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***Journal of Qualitative
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Editorial Introduction

Welcome to the third volume of the *Journal of Qualitative Criminal Justice & Criminology*. I am pleased to report that the journal is still going strong and manuscripts continue to be submitted on a regular basis. The journal continues to hold its authors to a high standard and as you will note for this issue's updated analytics, the journal is currently holding a 16.9% acceptance rate. I believe you will see the satisfactory results of maintaining the high standards in this first issue of Volume 3. Lisa Kort-Butler and Michael Killingsworth lead off with a historical analysis of media-crime relationship in criminology textbooks; Kevin Steinmetz looks at how a person becomes a hacker through his ethnographic interviews and participant observation; Danielle Lavin-Loucks and Kristine Levan explore the use of neutralization techniques in state parole hearings using ethnographic observation methods; and Brad Campbell looks at a little known policing phenomenon, the Summer Cop, through his summer conducting participant observation. Each of these pieces contributes to the qualitative body of literature in criminal justice and criminology, while the many book reviews included in this issue also demonstrate additional work in qualitative methods being published.

Since the last issue, it has come to my attention a number of changes in institutional affiliations among the editorial board. Kevin Steinmetz, the book review editor for *JQCJC* is now at Kansas State University. Craig Hemmens is now at Washington State University where he serves as the Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology Chair. Wilson R. Palacios has also moved to a new position at the University of Massachusetts in Lowell. And, finally, perhaps the biggest change is Shadd Maruna coming back across the pond to take the position of Dean and Professor in the School of Criminal Justice at Rutgers University. My congratulations to each of you in your new positions, and my thanks to all of the members of my editorial board for their assistance and dedication to this journal.

I would also like to take the time to thank everyone for their kind words in learning that I was planning to step down as the editor of the journal at the end of this year/volume. I have enjoyed getting this journal off and running, but I believe it is time to get someone else in the position with new ideas who can take the journal even farther in the future. If you are interested in being that person, please see the call for an editor at the end of this issue.

Finally, I must thank all of those people who have made this journal a success. In addition to the editorial board, I must thank my book review editor, Kevin Steinmetz; our excellent and very demanding copy-editor, Ronda Harris; our excellent publisher who makes the journal look like a journal, Harriet McHale; and our webmaster who makes sure everyone can see and download the journal, Melina Gilbert. The support of these dedicated pro-

professionals at Sam Houston State University has been critical to the success of the journal. And, I must thank the Southwestern Association of Criminal Justice's Executive Board for their support of me, my ideas for the journal, and the journal itself.

Willard M. Oliver
Sam Houston State University
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From Burlesque to *Grand Theft Auto*: An Historical Analysis of the Treatment of the Media-Crime Relationship in Criminology Texts

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ABSTRACT

The degree to which criminological scholarship on the media-crime relationship has been subject to the tides of moral panics is not well-understood, although there are theoretical reasons to hypothesize about the role of scientists in moral panics. Textbooks are one location in which a discipline chronicles its scholarly history and speaks to the public, making texts an important site for understanding how scholars interpret the media-crime relationship. A content analysis of over 200 criminology texts, ranging in publication dates from 1880 to 2012, was conducted. Almost half the texts covered the media-crime relationship. These texts often appeared to be responding to and concurring with public debates brought on by moral panics. Textbooks most frequently took a negative stance on the media-crime relationship, as opposed to a more neutral stance or balanced approach. Proportionally, the media-crime relationship received the most coverage in the 1950s, 1990s, and 2000s, decades that correspond to surges of public debates about comics and video games. The decision of many authors to take a negative position in texts, while others cited contrary evidence, may reflect scholarly authors' participation, intentionally or not, in the panic process.

“Burlesque, insensate, spiritless and indiscriminating, demoralizes both the audience and the players. It debases the public taste.” (Heyward, 1885, p. 477)

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“If there is ever something to get fired up about, or if you ever wondered why we’re raising a morally tone-dead generation of citizens, take a look at the recently released video game *Grand Theft Auto 5*.” (Ingram, 2013)

INTRODUCTION

In the United States, public discussion and policy debates regarding the relationship between the media and crime tend to suffer from generational forgetting; as time passes, discussions about earlier forms of media are given less attention or are dismissed as less relevant. However, concerns about the impact of the media on criminal behavior, deviance, or juvenile delinquency stretch back to the late 1800s or earlier. In the public and in politics, such concerns have been reflected in claims that link media consumption and deviance, and in reactionary exploratory hearings to inform policy making. The media industry has often capitulated to public fears and political gamesmanship by creating voluntary ratings systems, despite U.S. Supreme Court rulings defending various forms of media as protected speech, such as *Joseph Burstyn, Inc. v. Wilson* (1952) and *Brown v. Entertainment Merchants Association* (2011).¹

For its part, the American criminological enterprise, in its research and theorizing, has sporadically engaged in these debates. On the one hand, the historical and cultural literatures focus on moral entrepreneurs or moral panics emerging around certain forms of media or groups of media consumers, but say less about empirical findings (e.g., Hajdu, 2008; Springhall, 1998). On the other hand, the published empirical research tends to focus on contemporary media types and generally fails to comment on the socio-historical connections binding purported media effects (e.g., Coyne, 2007; Huesmann, 2007; for exceptions, see Miller, 2009; Shipley & Cavender, 2001). As a result, where the criminological enterprise writ large stands on these issues over time is not well-known; neither is the degree to which the enterprise is influenced by public and political concerns. Recent theorizing about the moral panic process considers the role of scholars in this process (Ferguson, 2008), but little to no research has explored this idea.

The current study was designed to address this lack of information with a content analysis of over 200 criminology textbooks designed for use in academic settings, ranging in publication dates from circa 1880 to 2012. First, we briefly outline the moral panic process, then illustrate how scholars have historically become entwined in moral panics about the media-crime relationship. We also discuss the role of scientific inquiry in the moral panic process based on insights from Ferguson’s (2008) moral panic wheel and Downs’s (1972) issue attention cycle. Next, we discuss the results of the content analysis, emphasizing context and content while employing an historical-comparative perspective.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Panic in the Public

History appears to repeat itself in moral panics and the related moral crusades against whatever new media form is believed to spur crime, delinquency, or immoral behavior (Cohen, 1997; Cohen, 2002). For a moral panic to bloom, some sort of latent fear or concern must exist among the general public or certain segments of the population; after all, fear cannot be generated from nothing (Goode & Ben-Yehuda, 1994). The latent concern in many cases seems to be either the well-being of innocent youth who may be corrupted into lives of crime or the dangerous youth poised for antisocial actions (Faucher, 2008; Springhall, 1998). Although many moral panics do not result in specific institutional changes, they nonetheless leave an informal legacy of consensus-building and norm-reaffirmation (Goode & Ben-Yehuda, 1994). This legacy and the social processes behind it lay the groundwork for each new round of concern, whether or not advocates of Fear B remember or recount the arguments formulated around Fear A. Cohen (1972) observed that the folk devils around which panics are centered tend to fade from collective memory if the purported calamity tied to them fails to emerge. Newer versions of the evils can thus fill the gap (Ferguson, 2010).

Ironically, the media itself contributes to moral panics about the media-crime relationship. Two factors are implicated: problem-framing and the issue attention cycle (Schildkraut & Muschert, 2014; Shih, Wijaya, & Brossard, 2008). First, Altheide (1997) argued that the media, and television in particular, act as a primer by providing information that consumers can use to interpret events. In this process, the media inform the audience that some situation is undesirable, many people are affected by it, and the main contributing factors are identifiable. Further, the media employ editorials or commentaries from purported experts, which suggest that the problem can be changed, mechanisms exist to change it, and we as a society already have an agent and process in place to fix the problem. This discourse or problem frame becomes a resource that the audience can use to interpret later information.

Second, the waxing and waning of public issues in the media has been attributed to the issue attention cycle (Downs, 1972). Initially, a problem may not be on the public's radar. However, a phase of alarmed discovery is created when the public becomes suddenly aware of the problem due to a series of reported events. The media play a key role making the public aware of relatively rare situations and contribute to constructing those situations as deeply troubling and widespread (Kappeler & Potter, 2005; Sacco, 1995). Alarm is followed by apparent widespread public enthusiasm for solving the problem. Once the public realizes the large amount of resources that are necessary to make significant progress in solving the problem, they begin to rethink the situation, enthusiasm wanes, and there is a gradual decline of intense public interest in the issue. Correspondingly, the media often fail to follow up on

stories. Consequently, the initial “danger” is revealed, but it is not resolved by continuing coverage (Kappeler & Potter, 2005). The issue attention cycle concludes in the post-problem stage, in which the public’s original concern is now in limbo and a new issue emerges to take its place.

Problem framing surrounding crime issues produces and reproduces public fears and the broader perception that society is dangerous (Altheide, 1997). The latent fear can be used by those interested in a particular issue to advocate for the issue. The problems that reach the issue attention cycle do so because those with the power to define social issues have identified them as such (Schildkraut & Muschert, 2014). Whether attention fades because the dire forecasts do not materialize or because meaningful solutions are not forthcoming, the issue is never fully resolved. The latent fears are never fully addressed, but the framework needed to regenerate the process remains in place for the next version of the issue.

During the twentieth century, the alignment of problem framing and the issue attention cycle surrounding the media-crime relationship was revealed in the patterning of attention to various forms of media. Utilizing the media, moral entrepreneurs were often successful in persuading the public and the government about the potential damaging effects of the latest media form on young people (see Critcher, 2008 for an historical review). In the United States, concerns over media’s suggestive influence spawned congressional investigations, such as the 1954 Senate Subcommittee on Juvenile Delinquency hearings on comic books (i.e., the Kefauver Committee) and the 1985 Senate Commerce Committee hearings on labeling records for explicit lyrics. The Kefauver Committee’s (United States Senate, 1954) hearings were televised, providing national exposure for the testimonials of crusaders and sympathetic researchers, exposés of the materials, and interrogations of comic book industry executives (Hadju, 2008). The national stage given the hearings solidified a connection between media and deviance in the minds of the public and the polity, however vague that association was. By the 1980s and 1990s, the purported effects of media on children had become “political orthodoxy” (Critcher, 2008, p. 91).

In fact, the model used for assailing comic books was repeated in the Commerce Committee hearings (United States Senate, 1985). Televised hearings featured the proponents of record labeling (the Parents Music Resource Center, an organization led by wives of prominent politicians, including Tipper Gore and Susan Baker), a cast of musicians under fire, and visual and audio aids. However, the advent of cable news agencies and “soft news” programming may now be shifting the stage, such that debates like those seen during televised hearings are played out among commentators and interview guests, including political and public figures (Britto & Dabney, 2010, p. 200).

Ultimately during the twentieth century, concerns about media’s effect on youth created social and political pressure on the American media indus-

try to create numerous, generally voluntary, censorship guidelines and ratings systems, the patterning of which reveals the cyclical nature of old fears dissipating and new ones taking their place. The earliest of these was the Motion Picture Production Code of moral censorship guidelines, instituted in 1930, shortly after the advent of talkies (filmratings.com, n.d.). In 1954, the Comics Code Authority, which censored and approved comics for publication, was established (Hadju, 2008). By 1968, the motion picture industry abandoned censorship for the modern voluntary rating system (filmratings.com, n.d.). The music industry adopted parental advisory labels for explicit lyrics in 1985. The 1990s saw the advent of the Entertainment Software Rating Board ratings for video games in 1994 (esrb.com, n.d.) and the TV Parental Guidance System in 1997 (tvguidelines.org, n.d.). To coordinate with the TV rating system, the V-chip has been included in every TV manufactured since 2000, and modern cable and satellite TV equipment offers parental controls. New devils thus replaced the old, yet the groundwork laid by previous panics set the stage for later efforts to curb immoral behaviors by attempting to control media content (Springhall, 1998).

Panic in the Ivory Tower

Like panics in the public, history also appears to repeat itself in scholarship centered on the media-crime relationship. Even when scholars acknowledge research on earlier forms of media such as TV and movies (Media Violence Commission, 2012), they frequently fail to consider the social history of the media-crime link. For more than 100 years, scholars interested in crime and delinquency have made claims about how the media, writ large, may affect individual behavior (Gunter, 2008). At the turn of the twentieth century, some scholars were concerned that the publication of news stories and photographs about crime would incite imitation among would-be criminals and delinquents, especially the “mentally and morally weak” (MacDonald, 1892, p. 272). Yet, other scholars advocated a more tempered approach, arguing that the “suggestive influence” of the sensational press and popular media (e.g., stage and moving pictures) was over-exaggerated (Parmelee, 1918). Art, argued Parmelee (1918), including artistic works, literature, and drama, “is in the main a reflection of conditions which have been created by other forces. It furnishes a picture of those conditions to a certain extent, but is not in itself a strong dynamic force” (p. 118).

During the post-World War II era, psychiatrist Fredric Wertham’s research appeared to demonstrate a dangerous link between comics and deviance among youth. His crusade against comic books propelled him to celebrity status among public interest groups and politicians, and he was a star witness during the Kefauver Committee’s hearings (e.g., Hajdu, 2008). Among other dissenting academics’ voices, Frederic Thrasher of the Chicago school of sociology took a stand on the purported relationship between reading comic books and deviance. Thrasher refuted such a relationship based on

lack of empirical evidence and argued that attention to such a relationship amounted to scapegoating.

There is a large broadside of criticism from parents who resent the comics in one way or another or whose adult tastes are offended by comics stories and the ways in which they are presented. These are the same types of parents who were once offended by the dime novel, and later by the movies and the radio. Each of these scapegoats for parental and community failures to educate and socialize children has in turn given way to another as reformers have had their interest diverted to new fields in the face of facts that could not be gainsaid. (Thrasher, 1949, p. 200)

Nearly 65 years later, scholars are divided, sometimes contentiously, over the relationship between playing what are thought to be violent video games and engaging in violent behavior (Critcher, 2008). Research is inconsistent but remains open to a seeming wide degree of interpretation. Researchers appear to refute and doubt the findings of one another, sometimes based less on empirical evidence and more on ideological orientations (Anderson, 2013; Ferguson, 2013). In some outlets, these debates are presented in a more balanced fashion than in the past (Carey, 2013). However, some scholars remain antagonistic, scorning those with whom they disagree. For example, Strasburger, Donnerstein, and Bushman (2014) likened academics who cast doubt on a media-crime relationship to Holocaust deniers.

As these examples over time suggest, the scholarly debate over media's influence tends to mirror the public debates of their respective eras. Despite the scholarly voices in a given era that advocate a narrower interpretation of the data and restraint in public claims-making, other scholars, equally convicted, advocate public action. Two additional examples, one from the comic book debates and one from the video game debates, illustrate how scholars can become integrated into the larger moral panic processes surrounding the media-crime issue.

First, consider C. Wright Mills' (1954) take on Wertham's (1954) treatise against comic books, *Seduction of the Innocent*. In a book review for the *New York Times*, Mills indicated that the issue did not lie with comic strips found in newspapers (which a few decades before were seen as problematic [Hadju, 2008]), but with the "recent upsurge" of violence, crime, and sex in comic books, an upsurge of which parents were ostensibly unaware. Mills extolled Wertham's work and concluded that it did not seem to him that more research was needed before action was taken against publishers. Nonetheless he advocated for additional research, which he thought would undoubtedly bolster Wertham's claim.

Next, consider the arguments Brown and Bobkowski (2012) offered for the shift from research on the TV-aggression link to the video game-ag-

gression link. They argued, first, that users' involvement with video games is more interactive than it was in earlier (electronic) media. Second, video game and computer use is increasingly popular with younger people. Third, perpetrators of school shootings purportedly had histories of playing violent video games.² Thus, they advocated for additional study of the link between video game playing and violence.

Neither Mills (1954) nor Brown and Bobkowski (2012) were attempting to mislead their audiences. Following purported crime upsurges or extreme events like school shootings, the discourse in the scientific community can change relatively quickly (Ferguson & Ivory, 2012). The mediums addressed by Mills and by Brown and Bobkowski were viewed in their respective eras as a new, more fearful phenomenon that, anecdotally, had horrible consequences that past mediums could not have had or did not have. Because such scholars believe, based on their interpretation of the research, that an earlier form of media is linked to aggression, they then contend that a new, more virulent medium must also lead to aggression (Critcher, 2008). As such, research into the newer mediums is deemed imperative. These examples reflect acquiescence or acceptance on the part of some scholars to the terms of the moral panic surrounding comic books and video games.

Scholars and the Moral Panic

Discussions about moral panics tend to center on out-of-proportion reactions to an issue and the question of who benefits from stirring those reactions (Garland, 2008); typically, the answer to that question is found in power and profit. However, moral judgments on the part of scholars are embedded in what they come to call a moral panic and what they consider to be an appropriate expression of concern (Garland, 2008). The ethics of attribution may also cause scholarly restraint in labeling something a moral panic. Scholars, even if the empirical evidence suggests panic, may refrain from using the term regarding events associated with widespread grief or fear. Garland's (2008) point is that scholars bring their own moral standards to the table when judging a phenomenon's panic-worthiness and are unlikely to be wholly objective in their analysis of it.

Ferguson's (2008, 2010) moral panic wheel, modified from the work of Gauntlett (1995), offers additional theoretical insight to the cyclical nature of moral panics as they relate to scientific inquiry, paralleling the issue attention cycle. Based on previous permutations of moral panic theory, Ferguson proposed that societal beliefs about a particular phenomenon, whether those beliefs are cultural, religious, political, or activist in origin, spur media reports on the potential negative effects of the phenomenon. The alarm and enthusiasm in both societal beliefs and media reports about the problem lead to calls for research that verifies and addresses this concern.

According to the moral panic wheel, scholars may become part of the moral panic by producing research that supports the original fear but fail-

ing to publish null findings or suppressing research critical of the feared phenomenon (Ferguson & Kilburn, 2009). In turn, the media report the confirmatory research, which validates sensationalized stories. Politicians pay attention to scholarly work that confirms their positions (Grimes & Bergen, 2008), and they and other authority figures promote that work for political gain. Scholars may also gain by perpetuating the existing dogma, potentially securing both public legitimacy and funding for their continued research on the topic. The moral panic wheel is completed as the media alight on the ideological and politicized positions regarding the potential negative effects of the feared phenomenon, and then call on experts in the field for their reports. Furthermore, the very use of the term “moral panic” has become a convenient way for news outlets to structure public debates, because the term provides a contrary view that is predictable (Altheide, 2009). Indeed, the term is so convenient that moral advocates, scholars among them, anticipate its use by opponents and provide arguments for why their issue is a “worthwhile” moral panic (Altheide, 2009, p. 91).

However, the issue attention cycle predicts that the fury cannot be maintained. As the public loses interest, these experts and their work become less relevant. The public and the media inevitably move on to something else. Scholars must do likewise to remain relevant, even if the initial target of their inquiry remains empirically unresolved. As one example, the American Psychological Association (APA) issued policy statements in 1985 and 1994 emphasizing the issue of violence in television and film. In 2005 (and currently under review), the APA issued a policy resolution on video games and interactive media that briefly mentioned television, reframed research about television and film, and then cited those studies alongside research about video games to fit the emerging narrative.

Like the public, scholarly attention wanes and issues fade from memory. Taken together, the moral panic wheel and the issue attention cycle suggest that in the drive for social relevance and perhaps for monetary support for their research, scholars may be roused to follow the latest trend in media research and abandon seemingly outdated modalities. Yet the orthodoxy of the media-crime relationship established in Wertham’s era remains (Critcher, 2008), as do the empirical and moral judgments of scholars in the field (Garland, 2008). Ferguson and Kilburn (2009) observed “that media violence effects research may continue to be driven primarily by ideological or political beliefs rather than objectivity” (p. 762). Scientists, willing or unwittingly, may contribute to the cycle of moral panics about crime and the latest form of media.

The Current Study

As Thrasher (1949) forecasted, the newest evil captures the imagination of the public and the ivory tower. Despite the historic record, research may fail to give much attention to the outcomes of panics of past mediums, re-

flecting the sort of generational forgetting that may occur among the public after moral panics. Perspectives offered by the moral panic wheel and the issue attention cycle provide a framework to understand the place of scholars in this process. However, little research has explored the degree to which scholarship on the media-crime relationship has been (and is) subject to the tides of moral panics.

One approach to detecting changes in scholarly attention to various issues is the standard review of the research literature. Typically, literature reviews are designed to explore the state of research and outline directions for future research. For example, Felson (1996) summarized the literature on television viewing and violent behavior, and Savage (2004) furthered this work with a methodological review of the research. Both of these studies revealed much about the state of research, but neither took a social-historical view in order to account for other forms of media, making it difficult to assess the influence of moral panics. Similarly, meta-analyses can be used to determine the impact of certain variables over time but are affected by selection and publication biases (Wells, 2009), which themselves may reflect the moral panic cycle.

Jensen (2001) offered a different approach, albeit indirectly. Jensen observed that in Edwin Sutherland's influential criminology book, which has seen multiple editions, Sutherland repeatedly addressed the role of television in the learning of crime and delinquency. (For the record, Sutherland [1947] largely discounted such a relationship.) This suggests that criminology textbooks may be a repository of knowledge about trends in scholarly thinking about the media-crime relationship. Textbooks represent the core of knowledge in a discipline, synthesizing theory, research, and even ideology (Keith & Ender, 2004; Wright, 2000). Textbooks can also play a pivotal role in students' overall learning process and socialization into the discipline. They provide a picture of crime and justice based in empirical reality and represent what the field deems to be important issues (Burns & Kato-vich, 2006; Rhineberger, 2006; Sciarabba & Eterno, 2008; Withrow, Weible, & Bonnett, 2004). At the same time, textbooks may fail to address fully the historical contexts of criminal justice or neglect certain topics or subareas in a discipline (Huffman & Overton, 2012; Sciarabba & Eterno, 2008; Turner, Giacomassi, & Vandiver, 2006; van der Hoven, 2001).

The proliferation of research on textbooks reflects the notion that textbooks represent an integral part of how a field defines itself (Keith & Ender, 2004), making them an important site for research into a discipline. To that end, the current study utilized textbooks to explore how scholarly attention to the media-crime relationship may be integrated into the processes of moral panics. If textbooks (and their authors) are speaking for the discipline, then the content they include and the context in which they present that content hypothetically represent the state of research, and perhaps ideology, regarding a given topic. If there is academic acquiescence to the terms

of a moral panic surrounding media, then textbooks may be crafted in such a way to follow that trend, focusing on the newest media forms and either overlooking or reframing older forms.

METHODOLOGY

The sample consisted of criminology and juvenile delinquency textbooks available in the main library at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, as well as a smaller set of textbooks available in the library of the Department of Sociology at the university. The sample was substantially larger than other criminology or criminal justice textbook studies (e.g., Burns & Katovich, 2006; Huffman & Overton, 2012; Sciarabba & Eterno, 2008; Turner et al., 2006). Nonetheless, the sample was one of convenience, the limitations of which are discussed below.

Because books in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century do not look like textbooks today, a book was considered a textbook if its intention appeared to be an overview of the field, rather than promoting a particular theory or point of view (Turner et al., 2006). In the libraries, every book from the sections housing criminology and delinquency textbooks was examined and coded if it met selection requirements. Recognizing that editions did not substantially change from one edition to the next, volumes with more than one edition were chosen in an every other year or every odd-numbered edition manner. In total, 223 texts were included in the sample, representing nearly 170 primary authors.³ These books were mostly designed for an American audience, but that was not a criterion for inclusion. All were written in or translated into English.

The analysis combined traditional techniques of content analysis with the ethnographic approach advocated by Altheide (1987). Traditional content analyses tend to be quantitative in nature, coding and counting occurrences of pre-designated elements (Maxfield & Babbie, 1995). This approach, while useful, can result in removing content from context (Muzzatti, 2006). In ethnographically-oriented content analysis, the procedures for data collection, analysis, and interpretation are designed to be reflexive (Altheide, 1987). Theoretically derived categories guide initial stages of a study, but other categories are expected and allowed to arise during the research process. This method is particularly useful when examining texts or contexts over time, because it allows the researcher to remain responsive to historical variations.

A preliminary coding rubric was constructed based on the research interests and the authors' reviews of several texts. In particular, we were interested in whether textbooks across the decades included mention of the media and a potential causal relationship with deviance, and if so, what genres of media were implicated in what types of deviant behavior. Initial coding was conducted by both researchers and compared to ensure inter-

rater reliability. As part of this process, the researchers were responsive to the sample and made appropriate modifications to the coding rubric. Some codes were pre-set (i.e., number of pages), whereas others remained open-ended. All textbooks in the sample were first coded by their publication date (year) and their coverage of the media-crime relationship (present/not present). For those textbooks in which coverage was present, coding focused on the context and the content of the coverage. That is, in order to gain an overall understanding of how the media-crime relationship was treated in the textbooks, it was important to discover not only whether it was mentioned and in what era, but also where and how it was positioned in the text, what content was discussed, and how the discussion was presented.

Coding categories focused on the context in which the relationship was presented. First, the location of the content was coded as in-text, in a sidebar, or both. Second, the amount of space devoted to the topic was recorded in number of pages. Third, to determine whether the content was presented in a way that was clearly grounded in research, the presence of cited empirical research either in-text or in footnotes was recorded. If present, the publication years of the research were also noted. Fourth, the presence of real-world examples and the nature of the examples (e.g., headline news, notorious names) were recorded. Similarly, whether images were used and their mode of display (i.e., black and white or color; staged or news image) was coded.

Coding categories also focused on the content presented about the media-crime topic. Codes focused on the types of media discussed and the text's treatment of the media-crime relationship, including the effects (i.e., dependent variables) referenced and the overall connotation of the section. First, the codes for categories of the media mentioned by the text included television, radio, movies, books, magazines, comics, video games, music, newspapers, advertisements, dime novels, computer/internet, pictures, theatres, and mass media (general).⁴ Second, the codes for effects referenced were initially open-ended, then categorized at the end of the coding. These categories included deviance (general), crime (general), aggression, violence (general), violent crime, property crime, white collar crime, juvenile delinquency, drug use/abuse, false reality, desensitization, mental health, sexual offenses, positive effects (e.g., catharsis), effects on policing practices, and effects on anti-social affairs. Finally, the overall connotation of a reference was coded into one of four categories: media has no impact on crime or it has a positive impact (i.e., media reduced crime);⁵ a negative impact (i.e., media increased crime); a net neutral impact (i.e., the negative, positive, or minimal effects of media on crime balance out); or as presenting both sides without further comment. Texts could be coded as representing more than one position, if, for example, media effects were covered in two different sections of a text.

Using this rubric, the sample of textbooks was coded, proceeding as follows. First, the subject index was examined for keywords such as mass media, communications, television, and video games. If any of these words

were present, the corresponding sections in the text were coded. Second, the chapter headings and subheadings in the table of contents were examined, and the sections with media content were coded. Third, to make sure nothing was overlooked, each section of the textbook was scanned to see if there was anything about media present. This process allowed for the most comprehensive coverage. The sections containing discussions of media were read several times, then coded for individual elements. The connotation codes were based on the reader's assessment of the overall theme presented in the section. The codes were compiled in a spreadsheet format.

For the purposes of the current study, there were three stages of analysis. In the first stage, we examined the historical trends in exclusion or inclusion of a discussion of the media-crime relationship. In the second stage, we narrowed the analysis to only those texts that addressed the media-crime relationship, taking an historical-comparative approach in order to paint a picture of how scholars chronicled the effects of mass media on crime. In the third stage, we focused on the three decades during which coverage of the media-crime relationship peaked, leading to an analysis of the role of scholars in the moral panic process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Media-Crime Relationship through Textbook History

Overall, about 43% of the sample (95 textbooks) made reference to media of some sort. Half of the books published from 1880-1926 contained a reference to media (3 of 6 texts); none of those published in the 1930s and 1940s did so (0 of 8 texts). The lack of interest in the 1930s and 1940s may be attributed to the large scale social issues occurring during that era, as well as to the limited availability of or access to certain media sources by many in the population. Beginning in the post-World War II era, the textbook industry expanded substantially (Elliot & Woodward, 1990), so that the sample from that point forward contains more texts. In the 1950s, 61.5% of texts contained a discussion of media effects (8 of 13 texts), but in the 1960s only 39% of texts did so (14 of 36 texts). This slow decline continued through the 1970s and 1980s, in which 36% of texts (24 of 66) and 20.6% of texts (7 of 34), respectively, contained a reference to media. The lack of attention in the 1980s may be due to a decline of overall interest in media effects or to the absence of any new forms of media during this period. However, this trend reversed in the 1990s, when two-thirds of texts (15 of 23 texts) discussed media. From 2000 to 2009, nearly 76% of texts (22 of 29) discussed the media-crime relationship. Of the eight books evaluated for 2010-2012, only one-quarter referenced media but without the full decade, it is difficult to draw conclusions.

Context: Presenting the Media-Crime Relationship

The ethnographic approach to content analysis takes into consideration the context in which information was presented. Of the 95 texts that presented information on the media-crime relationship, 90.5% (86) of the textbooks presented the relationship in the text itself. About 6% of textbooks also covered the media-crime relationship both in the text and in a side box, and 3% of the books only covered the relationship in a side box. The average page space devoted to the media-crime relationship across all decades was 3.86 pages. However, there were several outliers, in which books devoted considerable space (8-17 pages) to the topic. Removing those outliers, the average was about 3 pages. By decade, in the 1950s, texts devoted 2.56 pages; in the 1960s, 2.72 pages; in the 1970s, 3.88 pages; in the 1980s, 1.82 pages; in the 1990s, 3.14 pages; and in the 2000s, 2.46 pages. Thus, there appeared to be consistency over time in the type and amount of space devoted to the topic.

One way in which texts may tap directly into moral panics is by using ripped-from-the-headlines examples to discuss media effects. However, few textbooks referencing the media-crime relationship presented real-world examples. Of the 95 texts that mentioned the media-crime relationship, 18 mentioned real-world examples. These examples range from well-known criminal names like Al Capone, to music such as Eric Clapton's *I Shot the Sheriff*, to school shooting events. There was no clear trend in terms of the nature of these examples, but they were most common in the 2000s (about 25% of texts), followed by the 1960s (about 20% of texts). Images were also infrequently used, which may in part reflect trends in publishing styles. Only 1 book in each decade from the 1960s to the 1980s used an image. In the 1990s, 2 books used black and white pictures, one was a still of a TV show and one of a person playing video games. Images were most present and the most sensational during the 2000s when about 25% of books used an image. Of these, 2 showed a color image of a child playing a first-person shooter video game, 1 showed a black and white image of a person watching TV, and the remaining images depicted criminal justice scenes in black and white (e.g., a police officer talking to a person). Taken together, it appears that the use of examples and images was most common in more recent publications; however, the majority of books from the recent publications did not stage their discussion using these contextual tools.

The intent of coding if research was cited and what research was cited in-text or by footnote was to determine whether the content was presented in a way that was clearly grounded in research. However, the use of citations did not appear until the 1950s, when 75% of the books provided in-text or footnoted citations. Of books published in the 1960s, 71% used citations, but in the 1970s, only 42% did so. In 1980s, only 29% of texts referred to research in-text or in footnotes, and in the 1990s, 53% did. By the 2000s, 73% of books directly referred to research. These proportions also indicate that

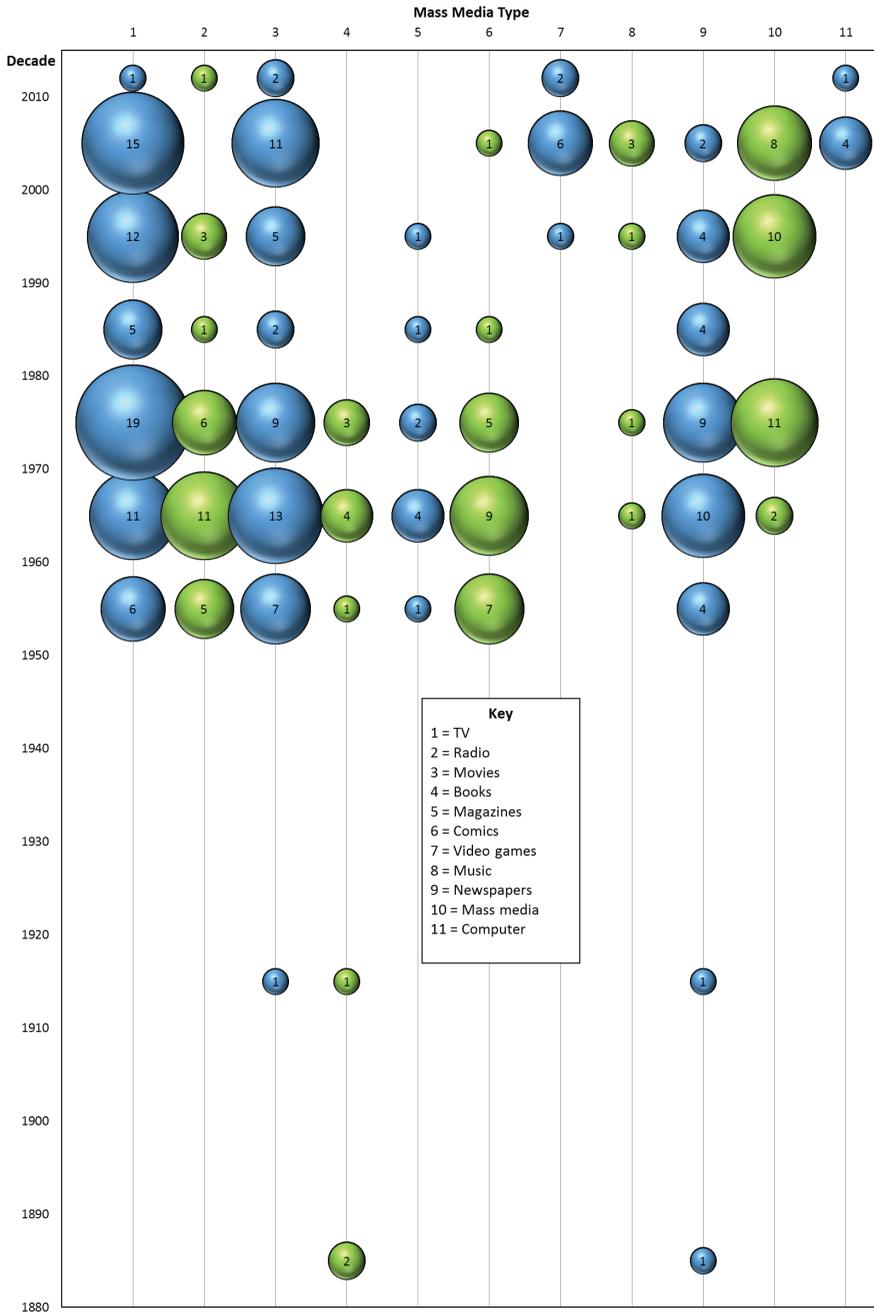
many books did not use these citation techniques, making it difficult for the reader to know either the historical record or the relevance of the research.

For each text, the mean years of distance between citation and publication date was calculated. Those means were used to calculate a mean for the entire sample and by decade. The goal was to determine if cited research encompassed a wide historical range. Citing recent research may present the newest information, but it also means that older research regarding other mediums is overlooked. This may feed into the impression that the current medium is the most problematic or that the issue is entirely new. On the other hand, citing older research may put the current debate in context in order to discuss the issue, but it may also be utilized to demonstrate a purportedly long-standing problem without noting the cultural ebbs and flows. Overall, on average, the cited research across all books from all decades was 11.38 years older than when the textbook was published, but there was not much variation by decade. However, it is worth noting that the range was broad. For the sample, the minimum difference between cited research and publication date was zero and the maximum was about 33 years. There were no clear patterns by decade, but the broad range suggests that authors were intentional about the research they cited. Within-decade variations are discussed in greater detail in the next sections.

Content: Chronicles of the Media-Crime the Relationship

The next stage of the analysis focused specifically on the content of the media-crime relationship presented in the 95 texts, including the types of media referenced, the effects (dependent variables) considered, the connotation of the coverage, and how each of these changed over time, using decade as the unit of analysis. To examine what types of media gained attention and when, Figure 1 depicts the types of media textbooks cited by decade. Books and newspapers were the first on the scene, followed by movies. Books fell off the radar, but newspapers appeared in every decade.⁶ Movies also had a consistent presence over time. Television, radio, comics, and magazines appeared in the 1950s, and music and the term “mass media” appeared in the 1960s.⁷ By the 1980s, references to books, magazines, and comics all but disappeared, to be replaced by video games in the 1990s and computers in the 2000s. Importantly, the patterns depicted in Figure 1 illustrate generational forgetting, as certain types of media disappear and are effectively replaced by newer concerns.

Figure 1. Types of Media Cited Across Time



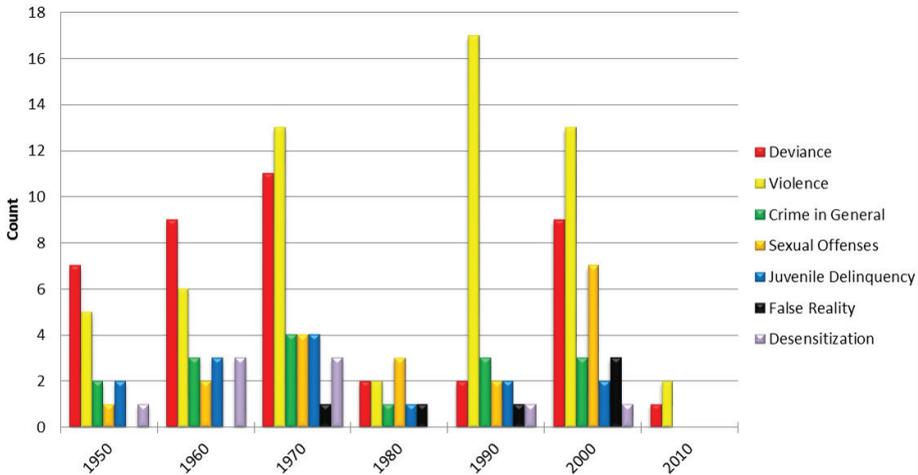
Note: Bubbles represent number of texts per decade that referenced the media type.

Overall, television and movies appeared to be the most dominant concerns, as did the mass media, once the term was introduced. Indeed, starting in the 1970s, television was the most frequently cited single type of media. By this decade, over 90% of American households owned a television, and

cable television subscription was expanding, reaching 50% of households in the mid-1980s (tvhistory.tv, n.d.). The other shifts of note—comics and video games/computers—also reflected social trends, namely the moral panics surrounding those mediums, which emerged in the late 1940s and the early to mid-1990s, respectively. The resurgence of interest in the mass media that occurred in the 1990s may also be reflective of the high point in the United States’ violent crime rate, the corresponding scare about juvenile violence, and, as Thrasher (1949) might put it, the search for scapegoats.

The purported effects of media on behavior are fuel for moral entrepreneurs, and the textbooks reflected these concerns. The concerns about media’s effects on social behavior focused heavily on its purported effects on violence. Violence, aggression, and violent crime were mentioned 58 times. Deviance, generally speaking, was referenced 44 times, and crime was mentioned 17 times. Examining specific crime categories, neither property nor white collar crimes were considered to be concerns, and drug abuse was specifically mentioned only once. In contrast, sexual offenses were named 19 times. The purported effects of media on juvenile delinquency were cited 14 times. Cognitive and emotional effects were also concerns, with 9 references to desensitization to violence, 7 to the role of the media in creating a false perception of reality, 3 to specific positive effects like catharsis, and 2 to mental health concerns.

Figure 2. Effects of mass Media Referenced Over Time

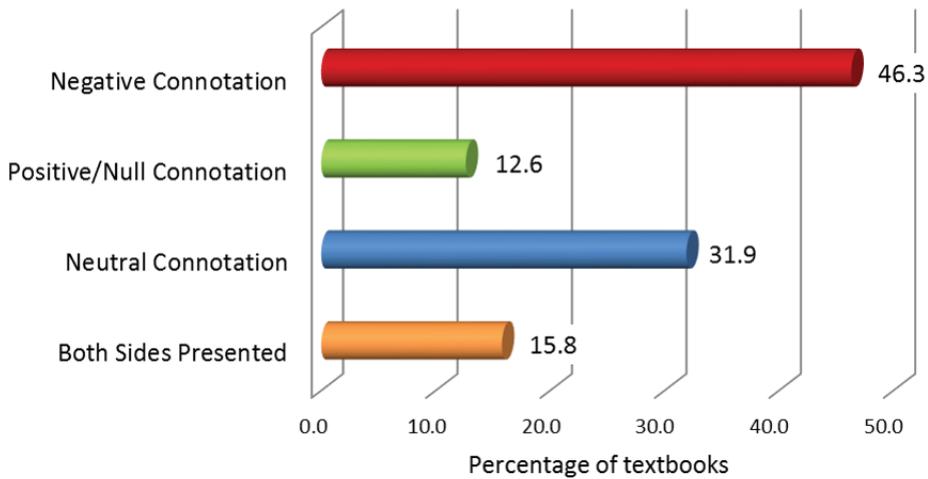


Note: 1880-1940 excluded for ease of presentation.

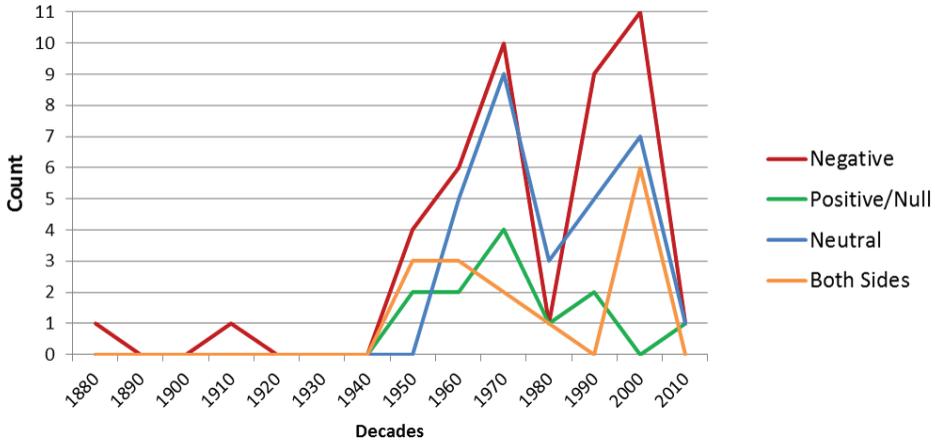
If shifts in attention to certain types of media are tied to social trends, shifts in concerns about the purported effects of media on behavior should similarly reflect these trends. Figure 2 depicts how these concerns changed

over time. For ease of presentation, the earliest decades and the less frequent concerns were excluded from the figure, and the 3 violence categories were combined. Of note, the earliest mentions (1880s, 1900s, 1910s) of the purported effects of media focused on deviance. In the 1950s and 1960s, deviance was the most frequently cited concern followed by violence. In the 1970s, concerns about violence surpassed deviance. After the general lack of attention in the 1980s, there was renewed attention to the purported effects of media on violence in the 1990s, likely reflecting the increases in the violent crime rate, and the public debate about its causes and how to address it. In the 2000s, the effects of media on violence remained a concern, but mentions of deviance and sexual offenses also increased in frequency.

Figure 3. Connotation of Media-Crime Coverage



As an initial assessment of the role of texts in supporting (or countering) moral panic, the analysis considered what connotations were present, and if they shifted over time with the types of media covered and their effects. Figure 3 illustrates that the connotation of coverage of the media-crime relationship in the texts tended toward the negative.⁸ Nearly half of the texts made the case that media has a negative impact on behavior, whereas only 12.6% reported a null or positive effect. About 32% of texts suggested that the net effect of media on crime was neutral. Approximately 16% presented both sides of the issue without taking a clear position.

Figure 4. Connotation of Media-Crime Coverage Over Time

The trends over time are depicted in Figure 4. The negative position was most predominant in every decade except the 1980s. Compared to the other connotations, the inclusion of negative connotations increased through the 1950s and 1960s. By the 1970s, the frequency of neutral connotations nearly matched the negative connotations, and among the few texts in the 1980s, neutral coverage was the most frequent. The 1990s and 2000s saw a rebound in the number of texts reporting an overall negative effect of media. In the 1990s, no text took a neutral stance but some did consider both sides of the issue. By the 2000s, the frequency of both these positions increased, but did not approach the number of texts reporting an overall negative effect of media on behavior. The lack of balance in the most recent decades may reflect the increased public, policy, and scholarly concerns with violence in particular, rather than the more generalized concerns of earlier decades.

The Peak Decades

Criminology and delinquency textbooks published in the 1950s, 1990s, and the 2000s saw the highest levels of interest (proportionally) in the media-crime relationship. These eras are associated with two different brands of moral panic, comics in the 1950s and video games and computers in the 1990s and 2000s. These panics resulted in voluntary ratings systems: the Comics Code Authority in the 1950s, and the ESRB video game rating system in the 1990s. In terms of the crime landscape of the eras, there were distinct patterns in homicide rates. Official homicide rates were stable in the 1950s and began to climb slowly in the 1960s, whereas the 1990s experienced an historical high point in crime rates and a sharp decline that continued into 2000s (Cooper & Smith, 2011). Textbooks thus gave consideration to the media-crime linkages that came to form the basis for panics in these decades.

How does textbook coverage from these decades compare? Reflecting the moral panics that arose in their respective eras, there were differences

in the types of media most frequently referenced. In the 1950s, comics, movies, television, radio, and newspapers (in that order) were most frequently referenced. By the 1990s, television and mass media received twice the citations as movies, music/radio, or newspapers, and video games make their first appearance in the textbooks. In the 2000s, television still tops the list, then movies, video games and computers, and mass media. There are also differences in the purported effects they considered. In the 1950s, when the crime rate was stable but when post-war concerns about supposedly wayward youth drew public interest, general deviance was the main concern, followed by attention to violence. In contrast, when violent crime was at its peak in the 1990s, violence nearly stood alone. Despite declining rates of violent crime, violence was still the most frequently cited concern in the 2000s.

The connotations presented in each decade also varied. It appears that at least some texts in each era were either reiterating or reinforcing the positions of moral entrepreneurs or claims-makers, who promulgated the idea that the media of the day had a negative impact on social behavior, promoting deviance or violence. In each decade, the presence of negative connotations was most common. However, in the 1950s, a similar proportion of texts presented both sides or even held a null or positive connotation. These texts seemed to wrestle with the limited amounts of empirical evidence, much of which appeared to be rooted in small samples or case studies. Vedder (1954) commented, “[Comics] specific influence is not clear—although dramatic cases are occasionally brought to the attention of the public” (pg. 87). Vedder leaned toward a no-influence or neutral position, but then nodded to the moral entrepreneurs:

To be sure, illegal conduct...is often undeservedly glamorized by the motion pictures, by radio and television, and by the comics. There can be no quarrel with those who decry this situation or with those who condemn the tabloid publicity that so often gives crime and delinquency a kind of prestige. But the causes of delinquency and the reasons for its persistence are many and complex. Mass media...play their part. (pg. 87)

In the 1990s, negative connotations were clearly the most frequent, followed by neutral connotations. Null or positive connotations were few, and no textbook presented both sides of the issue without commentary. One example of this negative stance is illustrated in Maguire and Radosh (1999), who asserted:

There is little debate about the nature of the relationship between media violence and subsequent societal violence....
The relationship between media violence and societal violence is a subtle force that influences some more than others....
The internalized understanding of violence as an appropriate response to discord, combined with daily examples of

widespread societal violence and a ready supply of media examples for imitation, may instigate violence in undefinable ways. (pg. 83-84)

A more provocative version of this negative stance is represented by Bartol (1999). After questioning the position of a study purporting no causal link (pg. 195), several studies were reviewed, primarily on television effects. The section concluded, “[A]fter over three thousand studies on the effects of violent media and aggression [about 15 were cited, alongside examples of mass shootings], the overwhelming conclusion is that violent television and movies do increase aggressive tendencies in both children and adults” (pg. 197).

Like the 1990s, negative connotations in the 2000s predominated and no null or positive connotations appeared, but more texts presented both sides of the issue or took a neutral stance on the purported media-crime relationship. For example, in Siegel and Welsh’s (2009) text, 2 pages were devoted to reviewing research on the level of violence in media, children’s exposure, and the evidence demonstrating a media-crime effect, and included a color photo of a child playing a first-person shooter video game (pg. 96). One-third of a page was devoted to alternative explanations for the “persuasive” evidence for the relationship between TV viewing and violence, offered by “critics” of the research (pg. 98). The paragraph concluded, “Further research is needed to clarify this important issue” (pg. 98). Similarly, Cassel and Bernstein’s (2001) text devoted 5 pages to reviewing research generally supportive of the negative effects of media on violence, occasionally peppered with the points made by critics. On the issue of video games, the text pointed out:

Recent studies have found a positive correlation between playing violent video games and aggressive behavior and delinquency, particularly in males. It has been suggested that these games may be even more harmful than violence in television and movies because they are interactive, psychologically addictive, and require players to become more aggressive....There is still much to learn about the nature and strength of correlations between violent crime and violence video games, however. (pg. 121)

Texts like these affirmed some sort of media-crime relationship, while suggesting additional variables may matter and that additional research was needed.

As shown in Table 1, the most prominent patterns in the use of in-text or footnoted citations were within, rather than across, these decades. In the 1950s, texts presenting both sides cited older research, whereas those taking a negative position presented more current research. In the 1990s, texts taking neutral positions cited older research, and those taking a negative position cited more current research. By the 2000s, there was a change. Texts taking a negative stance incorporated older research, and those taking

a neutral stance more often presenting recent research, with texts presenting both sides falling in the middle. Books in the 1990s and 2000s, even those that cited older research, did not appear to cite research old enough to build a discussion around the ebb and flow of panics about the effect of media on crime. Earlier media types would have been referenced in older works, and not accessing such work may also indicate generational forgetting.

Table 1. Average difference between publication date and reference dates, by connotation, selected decades

Year	Average difference (in years)	Connotation
1953	4.0	Negative
1954	13.5	Negative
1955	13.6	Positive
1956	15.0	Positive
1956	24.3	Both Sides
1957	17.7	Both Sides
1995	3.0	Negative
1996	10.0	Negative
1997	17.6	Negative
1999	4.3	Negative
1998	7.0	Positive
1995	11.8	Neutral
1995	23.5	Neutral
1997	15.0	Neutral
2000	24.3	Negative
2002	9.3	Negative
2003	8.0	Negative
2008	4.0	Negative
2009	8.5	Negative
2009	20.0	Negative
2009	21.9	Negative
2000	11.0	Both Sides
2001	13.3	Both Sides
2006	9.8	Both Sides
2008	18.5	Both sides
2000	2.0	Neutral

Given that television and movies were the most frequently mentioned in the 1990s and 2000s, followed by emergent forms of media such as video

games, textbooks may have been reframing earlier research to fit the current narrative regarding video games. For instance, in Siegel and Welsh's (2009) text, the section began with the subtitle *Media and Violence* in which half a page was devoted to computer and video games. This led into a longer section about television and violence, and the section concluded with a bulleted summary of the effects of media violence on adolescent behavior. Overall, the citation patterns hint at the selective use of the research literature to create a particular point of view; however, because a large minority of books did not employ in-text citations, firm conclusions on the use of published research to craft a text cannot be made.

CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Public discussion and policy debates regarding the media-crime relationship tend to suffer from generational forgetting about the topic and the panics surrounding it; scholarly research can be similarly forgetful. Thus, where the criminological enterprise stands on these issues over time is not well-known, nor is the degree to which it is influenced by moral panics. The current study examined textbooks in order to shed light on the position of the criminological enterprise over time and explore how scholarly attention to the media-crime relationship may be subject to moral panics.

Nearly half the sample of textbooks addressed the media-crime relationship in some capacity. Results of the content analysis revealed interest in media effects reaching back to the turn of the twentieth century, a lull of interest in the Depression and World War II eras, and increased interest beginning in the 1950s, with a dip in the 1980s. Proportionally, the media-crime relationship received the most coverage in the 1950s, 1990s, and 2000s. Although television and movies were mediums of enduring attention in textbooks, these decades correspond to surges of public interest surrounding comic books and, later, video games and computers. Comics were cited through the 1970s and were essentially replaced by video games in the 1990s. Texts that covered the media-crime relationship seemed to be responding to—and frequently concurring with—public debates brought on by moral panics.

As violence became an increasing social problem, at least as reflected in official crime rates, so too did coverage of its purported relationship with media. The caveat is the 2000s, during which concerns about violence still dominated the textbooks but violent crimes had fallen precipitously in official rates. The increased media and public attention given to anomalous mass shooting events and other extreme crimes, which appeared to run counter to the declining rates, nonetheless fueled panic about video games and media violence (Kappler & Potter, 2005; Muschert, 2007). Textbooks most frequently took a negative stance on the media-crime relationship, as opposed to a more neutral stance or balanced approach. Such an emphasis on violence and on the overall negative effects of media on behavior may be

due in part to an increase in research on the effects of media on violence specifically, which was often undergirded by theories biased toward negative effects (Gunter, 2008). Moreover, given the pitfalls associated with potential publication bias toward studies that find the expected effects and against those that either find unconventional or no effects (Ferguson & Heene, 2012), literature reporting negative effects may have appeared to form the bulk of information on which the textbooks could draw. However, given that some texts did present both sides of the issue or reported the overall effect of media on crime as neutral, research on which to base such content was available. If such information were available, and neither employed nor balanced against more negative information, then another explanation is needed.

The emphases taken in these texts, and in the literature more generally, may therefore be indicative of scholars' participation in the moral panic process (Ferguson, 2008) and issue attention cycle (Downs, 1972), at least during the peak decades. Scholars become part of the moral panic by producing research that supports the original fear, but failing to publish null findings or suppressing research critical of the feared phenomenon (Ferguson & Kilburn, 2009). Textbooks become part of the overall statement of scholars on issues, and the results of this analysis suggest that textbooks, too, can suppress critical evidence or fail to discuss null findings in an evenhanded manner.

Furthermore, consistent with the idea that concern or panic cannot be maintained, the lack of attention in the 1980s may represent a lull in the panic cycle. The public had lost interest in media issues, at least as they related to behavioral outcomes, and scholars had to move on to other topics.⁹ By the 1990s, the media and the public (or at least certain moral entrepreneurs), in the context of increasing violent crime rates, refocused their attention on the media-crime relationship. Likewise, in the textbooks, while some of the concern about television and movies reoccurred, newer forms of media garnered attention, as did their purported negative impact on behavior. Such narratives can take advantage of the groundwork laid by previous panics while at the same time downplaying or failing to acknowledge them (Goode & Ben-Yehuda, 1994). Very few texts analyzed for this study drew attention to the notion of moral panic surrounding these issues. Authors may apply their own standards when judging a phenomenon and are unlikely to be wholly objective in their interpretation of it (Garland, 2008). Ultimately, the decision to take a negative position in texts may reflect scholarly authors' participation, intentionally or not, in the panic process. As the second decade of the twenty-first century unfolds, it remains to be seen whether textbooks will continue rehashing such arguments or whether they will become more reflective in their approaches, giving attention to the full range of available research and being mindful of the social forces that shape both research and pedagogy.

There were several limitations to the study. First, we were limited in our sample by those books readily available to us, some of which may not

have been in wide circulation. The sample was also potentially limited by trends particular to the library (e.g., purchasing lows and highs, selection decisions). A more expansive sample that took into consideration sales and circulation patterns and expanded to other libraries may have yielded more diverse results. Relatedly, we were unable to account for the survival of some older texts over others, as well as the absence of books from certain periods. The relatively fewer texts available from the earliest decades may limit the validity of cross-decade comparisons. Although the sample of texts may impede the generalizability of the study, this study represented a unique attempt to discern the role of scholars in the moral panic process.

Second, because the coding effort took an ethnographic approach and involved one primary coder, it not amenable to the same sort of validation metrics advised by Maxfield and Babbie (1995). As a result, other coders may have had different insight into the process. Third, the analysis focused on media as a correlate of crime that fuels moral panics. However, other presumed correlates of crime also have moral implications, such as concerns about drug use and the decline of so-called family values (e.g., Bennett, Dilulio, & Walters, 1996). Future research could expand to include an analysis of these issues and their relationship to moral panics about crime. Fourth, given the emphasis on textbooks, we did not consider the full realm of special topics books that focus exclusively on the media-crime relationship. Presumably, such topical books would be more likely to be penned and published as panics arise. An analysis of their perspectives would add to our understanding of the role of scholarly work in the moral panic process.

Finally, the analysis was not amenable to causal arguments and without directly consulting with authors and editors of textbooks, it is impossible to know if they were mindful of their roles in the moral panic process (see Turner, et al., 2006). To address this issue, future research could use the textbooks' authors as the unit of analysis and consider factors such as discipline, theoretical orientation, or research activity. For example, such research could investigate other work published by the authors (e.g., empirical studies) to determine if the authors' other published work related to media and took a distinct perspective, particularly compared to authors who are not primarily engaged in research.¹⁰

Certainly, it is important to avoid overstating the impact of textbooks. After all, more than half of the sample did not mention the media-crime relationship at all, and much of the coverage that did occur was in the most recent decades. Nevertheless, textbooks are one location in which the criminological enterprise chronicles its scholarly history and speaks to the public-at-large, making texts an important site for understanding how scholars interpret the media-crime relationship. To trace the history more fully and to understand its intersection with moral panics, a content analytic inquiry of the published literature that remains cognizant of social history, examines the full range of media types, and focuses not just on methods or results, but

on *how* hypotheses are crafted and results are discussed is a necessary step forward. Scholars may think themselves above the fray, but this study reveals that they can play a role in it, whether intentionally or unintentionally. Unveiling the commonalities across history and recognizing scholars' roles in moral panics can assist us in avoiding the scapegoating Thrasher (1949) prophetically warned us against.

ENDNOTES

1. The U.S. Supreme Court's majority opinion in *Brown v. Entertainment Merchants Association*, written by Justice Scalia, acknowledged the historical controversies over violence in media formats, including fairy tales, literature, dime novels, movies, radio, comic books, television, and music.
2. Research has dispelled the purported causal relationship between video game consumption and mass shootings (Fox & DeLateur, 2014).
3. "Primary authors" refers to either sole or first authors of the texts.
4. Dime novels were later collapsed into the books category.
5. Because there were few cases in the individual categories, these two categories were collapsed. These categories run counter to the larger narrative of moral panics about media.
6. Despite the consistent appearance of newspapers, their purported role in the media-crime relationship changed over time. While earlier references were concerned with the potential for copycat crimes, later references were more concerned with sensationalism, desensitization, and/or fear cultivation.
7. Radio also represents a potential interpretive shift. In its early incarnations, radio had a good deal of programming, as well as music, but did not become subject to panic, in part because radio did not involve visual content (Critchler, 2008). Later, concerns about radio largely centered on the nature of the music available, and overlapped with concerns about music videos by the 1980s. However, because texts did not make this clear distinction, we kept radio and music as separate categories.
8. Numbers do not total 100% because a few texts were coded as representing more than one position, if, for example, media effects were covered in two different sections of a text.
9. The panic about music that occurred in the mid-1980s was both behavioral and attitudinal in nature. Music, as the testimony before Congress suggests (United States Senate, 1985), was thought to lead to poor mental health (e.g., suicide) and antisocial or immoral attitudes, but not necessarily crime.
10. An anonymous reviewer provided this suggestion.

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Becoming a Hacker: Demographic Characteristics and Developmental Factors

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ABSTRACT

Hackers are not defined by any single act; they go through a process of development. Building from previous research and through ethnographic interviews and participant observation, the current analysis examines characteristics which may influence an individual's development as a hacker. General demographic characteristics are analyzed, the participants' school experiences are discussed, and perceived levels of parental support and influence are defined. Finally, descriptions of first exposures to technology, the concept of hacking, and the hacking community are presented. The study concludes with theoretical implications and suggestions for future research.

INTRODUCTION

As a concept, hacking is a contested issue. For some, the term is synonymous with computer intrusions and other forms of technological malfeasance (Wall, 2007). Others consider hacking to be broader, to include activities like open-source software programming, and hardware hacking, among actions (Coleman, 2012; Coleman, 2013; Söderberg, 2008). Some consider hacking along ethical divisions, most notably described as black hats and white hats or hackers versus crackers (Holt, 2009; Taylor, 1999). What has become clear about hacking in the decades since its inception among technology students at MIT in the 1950s and 1960s (Levy, 1986) is that it serves as a lightning rod that attracts cultural conflict and public concern.

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Part of the disagreement over hacking stems from media and social construction (Halbert, 1997; Hollinger, 1991; Skibell, 2002; Taylor, 1999; Yar, 2013). Since hackers first emerged in popular culture in movies like *War Games* in 1986 and *Hackers* in 1995, the image of the hacker has been shrouded in fear and fascination (Hollinger, 1991; Skibell, 2002). This allure has been reinforced by various hacker controversies and events in recent times. For instance, approximately one hundred individuals were arrested recently in a crackdown targeting alleged hackers associated with the Blackshades malware (Perez & Prokupecz, 2014). Hackers have taken a position in the international spotlight with the actions of *hacktivist* (a term combining hacker and activist) groups like Anonymous and LulzSec who have engaged in web site defacements, distributed denial of service attacks, and created security breaches of various government, security, or corporate organizations (Olson, 2012). Additionally, in 2012 President Barak Obama pointed to hackers as a potential major national security issue. Such events and their subsequent portrayals have led to socially-constructed images which shroud hackers in mythology (Halbert, 1997; Hollinger, 1991; Skibell, 2002; Taylor, 1999; Yar, 2013).

Such constructions have led to the perception that hackers are “young men whose pathological addiction to the internet leads to elaborate deceptions, obsessive quests for knowledge, and bold tournaments of sinister computer break-ins” (Coleman & Golub, 2008, p. 256). Such perceptions often cast hackers as demonized figures lurking in the netherworld, ready to wreak havoc over the wires. In other words, the hacker becomes a figment in the cultural imagination largely divorced from personal history, context, and humanity.

Breaking away from such myopic portrayals, hacking is viewed here as a kind of “late-modern transgressive technological craft” (Steinmetz, 2014, p. 6). Hacking is thus recognized as a “process of becoming” rather than a state one embodies (Steinmetz, 2014, p. 2). Hackers do not emerge from a void, mouse-in-hand with technical knowledge and skill accumulated. Rather, hacking is about development. This process, for most, begins early and is affected by various life events, relationships, and institutions. Since hackers are largely made rather than born, this study builds on previous research examining hacker maturation (Bachmann, 2010; Holt, 2009; Holt, 2010a; Schell, Dodge, & Moutsatsos, 2002; Schell & Holt, 2010) by focusing on developmental circumstances and demographical characteristics through ethnographic field research (including participant observation and interview data) of a hacker group pseudonymously referred to as Union Hack. Such research could provide a more accurate depiction of hackers than commonly seen in popular culture and public discourse. While previous analyses have made strides in these areas (e.g., Bachmann, 2010; Coleman, 2013; Holt, 2009; Holt, 2010a; Schell et al., 2002; Schell & Holt, 2010; Taylor, 1999; Söderberg, 2008), more research is needed in light of the pervasiveness of hacker mythologization

and its potential consequences including knee-jerk policy reactions, disproportionate sentencing, and public fear. In the age of high technology, hackers are prominently demonized even though they are also involved in substantive advances in technological development (Coleman, 2013; Thomas, 2002). Changing misperceptions as well as probing features conducive to becoming a hacker appears to be a vital step toward understanding the nuanced role hackers hold in late modernity.

Before discussing the results of this analysis, the literature is reviewed with particular attention paid to previous studies examining hacker backgrounds and development. A short discussion of the ethnographic method used in this study is then provided. Finally, the results are presented which include (1) general background characteristics; (2) educational experiences; (3) parental support and influence; and (4) first exposures to technology, the idea of hacking, and the hacking community. The study concludes with an overview of the findings and a discussion of implications.

LITERATURE REVIEW

As networked technologies become more pervasive in late modern society, corresponding concerns arise over how such systems might be manipulated or compromised for nefarious purposes. As Yar (2013) stated, “Yet awareness of, and enthusiasm for, these changes have been tempered by fears that the Internet brings with it new threats and dangers to our well-being and security” (p. 3). Technocrime has thus become a hot topic in popular culture, political discourse, and in scholarship and can be understood “not so much [as] a single, distinctive kind of criminal activity, but more... a diverse *range* of illegal and illicit activities that share in common the unique electronic environment (‘cyberspace’) in which they take place [italics in original]” (Yar, 2013, p. 5).¹ Despite this digital context, “many of the basic crime ideas” described as technocrime “remain familiar” (Wall, 2007, p. 2). Even with this familiarity, law enforcement struggles to keep up with technocriminals and deviants as technology shifts and spreads under their feet (Nhan & Huey, 2013). To make matters worse, social construction has heavily skewed political and popular perceptions of technocriminals (Yar, 2013). Over time, these distortions have generated an archetypal technocriminal in the public imagination: the hacker (Wall, 2007).

Amid such fear and suspicion, a wealth of research has arisen on hacking and hacker culture across a diverse spectrum of topics. Many studies have adopted sociological and/or anthropological approaches toward the phenomenon. Some studies in this camp have examined hacking as a subculture that is rich with shared identities, practices, understandings, and organization (Coleman, 2010; Hollinger, 1991; Holt, 2009, 2010a, 2010b; Steinmetz, 2014; Steinmetz & Gerber, 2014; Turgeman-Goldschmidt 2005; Turgeman-Goldschmidt, 2011; Warnick, 2004). One of the most studied sociological

approaches has involved exploring various philosophical and perceptual commonalities among hackers, most commonly through the investigation of the hacker ethic (Brown, 2008; Coleman, 2012; Coleman & Golub, 2008; Himanen, 2001; Kirkpatrick, 2002; Levy, 1984; Warnick, 2004). Others have investigated the social construction of hacking over time, noting that popular culture has distorted the image of the hacker, generating consequences for the hacker community in the form of various legal/policy measures and crackdowns (Halbert, 1997; Skibell, 2002; Thomas, 2005). At the political economic level, hacking has been studied from a Marxist perspective, looking at how hackers—as intellectual laborers—fit within the dynamics of capitalism (Dafermos & Söderberg, 2009; Söderberg, 2008; Wark, 2004). Finally, scholars have pointed out that hacking has also been carried out as a form of political activism (sometimes called hacktivism) (McKenzie, 1999; Meikle, 2002; Taylor, 2005; Van Laer & Van Aelst, 2010).

Consistent with the focus of the criminological core, many studies have opted for more criminological analyses of hacking, often eschewing—though usually remaining sensitive to—the broader sociological and anthropological dynamics. For instance, research has investigated the more criminal or maligned parts of the hacker community such as the creation of viruses and malware, computer intrusions, website defacement, and identity theft (Furnell, 2010; Higgins, 2010; Holt, Strumsky, Smirnova, & Kilger, 2012; Jordan & Taylor, 1998; Nichols, Ryan, & Ryan, 2000; Woo, Kim, & Dominick, 2004). Criminological theory testing has been conducted on hacking-related behaviors (Bossler & Burruss, 2010; Marcum, Higgins, Ricketts, & Wolfe, 2014; Morris, 2010). Scholars have also examined the psychological characteristics of hackers (Rogers, Smoak, & Liu, 2006; Schell & Holt, 2010; Schell & Melnychuk, 2010; Voiskounsky & Smyslova, 2003).

In this way, the hacker literature has matured into a diverse and increasingly robust body of knowledge, and within the literature, scholars have probed hacker demographics and backgrounds, either through brief discussions (e.g., Coleman, 2013; Söderberg, 2008; Taylor, 1999) or explicit focus (Bachmann, 2010; Holt, 2010a; Schell et al., 2002; Schell & Holt, 2010). This review now turns toward explicating the more definitive research.

In their analyses and overviews, scholars have painted a relatively consistent portrait of hacker demographic characteristics (Bachmann, 2010; Schell et al., 2002; Schell & Holt, 2010). Generally, these studies have found that hackers, despite popular culture portrayals to the contrary, are a diverse group in terms of age, with mean ages approximately around 30 years old with ranges from teens to sixties (Schell et al., 2002; Schell & Holt, 2010). In addition, gender and race disparities have been found in the hacker community, with White men being vastly overrepresented (Bachmann, 2010; Schell et al., 2002; Schell & Melnychuk, 2010). Hackers are also reported to have relatively high levels of educational attainment; many possess at least a college degree (Bachmann, 2010; Schell et al., 2002). Approximately half

have been married (Bachmann, 2010). Finally, hackers have been found to be employed in occupations with income levels averaging between \$50,000 and \$57,000 (Schell et al., 2002; Schell & Holt, 2010).

Regarding development, previous studies examined features which appear to contribute to or appear as milestones in hacker development (Bachmann, 2010; Holt, 2010a; Schell & Holt, 2010). Previous analyses found that hackers typically become involved in hacking at an early age (Bachmann, 2010; Holt, 2010a; Schell & Holt, 2010). During these early stages of development, Holt (2010a) reported that becoming a hacker consists of four primary components: (a) initial interest; (b) access to technology; (c) engagement in “discovery and exploration;” and (d) attainment of an understanding of the “interrelated elements of computer systems” (Holt, 2010a, p. 113). Similarly, curiosity and a desire to tinker are often cited as motivations for early hacking (Bachmann, 2010; Schell & Holt, 2010). Holt (2010a) also explored the ways in which hackers went about learning to hack. Perhaps the most important method of learning is “through ‘trial and error’ and ‘playing with computers’” (Holt, 2010a, p. 115). Hackers largely seemed to rely on social networks, also, such as peer groups and hacker conventions for guidance (Holt, 2010a). Online communities and social groups were invaluable for many hackers in their development (Holt, 2010a). Additionally, Holt (2010a) discussed the importance of individuals demonstrating commitment to learning and developing as hackers, a commitment to that is a demonstration of autonomy as a creative thinker and learner in the activity.

Despite these noteworthy efforts, there still exists a need to further investigate hacker demographic and background characteristics. The hacker community is diverse, and it would be a mistake to consider that the subject is fully understood after only a few studies. This study advances the literature through its focus on socioeconomic class, school experiences, parental support and influences, as well as temporal exposure to hacking and the hacking community.

METHODS

The current analysis was conducted using ethnographic field research which included participant observation and semi-structured field interviews. Beginning in June 2012, the researcher began attending public meetings for a hacker group based out of a major metropolitan area in Texas. For both ethical and pragmatic reasons, overt participant observation was used (Bulmer, 1982). Attempts at subterfuge may have jeopardized research efforts because hackers are often capable of unearthing deceit. Observational field sites included restaurants, bars, and a local hackerspace where members of this group and others congregated. Observations also took place at DEF CON 21 at the behest of members of the group.² Following DEF CON 21 in August 2013, formal data collection ended which resulted in approximately

137 hours and 20 minutes of field observations with exposure periods ranging between 40 minutes to 17 hours.

While conducting ethnographic observations, 16 semi-structured interviews were also gathered among 14 members of this group or their close affiliates.³ Pseudonyms were assigned to each member and informed consent was gathered, although no documentation was maintained so their confidentiality would be more easily maintained (IRB approval for research was obtained). With two exceptions, all interviews were audio recorded and fully transcribed using dictation software and parroting. Interview times ranged from 58 minutes to 5 hours and 4 minutes. Many of the results presented in this study are derived from this interview data because of the targeted information direct questioning permits. The participant observation data, however, were instrumental in providing context and details otherwise absent in interview data.

To sift through the data in a systematic fashion, the analyses used in this study draw from grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Involved is an iterative, multilevel approach to qualitative data analysis. This approach permits the isolation of patterns and categories to emerge organically from the data. In this manner, all of the qualitative data used in the study were subjected to at least three waves of coding to inductively isolate common patterns and categories. *Atlas.ti*, a software package explicitly designed for grounded theory analysis, was used to organize the data analysis (the software's analytic capabilities were not used; only organization structures were employed).

RESULTS

Two general areas are explored in this study. First are demographic characteristics and disparities in the hacker community. These include participants' age, race, gender, perceived social class, and occupation. Second are developmental factors potentially influential in participants' maturation as hackers. Explored factors encompass educational experiences, perceived influences, and levels of support provided by their parents, as well as first exposures to technology, the concept of hacking, and the hacking community. The objective is to consider if these factors emerged as significant life events in their development and how these events unfolded. Table 1 provides summaries for many of the background characteristics discussed in this study.

Table 1. Demographic and Background Characteristics*

Name	Age	Race/ Ethnicity	Gender	Education	Occupation	Marital Status	Has Children
Aidan	27	White	Male	Associate's	Field Technician	Married	No
Danny	23	White	Male	In college	Computer security**	Single	No
Gilbert	24	White	Male	Bachelor's	System administrator	Single	No
Harvey	41	White	Male	Bachelor's?	Independent IT consultant	Married	No
Jensen	61	White	Male	Bachelor's	Technician/ contractor	Married	
John	30	White	Male	Some college	Web hosting manager	Married	No
Keith	27	White	Male	In college	Technician	Single	No
Miles	37	White	Male	Some college	Security research scientist	Single	No
Pete	35	White	Male	Honorary doctorate (otherwise, no advanced degrees)	Computer security researcher	Divorced	Yes
Raj	37	Indian	Male	Master's	Software development customer facing	Single	No
Rick	50	White	Male	Bachelor's	Software engineer	Married	Yes
Roger	27	White	Male	In college	Retail	Single	No
Russell	~30	White	Male	Bachelor's	IT technician	Married	Yes
Susan	~37	White	Female	Bachelor's	IT Management	Divorced?	Yes

* Some participants were vague or unwilling to be specific on certain demographic characteristics. Thus, approximations are presented for some (designated by '~'). In addition, some participants did not volunteer certain information. In these instances, the entry is left blank.

** In school working towards a career goal. Ideal occupation listed.

Table 1 (cont.). Demographic and Background Characteristics*

Name	Socio-Economic Class Growing Up	Father's Occupation	Mother's Occupation	First Exposure to Computers or Similar Technology	First Exposure to Idea of Hacking	First Exposure to Hacker Community
Aidan	Middle	Automotive mechanic	Respiratory Therapist	~5-7	~12-14	~13
Danny	Middle	Engineer (Ph.D.)	Jeweler	~10-11	Seventh grade	~Seventh grade
Gilbert	Middle	Food scientist	Teacher	Elementary school	Before junior high	College
Harvey	Middle	"The professions"	Homemaker	~6	Before age 14	Early 1980s
Jensen	Middle	CPA	Portrait artist	Grade school	During college	In the 1970s with phone phreaking
John	Middle	Stay-at-home parent	Lab technician	~5-6	9 th grade	Senior year in high school
Keith	Middle	Computer programmer	Stay-at-home parent	~6-7	End of elementary school	~24
Miles	Upper-Middle	Middle-management	Stay-at-home parent	~Kindergarten	~12-16	Late 1980s
Pete	Middle	Marine	Stay-at-home parent/book retail	~6-8	Since he was a child	~16-17
Raj	Upper-Middle	Medical doctor	Beautician	~12	~7	~26
Rick	Upper-Middle	Engineer		Elementary school	High school	High school
Roger	Middle	Software engineer	Office sales	~8	Teenage years	Teenage years
Russell	Middle	Automotive mechanic	Mortgage company employee	~9-10	~12-14	21
Susan	Lower-Middle to Middle	Computer engineer	Homemaker	~4-5	Unsure	College

* Some participants were vague or unwilling to be specific on certain demographic characteristics. Thus, approximations are presented for some (designated by '~'). In addition, some participants did not volunteer certain information. In these instances, the entry is left blank.

Demographic Characteristics

General demographic characteristics detailed here include occupation, age, race, gender, family status (marital status and the presence of children), social class, occupation, and education background. While the sample included in this study is small, thus rendering generalization unattainable, these findings complement previous analyses regarding age, race, gender, and marital status (Bachmann, 2010; Schell et al., 2002; Schell & Holt, 2010; Taylor, 1999). Additionally, an observational study of hackers at DEF CON 21 also supports the demographic distribution in this sample.

The participants in this study were diverse in age, which ranged from 23 to 61 with an approximate average of 34.71 and a median of 32.5 (some participants only gave approximate ages). The members of Union Hack varied in age, perhaps a relatively unique feature of a group subjected to criminological inquiry. However, when the members of this group described any activities which were illegal or got themselves into some sort of trouble with authority, these activities were largely done when they were much younger, typically in adolescence up to early twenties.

Most of the interviewees were White ($n = 13$); one subject was of Indian descent (non-Native American). While this distribution supports the idea that the majority of members of the hacker community are White, this distribution belies some of the diversity noticed during observational study. For instance, at the various Union Hack meetings, there were at least two African American men who would intermittently attend along with a member of Iranian descent who attended on a regular basis. In addition, an Asian woman attended three meetings during the time of my research. At DEF CON, numerous members of other racial/ethnic backgrounds could be found scattered throughout the convention; however, the vast majority of members in the hacker community appeared to be White.

In this study, gender disparity was present;⁴ 13 of the 14 interviewees in the study were men. Similar to the discussion of race, this representation among interview participants mirrors the overall presence of men in the hacker community. While women do exist in the community, men are over-represented in the hacker community compared to the general population.

Presenting a break from the stereotype of hackers as anti-social loners, 5 of the interview participants were currently married, and 2 were either divorced or separated from long term relationships. Of the unmarried/never married, 4 were under the age of 30, an age group where being unmarried is typical. Additionally, 4 of the interviewees had children; 1 of the interview participants was the son of one of the older participants.

All of the interview participants regarded themselves as middle-class or some variant thereof in this study, keeping in mind that regardless of their actual socio-economic position in society, most people tend to regard themselves as middle-class. It could be assumed that hackers tend to be

middle-class because of the relative financial privilege such economic positioning affords.

Ten of the participants were employed in legitimate occupations which emphasize working with technology such as system administration, programming, and technician work. One participant was in school (otherwise unemployed) and working toward a job in computer security at the time of study. Although their jobs did not involve technical work, 2 participants were employed in management and customer relations in technology industries, and 1 participant held a non-technical retail job. In general, the participants possessed occupations seemingly compatible with their interests in technology and hacking.

Unlike many populations which are characterized as criminal or deviant, the hackers in this study were relatively well educated. All of the interviewees had attended some form of higher education with the exception of one who was subsequently awarded with an honorary doctorate. Two had attended some college, 3 were in college at the time of the study, 1 had attained an associate's degree, 6 had a bachelor's degree, and 1 had a master's degree. Importantly, while many of the participants had some form of higher education, participation in these institutions is not necessary for inclusion in the hacker community. As Raj explained, "The good thing about programming is that some of the best programmers I know don't have a college degree. Some of the best hackers out there don't have a college degree."

Developmental Factors

Beyond demographic and background characteristics, the participants were also asked about aspects of their lives which may have influenced their trajectory as hackers. Developmental factors explored in this study include their educational experiences, parental relationship dynamics, as well as their temporal exposures to technology, the concept of hacking, and the hacker community.

School Experience

A number of the participants discussed their experiences in education, both in grade school and higher education. School performance spanned between average grades from a C to an A. What seemed to make a difference in the student's performance was the educational environment provided in the schools and the perceived usefulness of what was being taught. In grade school, the interviewees reported a wide range of disparate experiences. Public schools were largely associated with negative experiences such as anti-educational peer climate. "Busy work," work done to keep a student busy rather than intellectually engaged, was also cited as a problem, as Keith explained:

Essentially they gave you a large packet of work . . . The packets were largely worksheets and fill-in-the-blank problems and

things like that that were just essentially “look through the book for this keyword and fill it in.” There was nothing engaging at all about it so I didn’t bother.

In these educational settings, particularly in public schools, some of the interviewees reported feeling unengaged with the material; a lack of challenge was present. Jensen described a sense of apathy toward grade school because it was too easy which supposedly induced him to be an “under-achiever” with “high IQ versus low performance.”

Other interviewees reported more positive experiences in education, which tended to involve various private schools. These schools were thought to be more focused and more engaging. John described his experience in a Catholic high school:

There is definitely a different atmosphere in terms of what you’re responsible for and not being held to a lot of standards that are . . . And I... Having a bit more focused expectation on the kids, you know... saying, “John, you are responsible for these few things. Either you do it or you don’t do it. And that determines whether you succeed,” [and that] lends itself to a better education. And the smaller class sizes. You know your teachers.

In this explanation, John expressed a sense of satisfaction because his education had a more customized approach to learning and had smaller classes. Roger also compared his dismal public school experience with that of private school:

That was actually a fantastic experience. I was learning at a much quicker pace. Classes were smaller and more intimate. In my grade level there was about eight or nine of us. Sometimes there were a few classes that mashed up with a few people of lower grade levels so they would run up to like 13 or 15. And it was still pretty big. Teachers were very knowledgeable and we were learning... we were learning at a much more rapid rate. We were learning ahead of grade levels. I was passing classes with 90s. There was no homework. It was very... It was very efficient and very useful.

In this experience, school was more enjoyable because of the more efficient learning structures and the absence of what Keith identified as “busy work.” Overall, the education experience was considered better when the environment was perceived as engaging, challenging, and efficient.

Some of the interviewees’ experiences in higher education were also problematic. The idea of alleged uselessness of some courses was reinforced by Rick:

By that time I was already way smarter about computers than almost anybody else that was in school because very few people

actually had computers . . . So, when you go to college—you’ve been to college [gesturing toward me]—you go and they tell you, “okay, you’re a freshman. Well, everybody has to take English and History and Political Science and all of these other crappy-ass classes that nobody wants to take. Everybody has to take them.” And so I did that like my first year and suffered through a bunch of classes but I had a computer class and I aced it and was like, “this is awesome!” But you can only take one and I’m like, “what? That’s kind of fucked.”

In this experience, Rick expressed frustration with being forced to take classes he was not interested in; learning, in general, was not the objective. Rather, his desire was to learn about a specific topic of interest. Overall, the interviewees expressed appreciation for school when the environment endorsed challenging, engaged learning over topics in which they were interested. School experiences seemed to be viewed negatively if the learning was overly simplistic, unengaging, unchallenging, or perceived as irrelevant.

Parental Support and Influence

One objective of studying the background factors of hackers was to ascertain the influence and/or context the interviewees’ parents provided for their children’s development as hackers. A description of a potential relationship between parents’ occupations and the occupational pursuits of the participants is provided. Second are descriptions provided by the participants of their perceived levels of parental support for their interests in technology and/or hacking. Support, however, concerns a more direct relationship between parental actions/vocalizations and hacker interests. Despite perceived levels of support, parents may act in ways which otherwise influence hackers-in-development. As such, this study also explores participants’ descriptions of perceived parental influence as well.

Parents’ occupations

First, there seems to be a relationship between their parents’ occupations and the interests held by the participants. Twelve out of the 14 interviewees had at least one parent with some sort of technically oriented job; an equal proportion possessed some sort of white-collar job. The jobs held by their parents often involved some sort of hands-on and/or scientific orientation.

These jobs seem to have influenced the development of some of the interviewees. For example, Aidan stated a strong interest in things like robotics and hardware hacking and his father worked as a mechanic doing machine repair as well as repairs on automotive vehicles. Similarly, Russell’s father had worked on aircraft maintenance and repair while in the Marines. Russell described himself as a “builder” interested in working hands-on with hardware and such, doing some of this in his previous job working in the Navy. In the area of software, Keith and Roger both had fathers who were involved in computer programming, a domain both of them shared interests in as well.

While the relationship between an interviewee's parents' occupations and their own interests were not perfectly associated, there seems to be a link for some of the participants.

Perceived parental support

The perceived levels of support parents provided for technological development were also explored in this study. On this topic, 8 interviewees asserted that their parents were overtly supportive of their interests in learning and technology. Roger, whose father was also a member of Union Hack included in this study, explained, "I got into computers at a young age thanks to parents pushing me into it." For these participants, their parents actively supported their involvement in computers and related endeavors.

Five participants described their parents as not explicitly supporting their interests but also not discouraging them either. These parents were viewed positively because they implicitly supported their efforts to learn about technology and hacking by not interfering or simply by tolerating the behavior. Pete described how his parents encouraged him to learn, even if they did not necessarily understand what he was learning:

They've always... like, my mom has always encouraged my intelligence . . . And so she's always encouraged my music and the outlets of focus and helped me get structure. And she never really said, "don't be involved in computers." And I think she understood... she may not have understood what it is but I think she allowed for it to flourish. And my dad... you know, I used to ask a lot of questions when I was young. And my parents would do their best at answering them. So, I think, yeah... I think both of them really tried to encourage the constant effort of learning.

In this context, Pete's parents were supportive of his efforts to learn. They may not have been overtly supportive of his interest in computers due to their own lack of understanding, but they implicitly supported the behavior by providing an environment which "allowed for it to flourish."

Some parents provided both explicit and implicit support during technological development. For instance, Gilbert explained that, "at first my dad taught me how to use the computer. We had our first computer... Yeah, he taught me how to run commands from DOS and how to run things." When I inquired further about how his parents supported his involvement in computers, he elaborated that later in his childhood, "I think to some extent it was just letting me explore without... They didn't try to stop me in any way... 'he's interested in this, let him do it;'" his father helped to push him into computers but then stepped back and allowed for Gilbert's interest and curiosity to take over.

Contrary to the previously described experiences, one interviewee, Miles, asserted that his parents were unsupportive of his efforts to learn outside the classroom:

There were some complicating issues involving my family where I was... I didn't have... assistance from my parents and... In dealing with those things. And I was told, you know, basically everything was my fault so... But... I didn't really have a particularly social, supportive family.

He further chronicled his parents' perceptions of his involvement with computers, "they didn't understand it. I think that they... I think that they saw it as a word processor... and not something... not something to learn about in and of itself." Miles reported that he had to overcome his parents' resistance to computers rather than be nurtured and supported by them.

Harvey also faced opposition from his parent; while initially not disapproving, they became more unsupportive after he got in trouble for hacking. He described his parents as

specializing in staying unaware of most things at that point. And I don't think it was because they actually knew what was going on . . . I don't think they really noticed until they got calls from people who are interested in law enforcement. And then... They started to take notice and think things were bad. But I mean, you know, at that point I had been phreaking for a while and I knew how to wire up an external phone line and how to hide a modem . . . There was not much a parent could do.

He elaborated further by stating, "I would say at the end of it, my parents really wanted me to stop playing with the computer."

Perceived parental influence

Beyond supporting participants' development as hackers, either through direct encouragement or providing an environment where they were free to pursue their interests, parents can also influence the proclivities of burgeoning hackers in other ways. Such influence is buried in the implicit activities which children are particularly adept at observing. Even though 8 interviewees described their parents as openly supportive of their development, 10 indicated that their parents were at least influential. One mechanism of influence involved providing an environment which would foster interests in learning, building, and tinkering. John described learning to appreciate problem-solving and tinkering through his father:

My dad . . . putting kids through private school... is a pretty big financial drain on a single income family. And... so, my dad worked on a lot of things just to keep things going. And... he had... a pretty good approach to problem-solving. So, a lot of solving problems and kind of... MacGuyvering things came from him.

In essence, according to John, his father influenced his appreciation of problem solving and repairing.

Although Miles stated that his parents provided him with little to no support for his interests in learning and hacking, he admitted that his parents still had an influence:

My father was, you know, a reasonably intelligent guy and he had a lot of interests... You know, hunting, fishing, woodworking... you know, he could fix the lawnmower or he could... He could do shit. So, from when I was really very, very little I always had, you know, like, a little hammer and some nails and, you know, I could always make stuff.

Miles's parents were described as influencing his interests in security-related issues because his mother "was kind of afraid of everything" which supposedly encouraged a distorted fear of threats. In addition, he described that his curiosity about security may have been triggered by his parents because they "would always be in my shit." Those parental experiences allegedly triggered an interest in constructing and deconstructing security systems through hacking. Miles still claimed to have been shaped by the context his parents provided despite having an unsupportive family environment.

Parental influence, however, may not result in a positive transfer. There is the possibility that parents' interests may negatively influence the development of hackers and their interests in technology. At an early age, Susan described being exposed to computers and instruction in programming. As she left for college, however, the exposure to computers temporarily drove her away from working with them. When asked if her parents influenced her interests, she stated:

Actually [it] had the opposite effect. That's why my undergraduate degree is in psychology. So, I just had a lot of exposure to computers. All growing up they were all very easy and, for me, it was a normal part of life. And I think if you look at computer people, you see that they aren't very social and they are a little bit nerdy. And kind of like the way I rebelled against that was to pick up something that was very socially-oriented.

In this scenario, Susan described how her parents, particularly her father, influenced her interests in computers and her skills as a programmer. The problem was that this influence eventually drove her away. Although she was still relatively skilled, she chose to focus on the social components of the hacker community.

Only 2 of the interviewees asserted that their parents did not have an influence on their interests in hacking and computers. Aidan summarized this absence when asked about the influence his parents' may have had:

Not at all, really. Neither one of them are very technically savvy. Pretty much nobody in my family was really very technically savvy. So, I mean, the personal computer thing wasn't... I pretty much did all of that on my own. And it was, pretty much getting everything myself. There wasn't really interest in it in my family.

Raj described his parents' influence a similar manner, "Yeah, that was all me. They weren't pushing me to... to learn about it [computers] one way or the other." In both cases, the interviewees argued that their parents had no or little influence on their interests in technology and hacking.

Exposure to Technology, Hacking, and the Hacker Community

To help understand the background context the interview participants operated within, this study also examined three temporal milestones of interest which must occur at some point in a hacker's development which include their first exposure to computers or related electronics, to the idea of hacking; and to the broader hacker community. These periods are discussed sequentially. Since the interviewees were asked to recall the age or time period of exposure, the numbers often lack specificity. However, the results are still useful because they provide a temporal approximation.

First exposure to technology

The ages in which the interviewees reported first experiencing technology, either mechanical or computer, were generally around pre-adolescence, ranging from approximately 4 to 12 years old. For 10 of these participants, first exposure occurred at home. The experiences are often recalled with a sense of nostalgia. Aidan described his first experiences with computers centered around his father picking up a TI (Texas Instruments) machine that

took cartridges similar to Atari cartridges. It had the gold fingers on it and... you had to do everything manually through the keyboard. It plugged into a RGB video port on your TV so you could load it up on the TV and you had to basically manually do everything on there. You couldn't save but it was very similar to Atari and had all kinds of stuff. I can't remember a lot but you could pretty much do anything on that.

Similarly, Keith described his first exposure.

I was probably six or seven... somewhere in that general vicinity when I first was using a computer on my own. I remember being amazed when my father brought home his first laptop. It was one of the old ones that... brand DOS. It had the hinge in the middle of the computer where the screen was only, you know, half the depth of the computer. I know that when I was probably eight or nine we got our first upgrade for that computer, where I think his job actually furnished a new computer for us. I would

up taking the old one apart [laughs] and getting into a rather large amount of trouble for doing so.

One participant, Miles, described his first experience occurring in school when he was in kindergarten. Directly tying the relationship between class and exposure to technology, he describes his first exposure.

By a series of coincidences combined with [the] social strata of my classmates... we had probably the first computer lab in the city. And we started out with crap like MasterType and MathBlaster on the original Apple II, I think, even before the 2e and 2+ came out.

Harvey stated that his introduction to computers occurred around the age of 6 through some friends in his neighborhood, "I knew a number of people who had Apple IIs... and, before that, there were things like Kaypros and a number of those older CPM machines because we were in a neighborhood with a lot of engineers." In this case, his associations with friends with parents in technology-dependent occupations initiated him to computers.

Related to the importance of parental occupations, like those described by Harvey and Keith, Rick remembered going to his father's place of employment and watching a massive computer at work.

So, he brought me down there to watch with this punch card thing to put it in the things. They gave it to the monkeys behind the glass [the computer engineers] who ran it and we sat and waited for... at the time it was a form of early daisy wheel printer but it, you know, was this spinning disk with all the letters on the outside and it when "bahp, bahp, bahp, bahp, bahp, bahp, bahp" [printer sounds] and I watched that for an hour and thought it was the coolest thing ever.

In this case, Rick describes being fascinated with the computer and told about his first hands-on experience occurring in a school setting.

But my first experience *using* [emphasis added] a computer was actually in elementary school where they actually brought a teletype terminal and clunked it down in the middle of the classroom. It was the, I guess it must've been fifth grade, it was the special day for people to come in and tell you about stuff when you are going to grow up and kind of things, and somebody came in to tell us about this computer. So, we played *Adventure on the Teletype*, the Crowley and Woods original.

Video games seemed to play a key role in some of the participants' first experiences with computers (see also: Holt, 2010a). Rick described playing *Adventure on the Teletype*. Miles's first experiences involved educational games. Aidan recalled his experiences using the old Atari 2600, a gaming console, among some of his earliest memories involving computers. John

described his first exposure involving his father's Commodore 64 and the game *Haunted Hill*. While Harvey was never a big gamer, he communicated the importance that video games hold in triggering interest for a number of hackers, "I think video games got us, a lot of us, into it because that was how you started learning to write your own code and how to de-protect it." Many video games involve the use of various copy protection methods. Early introductions into hacking activities, for some, emerged from learning circumvention techniques for these measures (see also: Downing, 2011).

Most of the introductions to computing technology occurred at an early age for the participants, during their pre-adolescence, which is similar to the findings of Holt (2010a). Young children are often particularly curious and more easily fascinated. To develop as a hacker, it may be important to harness childhood fascination, parental support, and surplus time at an early age to foster the competencies necessary to be successful as a hacker later in life.

First exposure to hacking

For most of the interview participants, their introduction to the idea of hacking came after their first experiences with computers ($n = 8$). Three of the participants' initiations to computing and their exposure to idea of hacking were so close together that the temporal configuration is difficult to delineate. One participant was uncertain of when he first heard the term so temporal ordering could not be established. For interviewees who did recall when they were first introduced to the idea of hacking, 8 stated the experience occurred around adolescence (approximately 12-16 years old), 4 stated pre-adolescence (before 12 years of age), and 1 older participant claimed post-adolescence (college).

In addition to time frame of exposure, 8 of the interviewees also discussed *how* they came across the term *hacking* (the others were uncertain). For some, their introduction to hacking, as a formal concept, emerged from their social connections ($n = 3$). Harvey described creating war dialers and then being told that the activity was considered hacking. "But anyway, we were writing this little war dialer to dial all night long and return numbers... interesting numbers to us. And I remember being told that was hacking." Here, being in a social setting along with other people who had similar interests is what introduced him to the idea of hacking. Harvey was actually engaging in hacker-like behaviors before he realized that this was hacking. Most of the other interviewees fell into similar temporal ordering.

Some participants came across the idea of hackers through media ($n = 4$). Russell described hearing the term while seeing the movie on a date.

I've always been interested in how things worked but I remember seeing... seeing the cheesy movie "Hackers" in the theater . . . And I remember going to see that and I was like, "I never thought of making machines do something that they

weren't supposed to do." And I do remember that it was kind of pivotal like, "there is a hacker subculture . . . that are all about computers." And I was like, "I got to look more into that." And so that is kind of my... the movie "Hackers" actually had an influence on me [laughs].

In this scenario, Russell, like Harvey, was already doing many things some would consider to be in the realm of hacking. He became more familiar with the term and grew interested in pursuing the hacker culture as a result of his exposure to a movie. For some, the 1983 movie *War Games* was their introduction to hacking, a similar experience for other hackers, as Coleman (2012) describes:

Apparently the movie appeals to a slew of nerdy types across Europe, Latin America, and the United States, leading them to incessantly demand from their parents a PC and modem, which once they got, commanded their attention while they were logged on for hours on Bulletin Board Systems (BBSes). (pp. 105-106).

Media constructs simultaneously arose from the hacking community as well as engendered further growth and popularity of hacking recursively.

Unlike the previously discussed cases, Danny described first coming across the hacker community through exploration on the Internet:

I've been poking around in them [computers] since I was maybe ten or eleven but I didn't really find out what I was doing, or even really what "hacking" was, until about seventh grade. That was when I started reading "The Happy Hacker" website by Carolyn Meyer.... After that, I eventually moved on to textfiles.org and from there to Phrack, Union Hack, and HackThisSite, and from there to where I'm at now.

In this case, his introduction was through hacker-created content delivered through the Internet such as The Happy Hacker, a website specifically dedicated to providing a safe place for fledgling hackers to build their skills.

First exposure to hacker community

For almost all of the interviewees, their introduction to the hacker community occurred after their first experiences with computers and the idea of hacking. Eight were first introduced through in-person hacker groups. Of these participants, 3 were introduced through Union Hack specifically. Another 6 had their first experiences electronically, either on the Internet or through early BBSs. The majority of these interviewees came across the community around adolescence ($n = 8$). The remainder were exposed around college or sometime in their mid-20s ($n = 6$).

As previously stated, some of the interviewees were introduced to the hacker community through electronic means such as BBSs and online forums. Miles described his first experience with the community through BBSs:

I think that was about the time I got my first modem and started dialing into BBSs. And at that point, now I had... people, you know, somewhat that I could communicate with. And that's actually, you know, where I met some of my best friends.

His experience with groups which met face-to-face came later. As BBSs became less common and the World Wide Web became prominent, more hackers found the community through the Internet, such as through online forums. As Aidan elaborated in response to being asked about his first experience with the hacker community,

the hacking community... was online forums. It was after the BBS days. There wasn't... BBSs weren't a big thing but it was starting to get more geared towards forum based stuff so... I was involved in several of those.

In these cases, the subjects were already familiar with the idea of hacking but became involved in the hacker community through electronic means. An overt physical hacker community was not readily apparent and, as such, using telecommunications to connect to others with similar interests were used. Unlike the other participants, Danny's introduction to the hacking community co-occurred with his first experience with the idea of hacking.

Some persons, however, were introduced to face-to-face hacker groups as their first exposures to the community. Susan described being taken to her first Union Hack meeting in college, where she took up a psychology/neuroscience major to break away from computers initially.

I think it was probably... It probably wasn't until college when someone brought me to a Union Hack meeting... It was a bunch of people hanging out in [location omitted] talking about the... I mean, a lot of it was nostalgia and stuff people had done on BBSs and that was kind of my coming up to speed with it. Just people talking about different things they did. I think as I started going to more and more meetings there were actually people who are very active.

Similarly, Gilbert described his first experience with a hacker group (his introduction to the community), "I guess I would say my first serious involvement with what I consider the hacker community would be... Wouldn't be until college when I joined a [programming group]. So that was in-person." John had his first exposure through a hacker-zine which then led him to a Union Hack group meeting. In all of these cases, the authors were introduced to a face-to-face group after they were already personally interested (or at least skilled) in computers and were already familiar with the idea of hacking.

DISCUSSION

In this study, multiple background and developmental factors in the lives of the participants were explored in order. On one hand, this study sought to reevaluate demographic and developmental features which had been explored in previous analyses (Bachmann, 2010; Holt, 2009; Holt, 2010a; Schell et al., 2002; Schell & Holt, 2010; Taylor, 1999; Turkle, 1984). In this regard, this study's findings echo previous analyses. On the other hand, this study also sought to investigate features which had not previously received tremendous attention including (1) class dynamics, (2) parental support/influence, and (3) introductions to the idea of hacking and the hacker community. These dynamics convey a broader developmental context than had previously been explored.

Regarding demographics, age was found to vary, ranging from 23 to 61 with an average in the mid 30s, mirroring previous analyses (Bachmann, 2010; Schell et al., 2002). Similarly, the current analysis reinforces previous findings of a prominent gender disparity throughout the hacker community (Bachmann, 2010; Jordan & Taylor, 2004; Schell et al., 2002; Taylor, 1999; Turkle, 1984). Most of the participants were White as well, pointing toward the larger race disparities throughout the community (Bachmann, 2010; Schell et al., 2002; Schell & Melnychuk, 2010; Söderberg, 2008; Taylor, 1999). Additionally, most of the participants in this study considered themselves to be middle-class and were employed legitimately in technological occupations.⁵ The majority had higher education degrees or were working toward them (see also: Bachmann, 2010; Schell et al., 2002). Notable demographic imbalances exist in the data and seemingly throughout the hacker community, particularly along gender, race, and socio-economic class lines. Drawing from previous literature and other supporting evidence, this analysis offers potential explanations for these gaps.

Concerning gender, Taylor (1999) commented on the relationship between hacking and gender and offers possible reasons for the gender disparity noted in his study and in the current analysis. As he noted, there are three potential reasons for this gap. One is a societal factor such as training children into gender roles which tend to favor technical development as a masculine endeavor. Another is that the masculine (and sometimes misogynist) environment of hacker culture may deter women from participating. The final reason, related to the previous, involves the often masculine, technical, and coded language used by men in the hacker community and STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) areas which may act as exclusionary toward women. As a result of these factors identified by Taylor (1999), women may be steered away from participation in hacker culture.

The latter two dimensions discussed by Taylor (1999) parallel Turkle's (1984) discussion of hacking that involves a culture of computational masculinity which is dominated by young men. Such a culture is described as

concerned with various levels of technological and relational control. Similarly, Jordan and Taylor (2004) summarized the issue; “While it would be misleading to brand all hackers sexist, there is no denying the competitive, masculine nature of the hacking community” (p. 117). Women may therefore be dissuaded from participation, though participant observation indicates that presence and acceptance of women may have changed (at least slightly) in the hacker community since these previous studies (Jordan and Taylor, 2004; Taylor, 1999; Turkle 1984). Further research is needed to probe gender in the hacking community, with a particular eye toward gender role socialization explanations generally (Schell & Holt, 2010).

The majority of hackers in this study were found to be White, a finding similarly reflected in previous research (Bachmann, 2010). While research on potential reasons for this disparity in the hacking community is lacking, research on racial/ethnic underrepresentation in STEM fields may provide insights, since the similarities between the two areas are notable. While the gap is closing, there is a prominent underrepresentation of minorities, particularly African Americans and Hispanics, in STEM areas (National Science Foundation, 2013). Reasons for this underrepresentation “are complex and exist at several levels (individual, family, the educational system, the workplace, and in society at large)” (Burke & Mattis, 2007, pp. x-xi). Various environmental, institutional, and/or structural barriers exist which obstruct racial minority participation; similar obstacles may exist for membership in the hacker community. Future research should investigate this issue in greater depth.

For socio-economic class, all of the participants in this analysis self-identified as middle class; Söderberg (2008) stated, “[a] quick glance is all it takes to confirm that the social base of the hacker movement is heavily skewed towards middle-class males living in the West” (p. 28). While the cost of technology is declining over time, access to computer hardware, particularly during the period most of these participants were children or adolescents, is often costly and out of reach for many without some sort of surplus finances. For example, some of the participants in their late 30s and older grew up when few households had access to computers compared to today. The Apple II was one of the first personal computers some of the older participants had access to. This computer was approximately \$1,200 dollars (for a bare-bones model) in 1977 and was one of the first home computers to gain even a modicum of popularity. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics inflation calculator, a \$1,200 computer in 1977 would cost approximately \$4,631.23 today. This estimate does not account for the cost of any additional hardware, software, or any other devices necessary for learning. In short, there seems to be a cost barrier to entry for hacking.

There are certainly members of the hacker community who circumvent these barriers and find ways to access technology; the origins of the hacker community at MIT involved instances of early hackers finding ways to access

the enormously expensive computers available at the time (Levy, 1984). Additionally, some hackers engage in scrounging or dumpster diving to acquire parts. Regardless, because it is easier for a person from a middle-class background to access technology, hacking appears to be a predominantly middle-class phenomenon, at least in the United States.

Beyond demographic characteristics of hackers, this study also examined developmental factors which may have helped influence interviewees' participation in hacking. The results of school experience data show that hackers seem to fare better in educational environments that challenge and promote specialized learning in areas of their interest. Additionally, efficiency seemed to be valued in education; work which did not directly contribute to learning (i.e., busy work) was frowned upon. While hackers generally tended to express a preference for private schools over public, this is a result of the particular educational environment these schools were seen to provide rather than any particular aversion to government-sponsored education generally.

Data on parents were also explored as a potential influential factor in development as hackers. Participants' parents generally held technological occupations. This finding indicates that parents may share and/or transmit proclivities toward technology. At the very least, such occupational preference may have demonstrated to participants that work with technology was a viable life choice. Parents' occupations also further solidify the connection between hackers and middle class status. Most parents often held traditional middle class occupations which would provide the funds to afford technology.

Additionally, the participants' accounts of parental support and influence point to an environment that, for most, fostered the interest and autonomy to engage technology made available to them. Generally parents appeared to support the participants' engagement with technology or, at a minimum, did not obstruct their engagement. Even if support was not provided, many hackers reported parents at least influencing their interests and development in various ways. Overall, while measuring the magnitude of any sort of effect parents may have had on participants, there seems to be a relationship which, for most, nurtured their development and interests.

Finally, participants were asked about their introductions to computing (or related) technology, the idea of hacking, and the hacker community. The hackers in this study reported first exposures to technology at an early age, usually pre-adolescence (see also: Holt, 2010a; Schell et al., 2002). Such exposure seems to correlate with socio-economic class positioning; middle-class families are ones more likely to possess excess funds in which to buy high technology equipment and thus provide access for children.⁶ The participants' introduction to the idea of hacking usually followed after their first experiences with computing technology, often occurring during adolescence.

Introductions to the hacking community were mostly cited occurring during or immediately following adolescence. These results indicate that, generally speaking, there seems to be a temporal ordering for exposure and development that begins at an early age. Interest in technology comes first, and then, during adolescence, a person drifts toward hacking as a behavioral and cultural outlet. Once the hacker subscribes to the notion of hacking, participation in the community may follow; some associate with other hackers before self-identification as a such (which seems to occur in tandem with exposure to the idea of hacking). Previous research has similarly indicated that hacker development is heavily linked to social relations; despite popular beliefs about hackers being anti-social loners, many hackers share friendship/peer networks that include other hackers (Holt, 2009; Holt, 2010a; Holt et al., 2012).

CONCLUSION

This analysis serves to qualitatively investigate background factors in the lives of hackers, expanding previous research (Bachmann, 2010; Holt, 2010a). Understanding the contexts from which hackers emerge is valuable because such people do not emerge from nowhere, ready to code and/or crack. Studies that attempt to explain hacker behaviors which do not account for their backgrounds and history may fail to consider important variables and, thus, come to problematic or even erroneous conclusions. Demographic and developmental characteristics may be worth investigating in future analyses to provide a foundation for explanatory frameworks necessary to fully understand hacking as both an individual level and cultural phenomenon.

The examination of background factors also offers theoretical insights and potential avenues for further theoretical analysis. For instance, the early development of hacking interests and associated behaviors may lead to implications from a life course criminology perspective (Laub & Sampson, 1993; Sampson & Laub, 1992). While the sample is limited, the results indicate that hacking is an activity and mindset which begins at an early age and is reinforced by various life events, each one seeming to further pull individuals into the hacking community. The current study demonstrates that such events and their order seem to matter in the development of hackers.

The research also notes that peer relationships are sometimes significant; some participants discussed learning to hack and being exposed to the hacker community through peer networks. As such, social learning theory may be a viable perspective (Burgess & Akers, 1966) and has already been explored as a potential explanatory apparatus for hacking-related behaviors (e.g., Marcum et al., 2014). Considering the early age in which hacker proclivities seem to develop, however, the birds of a feather hypothesis may also be viable, thus making developmental criminological perspectives worth pursuing.

The seeming importance of class also indicates that studying hacking from a political economic perspective is viable. Previous analyses have already begun exploring the political economy of hacking, particularly from a Marxist framework (Dafermos & Söderberg, 2009; Söderberg, 2008; Wark, 2004). This study gave greater focus to the immediate social milieu surroundings hackers—parents, school, etc.—but future analyses might consider the macro-structural context surrounding hacking as well in light of the seeming importance of social class.

To conclude, several limitations confronting this study need to be elucidated. First, this study was faced with a small sample size for the interview data. In depth field research is often plagued with this limitation; however, the depth of data obtained may offset this problem. Additionally, the demographic characteristics and some of the other factors explored in this study parallel previous research on hackers (Bachmann, 2010; Holt, 2010a). The ages of the hackers when they were first introduced to the subject and the dates used in the data may be unreliable, because subjects were asked to recall these instances from their pasts. That said, the discussions provided in this analysis do not attempt to make assertions beyond what the limitations permit, and the recollections were reliable enough to allow for the general examinations which occurred in this study. This study was additionally limited in the ways that ethnographic field research is commonly afflicted, and thus these limitations were not explained here further.

Despite the limitations present, this research indicates that background and developmental factors deserve further exploration to further refine our understandings of the creation and upbringing of hackers. The analysis demonstrates that hackers are not ahistorical beings. Rather, they emerge from a context and develop along a trajectory toward hacking. As such, researcher would be wise to pay heed to these (and other) factors when examining the development of the hacker. This area of research is still in its relative infancy in criminal justice and criminology. The current study is one more step forward along the path to creating a theoretically (and hopefully practical) useful body of knowledge on hackers and related populations.

ENDNOTES

1. The term “technocrime”, borrowed from Leman-Langlois (2013), is adopted here instead of “cybercrime” to avoid the litany of symbolic and ideological baggage such a term carries.
2. DEF CON is the largest hacker convention in the world. Starting in 1993, the convention is held annually in Las Vegas and serves as a social epicenter for many in the hacker community. While many participants emphasize security hacking, hackers from all over the hacking continuum participate including hardware hackers, free and open source software programmers, and others.

3. Quotes are presented throughout the study from interview data. Unspaced ellipses (“...”) are used to denote significant pauses in speech to preserve the phonetic qualities of the participants’ discussions. Spaced ellipses (“ . . . ”) are used to denote parts of quotes which have been removed for concision.
4. In this study, the term gender is used to note the socially constructed nature of masculinity and femininity. That said, it appears as if Western gender categories and dualistic sex categories correlate perfectly in this study. As such, an argument could be made that sex or gender could be used interchangeably. This study, however, assumes differences in the hacker community are more likely associated with explanations oriented around gender rather than sex and, as such, adopts the former nomenclature.
5. Schell, Dodge, & Moutsatsos (2002) similarly found income levels and occupational statuses among survey respondents indicating middle class statuses as predominant throughout the hacker community.
6. Holt (2010a) has similarly discussed how hacker development hinges on access to technology.

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“Were You Drunk at the Time?”: The Influence of Parole Boards on Accounts and Neutralization Techniques in State Parole Hearings

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the collaborative nature of accounts and neutralization techniques that are employed in parole hearings. Prior research using neutralization theory has largely overlooked the role of other actors in the development of neutralizations, examining them through interviews or narratives where interaction is either scripted or limited and thus has little bearing on the production of such accounts. In contrast, this study evaluates real time interaction, examining how parole board members propose, respond to, and modify neutralizations issued by inmates seeking parole. Ethnographic observations of 438 regular parole and parole revocation hearings, videotapes of 40 such hearings from the larger corpus, and interviews with a state parole board demonstrate how accounts are shaped by interactions that may influence social control decision making and criminal justice outcomes.

INTRODUCTION

Individuals seeking parole have a limited amount of time in front of the parole board to build a case for early release. In one form, their appeals represent accounts (Scott & Lyman, 1968) or statements of neutralization (Sykes & Matza, 1957) that they anticipate will protect themselves from self-blame, guilt, and the blame of others. A great deal of what we know about neutralization techniques has been learned through interviews or surveys and questionnaires of active criminals, incarcerated criminals, former criminals, and other deviant groups. Yet, many neutralizations are not simple statements, but rather constructions built through interpersonal exchanges.

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Prior research has largely ignored the collaborative nature of neutralizing behavior, viewing it as either a unilateral assertion by the deviant actor prior to the commission of deviance, or, in more recent research, as a retrospectively invoked rationalization to mitigate the offense. As a result, very little is known about how neutralization techniques function interactively, especially with regard to exchanges that involve power differentials that can influence criminal justice outcomes. Indeed, according to Sykes and Matza's (1957) original conception of neutralizations, they were "justifications for deviance that are seen as valid by the delinquent but not by the legal system or society at large" (p. 666).

This paper examines accountable motives and neutralizations by inmates that exist as collaborative efforts. Even when the statements are made summarily, they exist in a context that allows for ratification, denial, or modification by another interested party, namely the parole board. Inmates routinely ascribe accounts and neutralization strategies to their behaviors as a means of diminishing personal blame during parole hearings, and in doing so, deny a need for their own rehabilitation and offer a justification for release. Parole board members also provide candidate accounts for the potential parolees. This work illustrates how parole hearings, much like the drug court proceedings analyzed by Burns and Peyrot (2003), take the form of negotiations.

The larger implications of this research can be partially linked to social control decision making in the criminal justice process and the continuation of deviance. Potential parolees present evidence and engage in excuse making and remedial work (Goffman, 1971), which attempts to change the meaning of their behavior, thereby convincing the board members that they are deserving of parole release. Although parole hearings in the United States are not nearly as adversarial as criminal trials in which legal representation and the provision of a defense are encouraged, some of the questions that state parole boards ask are accusatory in nature. In addition, because the board itself determines release decisions, the types of questions that parole board members ask can transform the meaning of inmates' acts. Although board members themselves espouse beliefs that support the presentation of a rehabilitated identity on the part of parole applicants, they also offer, ratify, and comment on accounting strategies. Furthermore, as Maruna and Copes (2005) proposed, parole applicants who accept these neutralizations and have them endorsed by the board may be contributing to their own long term or persistent deviance. Thus, understanding how accounts are collaboratively constructed in a context in which decisions to release offenders are made, is of particular import to the field of criminology.

THEORETICAL BACKDROP

C. Wright Mills (1940) used the term "vocabulary of motive" to describe the way in which individuals recast their deviant actions in a way that is so-

cially acceptable. As opposed to an internal process, these motives are powerful because they are linguistic and possess the unique potential to influence the perceptions of others. Weber (1947) noted that motives themselves are an amalgamation of meanings understood by the actors and observers who are given the referent action and can provide a sufficient explanation for a social action in question. Individuals with a spoiled identity, stigmatized and barred from social acceptance, face challenges in reframing their identity (Goffman, 1963). When confronted by normals, those who bear no stigma, those with spoiled identities are forced to renegotiate their accountable actions. In order for an actor to be successful at overcoming a spoiled identity, the audience must honor the proposed account. This is even more apparent in parole hearings, where attempts to establish identity are overtly contested as part of the hearing process. Moreover, there is a significant amount at stake for parole petitioners. The difference in participant status in the hearing may place individuals seeking parole at a distinct disadvantage, as they vie to have their version of accounts accepted by those who hold the key to their freedom.

Building on the concept of vocabularies of motive, Scott and Lyman (1968) proposed the concept of accounts to refer to “linguistic device[s] employed whenever an action is subjected to evaluative inquiry” (p. 46). These accounts have the capacity to bridge the gap between what is expected and what actually transpires. Furthermore, according to Scott and Lyman (1968), they are situated; accounts that are offered to explain behavior are presented in an environment where they are interactionally relevant, linked to social status, and culturally rooted. When confronted or accused of an action, individual actors can deploy two types of accounts: excuses and justifications. Justifications involve a denial of the wrongness of an act, and yet responsibility is acknowledged. However, excuses involve a denial of responsibility and an acceptance of the wrongness of an act (Scott & Lyman, 1968). When faced with moral judgments, excuses and justifications attempt to salvage a spoiled identity. In all of these cases, motives can be rejected, questioned, altered, or proposed by other parties to an interaction—parties who may possess more power over the issuer of the account. Characteristics like gender and social status influence the form and content of rhetorical strategies, such that the symbol banks differ and means and methods of constructing accounts differ sharply (Hazani, 1991; Klenowski, Copes, & Mullins, 2011).

Sykes and Matza’s (1957) neutralization theory further explains how these discursive techniques provide the means to rationalize deviant behavior in such a way that limits guilt and self-blame and minimizes both negative attributions (Agnew, 1994) and stigma (Hathaway, 2004). Frequently conceived of as a psychological process, rhetorical skill and linguistic devices are used by individuals to deploy techniques of neutralization. In Sykes and Matza’s original formulation, the techniques precede the behavior itself, allowing individuals to engage in crime and deviance through the process of neutral-

ization and continue after the act concludes. That is, because deviants held conventional values and belief systems along with societal attachments, in order to engage in deviance, they needed to neutralize (Copes, 2003; Cressey, 1953). Sykes and Matza (1957) explained how deviants cognitively alter their behavior so that neither their conscience nor their self-image is damaged by their actions. In cognitive psychology, Bandura (1990) highlighted the concept of "moral disengagement" to refer to the process whereby individuals reframe conduct, reduce personal agency, ignore negative consequences, or degrade the victim to avoid self-condemnation. However, neutralizations and moral engagement appear to extend beyond internal processes and even the commission of the deviant or criminal act, especially in light of criminal justice processes that potentially solicit at least candidate explanations, if not outright neutralizations from individuals after the act.

Sykes and Matza maintained that neutralization occurred prior to deviance, allowing individuals to engage in deviance. In this context, techniques of neutralization are important because they allow individuals to drift between criminogenic and law abiding behaviors (Matza, 1964). Yet, other researchers contend that neutralization occurs more frequently after a deviant act as a retrospective rationalization (Byers, Crider, & Biggers, 1999; Fritsche, 2002; Hirschi, 1969; Minor, 1984), with others contending that they co-occur with the deviant behavior. Notwithstanding the voluminous research in regard to neutralization theory, the testability of temporal ordering has proven problematic and remains much debated in contemporary criminology. Although this debate has important implications for understanding an individual's entry into delinquency and crime, the timing has little impact on our analysis or interpretation because this research examines the collaborative nature of neutralization and accounts in parole hearings, which by definition occur after a crime or alleged parole violation has occurred.

Included in Sykes and Matza's initial formulation are five neutralization techniques, including denial of the victim, denial of responsibility, denial of injury, condemnation of condemners, and appeal to higher loyalties. To neutralize their criminal misconduct, offenders make a variety of claims seeking to minimize blameworthiness; however, they may invoke multiple techniques as well. The first three techniques involve claims that sidestep the worthiness of the victim, intentionality of the act, or the harm perpetrated. In contrast, the last two techniques allow delinquents to question the character of those who judge them or identify more soundly with a distinct moral code; this eliminates the need for them to consider the wrongness of their own actions. Neutralization techniques and the perspective more generally have been applied to a wide-ranging set of deviant behaviors committed by youth and adults. Researchers have examined the use of neutralizations among violent inmates (Agnew, 1994; Presser, 2003; Presser, 2004); rapists (Scully & Marolla, 1984a; Scully & Marolla, 1984b); pedophiles (DeYoung, 1989; Long, 2011); spousal abusers (Cavanagh, Dobash, Dobash, & Lewis,

2001; Totten, 2003; Wolf-Smith & LaRossa, 1992); hit men (Levi, 1981); hate crime offenders (Byers et al., 1999); white collar criminals (Benson, 1984; Geis & Meier, 1977; Klenowski et al., 2011; Piquero, Tibbetts, & Blankenship, 2005); embezzlers (Nettler, 1974; Zeitz, 1981); legal professionals (Erez & Laster, 1999); drug users (Burns & Peyrot, 2003; Hathaway, 2004; Priest & McGrath, 1970); shoplifters (Cromwell & Thurman, 2003); poachers (Eliason & Dodder, 2001); car thieves (Hazani, 1991); cheaters (Diekhoff et al., 1996); undercover officers (Jacobs, 1993); hospital nurses (Dabney, 1995); and even pageant moms (Heltsley & Calhoun, 2003).

In the last fifty years, at least seven other neutralization techniques have been identified, including justification by comparison and postponement (Cromwell & Thurman, 2003); metaphor of the ledger (Minor, 1981); defense of necessity (Klockars, 1974); claim to entitlement, denial of necessity of the law, and the claim that everybody else is doing it (Coleman, 1994). All of these techniques of neutralization involve socially approved “vocabularies of motive” (Mills, 1940) or excuses, justifications, and accounts (Scott & Lyman, 1968) that provide rational explanations for seemingly irrational behaviors. The neutralization framework has become a staple in deviance research, garnering attention with the discovery of each new technique that actors use to mitigate blame and deny responsibility.

While the enumeration of new techniques of neutralization helps specify Sykes and Matza’s original formulation, it does not explain how they function in real interaction, why they are of consequence, and how they are impacted by other factors such as setting and power. Certainly, the setting in which neutralizations are articulated also has an impact on how they are accepted, rejected, or altered and, in turn, how they influence decision making. Social control decision making, situated within the context of the criminal justice system, fundamentally alters how accounts and neutralization techniques evolve as explanations of deviant and criminal behavior, especially when that system promotes the acceptance of responsibility for individuals’ actions (Fox, 1999). It is precisely this interactive aspect of the phenomenon that this paper seeks to explore.

DATA AND METHODS

Method

The first author observed the Midwestern state’s¹ parole board for over six months. At the beginning and end of the study period, open-ended qualitative interviews were conducted with parole board members; 14 additional impromptu interviews were also conducted with each of the board members during the study period. These informed the analysis and provided background that may explain the behavior of the board members during the hearings. The first author observed 438 regular parole and parole revocation hearings conducted at various penal institutions throughout the state,

as well as public hearings at the local government center where individuals could speak in support or opposition of the potential parolee.

Forty videotaped hearing records were randomly selected from the initial set of 438 hearings attended for in-depth analysis because they could be transcribed and subjected to repeated analysis; they were transcribed verbatim, using a modified set of conversation analytic transcribing conventions (Jefferson, Sacks, & Schegloff, 1987). The decision to transcribe only 40 hearings was primarily a practical one because the transcription of the tapes was labor intensive. In the data, inmates and parole violators are identified by pseudonyms which were abbreviated in the speakership portion of the transcript.²

Sample

Of the 40 parole hearings, 25 involved parole revocations and 15 were regular parole cases. The majority of parole revocation hearings involved technical or routine violations of parole.³ Regular parole hearings centered on two types of inmates, those whose parole had been previously violated and were now eligible for discretionary release, and old code⁴ inmates who had remain incarcerated for serious violent crimes including homicide, rape, robbery, kidnapping, or assault.

Table 1. Offender Demographics

	Male	Female	Total
African American	15 (37.5%)	2 (5%)	17 (42.5%)
White	22 (55%)	1 (2.5%)	23 (57.5%)
Total	37 (92.5%)	3 (7.5%)	40 (100%)

Note: No information was available on the ethnic composition of the sample of hearings.

In the data corpus, 3 of the offenders were female and 37 were male. Though the sample of female offenders was small, it is representative of the state prison population, given that female offenders accounted for only 5% of all state prison inmates nationally. Of the female offenders, 1 was White and 2 were African American; 15 of the males were African American and 22 were White. In all, 42.5% of the offenders in the sample were African American, which is slightly over-representative of the actual 39.3% African American prison population in the state where the parole board met; when compared to state prison populations on a national level, this figure is under-representative. Moreover, 30 % of the offenders in the data corpus had achieved some level of post high school/collegiate education, whether in standard educational institutions or inside the prison via correspondence courses.

The Setting: State Parole Hearings

At the state level, the parole system in the United States varies widely. In the state under investigation, one centralized parole board travels across the state to individual penal institutions or conducts facility hearings with inmates via videoconferencing. This is the offender's opportunity to petition the board for early release. A separate public hearing is also held to allow community members to oppose/support the release of an offender. In this Midwestern state, the parole board consists of five members, with three members representing the political affiliation of the governor.⁵ Members of the board serve four-year terms. A simple majority vote determines release decisions. Although there are no specific release criteria, the state provides four factors for consideration in the denial of parole including the nature and circumstances of the crime; conduct while incarcerated; prior criminal history; and the best interest of society. These rationales are included on the official parole decision paperwork, where board members simply check the appropriate boxes. Frequently, board members retroactively impose the criteria by mapping them on to their decisions as a means of justifying assessments that were based on factors not included in the official directive.

Despite the high volume of cases heard by the board, discretionary parole was abolished in the state in the late 1970s. Yet, even in a state that has technically abolished parole, parole hearings matter, and for many offenders, the board itself decides when release is appropriate as opposed to mandatory release after a proportion of the sentence has been served. For every offender who violates his/her mandatory parole release, that case becomes fully discretionary and thus subject to parole board decision making. For those who violate parole, their recommitment to the institution or rerelease is dependent on the parole board. When these cases are combined with old code offenders—those sentenced prior to the abolition of parole—the resulting population is significant in size. Understanding the interaction that occurs within the context of parole hearings and how inmates and board members collaborate to produce accounts and ultimately influence outcomes is critical to the understanding of our justice system more broadly.

Parole hearings themselves are largely unscripted. Parole board members read case files prior to the hearing and routinely make informal notes about specific aspects of the case that deserve inquiry. However, they do not agree on a script or a line of questioning backstage, as researchers found is the case in juvenile parole revocation hearings (Cavender & Knepper, 1992). Rather, the types of questions that emerge depend on the case building strategy of the parole applicants. The hearings themselves range from mere minutes to over an hour. Each hearing opens with a reading of the initial charges, the parole violation (if it is a hearing to revoke parole), and an open-ended prompt that usually gives the parole applicant an opportunity to discuss any topics they believe are important to the case at hand. The board maintains the discretion to ask questions about any element of a parole petitioner's life

it deems relevant to their work. Unlike the hearings, which are taped, the board deliberates privately, the petitioner returns, and the board gives its decision. For most individuals who violate parole or other discretionary cases, the board members will wait twelve months to see the petitioner again for another hearing, although they may opt to see the applicant earlier if they are so inclined. For some old code offenders, the board may elect to wait five years before the next hearing.

All of the regular parole and parole revocation hearings are conducted either in the institution or via a video conferencing system. Technical violations, including failure to maintain a residence, gainful employment, and a verifiable address are among the most frequent causes for parole violation, with no new criminal charges being issued. In these situations, board members typically issue an order to appear instead of immediately bringing the parolee in to custody and remanding to the institution to await their revocation hearing. For more serious violations, especially for those offenders who have new pending charges, the parolees are rearrested and await their parole violation hearing at the institution. Parole revocation hearings are conducted separately from any criminal hearing or plea-bargaining related to a new charge; evidence that an inmate had engaged in criminal conduct, even in situations where the charges are eventually dropped, is sufficient cause for issuing a parole violation warrant and for the revocation of parole. Drug use/sales and weapons related charges are the most common offenses for the subset of inmates with new criminal charges.

Ethnographer's Role in the Hearing

The first author's role in the parole hearings was minimal. Because she did not conduct interviews with the inmates themselves, they were not informed of her status as a researcher, nor was she introduced at the hearings. Parole hearings are open to the public and as a result, the parole board decided it would be better to conceal her identity. Therefore, she sat with the parole board, appearing to serve some official purpose, as inmates told their stories and sometimes directed their comments to her as if she were a board member. After spending over six months traveling to various prisons throughout the state, the first author became somewhat of a fixture with the parole board, tagging along to locations where security screeners and correctional officers routinely knew her; however, she had no input at any time during the hearings. It was in this minimal sense that the first author was a participant in the setting, although her role was more in appearance to the inmates than actual effect (Adler & Adler, 1987). Field notes were taken temporally, using a comprehensive strategy rather than limiting the observations to conduct believed to be salient (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 1995). This strategy allowed the first author to return to the notes each evening and make additional notes and observations. The videotaping of the hearings was also minimally intrusive, since all hearings were already videotaped by the parole board as public records. Most parole applicants were familiar

with the videotaping and understood that it was required by law. The parole board, however, recycles the public record tapes, recorded on a VCR and stored in a central location, and tapes over them every three years.

Analytical Approach

A grounded theory approach was used to analyze the videotaped interactions, ethnographic field notes, and in depth interviews (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The field notes offered a wealth of information on the ways in which hearings were conducted and were also invaluable in terms of analyzing what was said during the deliberation portion of the hearing, which is not taped. Ethnographic field notes also revealed core organizational features of the setting, the parole board's orientation toward certain types of offenders, and how hearings are accomplished "for all practical purposes."

Guided by the process of analytic induction, the videotaped data, which is the bulk of the data analyzed here, were examined for emerging themes and common strategies that inmates adopted throughout the hearings; close attention was paid to parole board members' contributions and responses, as well as the case outcome. Initial analysis of the transcripts focused on open coding (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998), identifying all of the types of statements that parole petitioners made to the board, the content of the claims, and the board's reception to the claims. The resulting categories were checked against field notes to see if additional phenomena were present but not represented in the videotaped data. Following the open coding, a method of constant comparison allowed for the collapsing of many of the analytical categories into more general groupings, although still unrefined (Scott, 2004). Reflective coding or axial coding and a conditional relationship matrix helped sort the instances of parole petitioner claims and the types of questions the board asked. Using this matrix, we identified the who, what, where, when, why and how, (insofar as it appeared in the talk itself), as suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1990). Eventually, a set of core categories emerged that clearly identified the types of strategies parole petitioners adopt to craft their appeals to the board and how the board members respond to such claims, a point which Glaser (1978) referred to as theoretical saturation. This analysis revealed patterns of talk that characterized inmates' case building attempts. Mitigating blame and denying responsibility by using excuses, justifications, and neutralizations was one of the themes identified. After identifying these strategies, the context in which these techniques emerged and how they were shaped by interaction with the parole board were also identified. These distinctions were particularly important insofar as they illuminated how parole board members themselves shaped the basis for offenders' appeals. During the final stage of the analysis, the researchers also considered the parole board's statements in open ended interviews and during the larger corpus of hearings to assess the degree to which their behavior in the hearings matched their stated preferences and confirmed larger data patterns.

ANALYSIS

Candidate Neutralizations

The most influential way that the parole boards elicit accounts that neutralize behavior is through the proposal of candidate neutralizations. In these instances, parole applicants can simply agree with these characterizations and elaborate to satisfy the parole board's typifications or theories of offense involving criminal types (Drass & Spencer, 1987; Fox, 1999). Similar to the probation officers Drass and Spencer (1987) examined, parole board officials use parole applicants' statements as evidence of whether they can succeed on parole. Drawing from their individual experiences with similar types of offenders or criminal types, the board makes assessments based on the perceived legitimacy of the applicants' neutralizations and whether that places them in a lower risk category for reoffending.

If neutralizing is predictive of an unsuccessful parole bid, then why do parole board members propose candidate neutralizations? When asked about excuses and explanations, one board member suggested a possible reason, saying, "I guess for me it does matter if drug addiction or other circumstances are really to blame for the criminal activity. It is a mitigating circumstance that deserves to be heard even if we end up not deciding in their favor." Drug and alcohol use is the most common excuse that the parole boards offered to inmates. The proposal of drug or alcohol related mitigating circumstances permits inmates to deny either partial or full responsibility for the actions that violated their parole or led to their original offense, while performing the denial of accountability in a preferred manner (Pomerantz 1984) that was sanctioned by the parole board. At the same time, problems with drugs and alcohol present parole board members with a solution to an inmate's problem, often providing a reason to add special stipulations to their continued parole if they are released or to advise completion of a drug/alcohol treatment program inside prison if they are retained. Inmates who adopt these neutralization techniques become victims whose behavior can be explained by their past experiences, their co-conspirators, and/or drugs and alcohol.

Excerpt 1: IN9-1:PV Martin

B4: Mister White, are you so addicted to marijuana that you just don't have any control of yourself?

MA: Well I know it's a sickness. Maybe I need some more help. I do need some more help with it. I'm more than willing to go back to classes. Extensive classes.

B4: We tried v o a and I don't know why it didn't work.

MA: I just need some more help.

B2: Mister White, once or twice ya know I was at a party and somebody passed me a joint. You tested positive seven times.

B4: Six times isn't it?

B2: Or six times. A lot

MA: Well if you look at the dates, it's not justification for anything, but I was being dropped every week and if I'm drop-pin' the first and I've been using then quite naturally the next week I'm going to be dirty too in my-

B2: It takes a good month for it to get out of your system.

Board members conversationally encourage accounts that neutralize behavior, insofar as they provide potential parolees with candidate excuses for their behavior that they can simply adopt into their narrative. Here, in excerpt 1, one parole board member proposes that addiction led Martin to lose control. Martin agrees with the assessment, invoking the term "sickness" to describe his relationship with drugs. His denial of responsibility allows him to present himself as acted upon instead of actor. The culprit is marijuana, which is also the reason for his parole violation. At the same time, accepting this neutralization allows him to ask the parole board for help.

Implied in the denial of responsibility offered by the parole board is that drugs were the reason why the inmate offended and continues to offend. He also alludes to the impossibility of certain aspects of the parole terms. If parole officers drug test on specific dates, then the failure of one drug test automatically implies failure of the next, regardless of whether additional substances were used. One board member agrees with the impossible circumstances the drug testing system creates, which also represents a structural reason for parole failure. Although his parole is revoked, during the deliberation, three parole board members agree to see him early after he has completed a prison drug program. In this case, the candidate neutralization, although not resulting in release, does contribute to a potential earlier release date as opposed to the balance of time on the original sentence.

The theme of losing control due to drug or alcohol use/abuse recurred throughout many parole hearings. However, some inmates were more effective at convincing the parole board of their motives than others.

Excerpt 2: Case IN18-1: Richard

B2: Mister Tyson, were you drunk or drugged out at the time you committed this crime?

RI: Well, at the time I was in a bar; that's where it happened.

B2: Uh huh

RI: There was an officer of the law in there.

B2: Were ya drunk?

RI: Yeah, I would say so.

B2: Hm. Okay, from what I saw you've never taken any substance abuse counseling or anything while you've been here. Have you?

RI: Substance abuse?

B2: Yeah

RI: Yeah I did.

B2: You did-? You did complete substance abuse? Okay, would you be willing to do any follow up counseling and that type of thing once you go out?

RI: Oh yeah. Yeah.

B2: Okay because you obviously- it looks like you had a problem with both alcohol and marijuana. You used to be a daily user of pot too didn't you?

RI: Right.

Some inmates conversationally resist candidate neutralizations by side-stepping parole board proposals. When asked if he was drunk or on drugs, Richard indicates that he was in a bar. While this admission is aligned with the proposal of alcohol use, he avoids using the term "drunk" in his response and instead initiates an account of where the crime occurred and then how he came into contact with the police officer. His resistance prompts a parole board member to directly inquire once more about whether he was drunk. After he admits to being drunk, the same parole board member immediately moves to the topic of treatment. However, this time the inmate has already completed the program. He does indicate willingness to complete counseling, which is also aligned with the neutralized offense, yet despite this willingness, he is retained at the institution.

The adoption of a candidate neutralization requires an inmate to agree with the parole board's assessment. When the agreement is modest or unconvincing, parole board members prompt inmates to elaborate or fully accept their assessment.

Excerpt 3: Case IN163-1 Kirk

B3: Were you drunk at the time or what was going on?

KI: I suppose I was. I had drunk some that day.

B3: Can you just not control yourself?

KI: I don't know. I suppose not.

B3: What can we do with you? You just don't seem to get it.

KI: I'm trying, but I just can't get a break.

In Kirk's case, the parole board again discusses the issue of control and suggests drunkenness at the time of the battery as a reason for the crime. He

reluctantly agrees, but modifies his problem to being unable to get a break—a potential allusion to the impossible circumstances faced by parolees. When asked what the parole board should do with him, Kirk has no answer. In the discussion of his parole violation, the board unanimously agrees that he just does not have what it takes to be a parole success, and they vote to give him the balance of time on his original sentence. One board member claims that he is “still blaming everyone but himself.”

In some situations, parole board members’ questions about circumstances elicit more compelling neutralizations than originally offered by the inmate or parole violator.

Excerpt 4: IN13-1:PV Jon

B4: What were the circumstances of that offense?

JON: Well uh I was over at my girlfriend’s house and she had some stuff over there that-

B4: She had some stuff over there?

JON: Yeah and then-

B4: And how’d they come—how’d they come into your house?

JON: Well they was looking for somebody that was staying- was supposed to been staying there.

B4: They had a- they had a

JON: They had a warrant that they-

B4: They had a warrant, okay.

JON: Yeah because somebody that was staying there.

B4: Okay.

JON: It must- they didn’t have no warrant she actually let them.

B4: Oh let them in.

JON: Yeah, let them search and saw that the person wasn’t there.

B4: And when they went there, they found the cocaine in the apartment.

JON: They found some things on me and—and they seen some substance in the ()

B4: So you were just in the wrong place at the wrong time.

JON: Yes sir.

B4: Uh hah. That often happens.

Responding to a parole board member’s question about the circumstances of the drug offense that violated his parole, Jon explains that his girlfriend was the one who had some “stuff.” Collaboratively, they construct how it was that the police entered his house to look for another person. A board member

proposes that he was in the “wrong place at the wrong time,” which he immediately agrees with. The same parole board member then contends that this often happens, normalizing the candidate denial of responsibility that he initially provided for the inmate. In this way, the offender becomes a victim of circumstance, as opposed to the initiator of criminal activity, and worthy of release. The victim of circumstance represents a specific type of neutralization, not entirely elaborated in prior research. Moreover, it demonstrates that board members are attuned to the specific challenges faced by parolees.

Board members conversationally encourage neutralizations, although sometimes these techniques are offered in such a way that they allow the parole board to recommend a specific course of action to resolve the issue—primarily treatment. Even in instances when drugs and alcohol are not directly involved in the crime, parole board members can invoke these explanations to explain seemingly irrational behavior, effectively mitigating the inmate’s responsibility. Despite their willingness to contribute to offenders’ versions of events, all members of the parole board expressed some level of disdain for excuses or justifications. When asked about what factors influence their parole decisions, one board member remarked, “If an offender can’t even take responsibility for the crime, then he’s not ready, ya know, to be out dealin’ with reality and victimizin’ other people.” Another board member noted the inability of some offenders to admit to their crimes, saying, “In some cases the offenders can’t even acknowledge the offense,” later commenting that this was “problematic” and “evidence that the offender has not learned anything.” A third board member, a lawyer, commented that “some of these offenders come in here expecting us to hear their woes and just release them because they got caught up in the moment or were on drugs.” Later on during the study period, one of the four board members remarked in an impromptu interview, “I just cannot understand how some of these offenders think that what they do is okay. Somehow, they think it’s okay and they are trying to convince us to be on their side.” Although this explicit preference for admissions of responsibility and a disdain for excuses existed, parole board members were the ones who sometimes proposed candidate neutralizations, suggesting at least tacit approval of some accounts that minimized culpability. In other instances, parole board members acted in ways that were consistent with their statements, denying accounts that involved neutralizations and attempting to force potential parolees into accepting responsibility for their actions, which parallels Fox’s (1999) research on the acceptance of responsibility as one of the dominant paradigms in the correctional management of offenders.

Table 2 shows the outcomes of the hearings according to the case building strategy used. Clearly, the most effective means of building a case for release was claiming rehabilitation. However, neutralizing was also modestly successful, which challenges the acceptance of responsibility as the only path to release.

Table 2. Hearing Outcome According to Case Building Strategy

Case Building Strategy	Released/Granted	Retained/Denied	Total
Claiming Rehabilitation	9	4	13
Complaining	0	14	14
Mitigating Blame/Neutralizing	2	10	12
Total	11	28	39

N=39. One case of the original corpus of 40 hearings was excluded because the offender consistently shifted case building strategies throughout the hearing. Both parole violation and regular parole hearings are represented in the table.

Furthermore, just under half of the offenders who neutralized with the assistance of the parole board's own constructions of the crime or parole violation would reappear in front of the parole board prior to their legally scheduled time so that the board could hear their case early.

Inmate & Parole Violator Initiated Neutralizations

Frequently, individuals seeking parole invoke neutralizations without prompting. In other instances, the parole board prompts them for an explanation or mitigation of an offense. This line of questioning may engender the types of accounts that diminish individual responsibility for a crime or parole violation. However, neutralization techniques issued by inmates are generally not as well received as those proposed by other parole board members. When inmates provide neutralizations for their behavior, parole boards view the inmates as unable to accept the repercussions of their actions, which they expressly articulated a preference for during ethnographic interviews. In many instances, board members are quick to deny these accounts. In other cases, they divert talk to topics they believe are more germane to the case.

This is especially true of those who portray their identity as overwhelming positive, a technique Minor (1981) referred to as the "metaphor of the ledger." The logic behind the metaphor of the ledger is that good deeds outweigh bad deeds, so when they are added up, the deviant's behavior is really more good than bad, and thus non-deviant at heart. In excerpt 5, Jeff refers to the positive side of his ledger, but then refers to "impossible circumstances," a similar account to one proposed by a board member in another hearing.

Excerpt 5: IN1-1:PV Jeff

B1: Okay, you wanna explain?

JF: I'd like tuh start back with something that I feel is pretty important. March fifteenth nineteen ninety seven, I quit smoking. I vowed to give up drugs and alcohol. I vowed to do something with my life

B1: Uh hah.

JF: I worked hard in college. I made the dean's list three times. I became shy of one semester from graduating. When I got out, I went straight to work. I also went to school. My child support is paid. I'm a law abiding citizen. I'm very clean, and I do good things for people.

B1: All that's well and good

JF: These people are—I cannot control-

B1: Mister Coleman, let's talk about this allegation okay. We don't wanna know about all you're doin' in the community.

In response to a parole board member's request for an explanation, Jeff, a parole violator, recounts all of the good deeds he has accomplished since release. Instead of explaining the violation, Jeff discusses quitting smoking, giving up drugs and alcohol and doing something with his life. He references his school performance, making the dean's list, being gainfully employed, paying his child support, and doing good things for people, rejecting the parole board's request for an explanation. In this manner, Jeff seeks to have the parole board consider the positive acts that he feels are an indication of improvement and discount his negative behaviors, but he simultaneously ignores their initial line of questioning that was related to the offense, which leads one parole board member to directly reject his assertion of good character.

When parole boards rebuff accounts, inmates are required to shift their appeal strategy and invoke other neutralization techniques. When prompted again for an explanation for his violation of a no contact order, Jeff (continued from excerpt 5) denies the act altogether.

Excerpt 6: IN1-1:PV Jeff

B1: Lets deal with this allegation. You had special stipulation nuh—to have no contact with Miss Kelly.

JF: Yes.

B1: And you-

JF: And at no time did I get a hold of her. No time did I ever bother her or her family.

B1: So, now where did you get this car title from then?

JF: She delivered—I have not—she has—I can't control what she does.

B1: Oh but you can.

JF: I can't.

B1: Oh but you can. If someone comes to my home, my place of business, invading my space that's like if you had a no con-

tact order from a court that says you're not supposed to have contact with somebody and if they came around you, you need to notify somebody that that's going on because YOU are under the penalty of revocation for violating. Not her.

JF: I understand that

B1: You—so I don't wanna hear about how you couldn't control that. Sounds like to me you may not have wanted to control that.

JF: That's not true.

B1: Okay.

JF: I've worked very hard to stay out of prison.

B1: Okay, so now at what other times did you have contact with Miss Kelly?

JF: I did not have contact with Miss Kelly.

B1: At what other times did she have contact with you?

JF: She has called me when—when her brother died and when her other brother had a heart attack and out of compassion I'm gonna talk to her and I realize that that's a direct violation but-

B1: It is. Enough said.

Later, Jeff denies responsibility, contending that the victim was the one who initiated contact. After one parole board member rejects this and reformulates the question about the contact, Jeff asserts that he talked with the victim out of compassion, to help her deal with a difficult time. This generates further criticism from one parole board member. In the face of evidence to the contrary, Jeff is forced to develop a new neutralization, referring to the impossibility of the circumstances. His inability to control the actions of others becomes the reason for his parole violation, and if accepted by the board, this would reduce his culpability. Jeff's ability to switch between a variety of neutralization strategies attests to the dynamic nature and context dependence of neutralization techniques. Depending on the response, Jeff attempts to tailor his appeal to the reaction of parole board members, searching for a neutralization that will minimize his blameworthiness in the eyes of the board. However, his strategy is not effective. During the deliberation, the board chastises him, and refers to him as a "con man." Upon his return, one board member tells him "I hope you brought your toothbrush," a clear signal that they would not be returning him to parole after his violation and he would be re-incarcerated.

Condemnation of the condemners is a technique that deflects attention away from the inmate and focuses instead on members of the system that are admonishing him/her. Kirk proposed a modest version of this theme in

excerpt 3, making an indirect allusion to not being able to “get a break.” However, his source of problems was vague and invokes a similar theme to the other accounts discussed earlier—the impossible circumstances of parole. Some inmates are more forthcoming about who is to blame for their problems, contending that judges, lawyers, and witnesses are at fault. For parole violators, parole officers and other administrators, even parole board members, are likely scapegoats for unsuccessful parole periods. Inequity in parole administration, unduly restrictive parole terms, inaccessible parole officers and the like are routinely cited in parole hearings as reasons for failure, all of which suggest that parole stipulations and the system itself generate failure. According to some inmates, parole officers make it difficult to comply with parole stipulations or even get treatment for drug and alcohol problems, as the following extract illustrates:

Excerpt 7: IN3-1:PV Mark

B3: The New Day program that’s—that’s the—that’s the inpatient treatment that’s where ya know well there are inpatient and outpatient there are a whole series of things.

MK: They told me—I—when they gave me the outpatient program I told them that’s not enough she told everybody (no), and I asked her for it and she (wouldn’t).

B1: Who?

MK: My parole officer. She said no you give—give—you’ll get what I give you.

B1: Well then why didn’t you go get into a program of your own?

MK: It was—‘cause the outpatient was not enough, it was doin’ nothin’ for—I-

B1: No, I’m just sayin’ why didn’t you go find one on your own?

B3: That’s why you went in.

MK: She told me I couldn’t, she told me I could not, she said you cannot, that’s (it). She told me you cannot go in the inpatient program. What programs we give you is what you take.

B4: Okay.

When questioned about his non-compliance with a parole board order to complete substance abuse treatment, Mark claims that his parole officer was unwilling to provide him with the resources necessary to enroll in and complete an inpatient drug program. One parole board member challenges this assertion, asking Mark why he failed to complete a program of his own. He responds by condemning the parole agent who issued his violation, claiming that she would not allow it. Initially, the parole board member interactively sought the acceptance of responsibility on the part of the parole violator, by proposing that he is the one who could have initiated another course of treat-

ment. This places him in the actor-agent role and indicates that he is responsible for his own situation. However, he shifts the blame to his parole officer, although unsuccessfully since he is retained on the parole violation.

Individuals who claim that everybody does it (Coleman, 1994; Coleman & Ramos, 1998) appeal to the normative nature of their actions. Not only are the acts in question widespread, they are very common occurrences in the eyes of the deviant. An interesting twist occurs in parole hearings, where non-criminal acts can lead to a parole violation. Tim's hearing involves a discussion of his harassment of a little girl waiting at a bus stop. Even though his parole violation technically involved public intoxication, his parole stipulations also require that he not be present at locations where children congregate. However, a local police officer had just testified in favor of retaining him at the institution because he is bothering a little girl who lives close to his home and is at risk of victimizing another child.

Excerpt 8: IN6-1: Tim

B1: Well what are you-

Tim: I ain't bother nobody.

B1: What are you saying to her in the morning?

Tim: I aint said nothing outta the way. All I said is hi. What's wrong with saying hi? If someone comes in, you'd say hi. What's wrong with saying hi? I didn't-

B1: But what were you calling her for?

Tim: I just waved at her, spoke.

B1: M hm.

Tim: Just like I'd say hi to you if you spoke to me. I'd say hi right back. I don't mean no harm, lady.

B4: How come you were drinkin' beer when you were not supposed to and how come you were intoxicated?

Not only does Tim justify his behavior by claiming that "everybody does it," he further rationalizes it as common courtesy, the embodiment of social norms. In his argument, not initiating a greeting would be at odds with social behavior and even provides an example of a typical hypothetical exchange by using a parole board member as the subject. His account invokes the impossible to follow stipulations of parole which appear to be at odds with normal social conduct. As Tim unwaveringly supports his action as normal, another board member interjects and focuses the discussion on the public intoxication. The parole violator later responds that he was not aware that he could not drink alcohol. Regardless of the secondary issue of intoxication, his initial proposal of the normalcy of a greeting exchange fails, and in the parole board's deliberation, it is used as evidence of his status as a parole risk.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Neutralizations are common among parole violators and regular parole applicants undergoing review in parole hearings; over 30% of the parole applicants in the videotaped hearings selected for analysis adopted neutralization strategies, which is roughly equivalent to the proportion in the larger set of 438 hearings. While this paper does not address the cognitive dimensions of why inmates neutralize, a topic for future research, it does offer insight into the manner in which parole board members contribute to the neutralizations of inmates. In some instances, these statements are offered to potential parolees as candidate neutralizations, to which they can simply offer agreement or incorporate into their account. In other instances, parole board members wield their power and directly challenge and deny offenders' accounts, forcing them to alter their strategy or reframe their strategy for building a case for release. In these instances, individuals seeking parole shift their approach and rely on other neutralization techniques, as well as non-neutralizing techniques such as making claims to rehabilitation or lodging complaints to the board.

The least successful neutralizations were those offered by inmates. In particular, when parole violators blame the circumstances of parole or life more generally, deny their responsibility, or reconstruct their role in relationship to the victim as moral or just of their own accord, parole board members react negatively. In contrast, those neutralizations initiated by board members engender a more positive response, one that emphasizes treatment or the unique circumstances of the inmate and may predict early release or at minimum early review of the case following a rejection. The parole board's candidate neutralizations focus primarily on a specific form of denial of responsibility, the impossibility of circumstances, which suggests that other neutralizations may be less acceptable in their type of social control decision making. Candidate neutralizations may embody social approved vocabularies of motive (Mills, 1940) within the context of parole hearings. Despite a more general preference for prisoners who repent and acknowledge their immorality (Fox, 1999; Ugelvik, 2012), individuals seeking parole frequently point to external forces as responsible for their actions. Moreover, parole board members themselves appear to be accepting of the impact of external forces that diminish culpability insofar as board members initiate the use of these circumstances as topics for discussion in the course of the hearing. Despite a clearly articulated preference for accepting responsibility, parole board members engage in discursive techniques that oppose their own views.

Although this type of research cannot specify whether inmates actually experienced guilt or whether their neutralizations were carefully crafted to minimize blameworthiness, it does reveal how conventionally-oriented others, such as the parole board members, influence the development of strategies to account for criminal behavior. Ironically, the use of neutralization

techniques initiated by parole violators usually solidifies their deviant label, insofar as parole boards look for acceptance of responsibility, for this responsibility is tacitly denied when neutralization techniques are employed. Despite the fact that parole board members routinely ask for any explanation or mitigation of the parole violation, the preferred answer, according to interviews with board members, is to admit fault and accept culpability for the transgression or crime. This illustrates a key tension between the rehabilitative ideal that board members espouse a preference for, and the candidate excuses they offer up to individuals petitioning for release.

If neutralizations exist as after-the-fact justifications that buffer the effects of negative attributions, their insulating effects are only experienced to the degree that parole boards buy into them and make decisions in their favor. In contrast to police, who frequently use candidate neutralizations to trick suspects into statements of culpability (Leo, 1994), parole board members proposing neutralization techniques do so in an interactive environment where they also propose resolutions such as drug or alcohol treatment. Adopting a more medical model of dealing with potential parolees, parole officials actively shape the vocabularies of motive adopted by the petitioners. This may suggest a larger awareness of the prominence of a treatment oriented, psychiatric approach in not only popular discourse, but in corrections more generally (Scully & Marolla, 1984a; Scully & Marolla, 1984b).

The purpose of this paper was to understand how parole violators and inmates use neutralization techniques as a case building strategy, and how these techniques are influenced by interaction with board members. The theoretical implications of candidate neutralizations expand some of the earlier conceptions of neutralization theory as initially presented by Sykes and Matza (1957). The collaborative nature of producing neutralizing accounts, especially in the context of a hearing where the behavior and the spoiled identity of an offender are topics of discussion, adds to this classic literature. If conventional others offer viable accounts, then the excuse-making of stigmatized individuals is more likely to be accepted as legitimate. It may also alleviate self-guilt more powerfully because it is endorsed by social control decision makers. However, it is not just candidate accounts that the parole board influences. Those which are initiated by offenders become modified in the course of the hearing as well.

In addition to illuminating the collaborative nature of neutralizing accounts, what appears to be a new subtype of neutralization and part of a potentially larger category presenting the impossibility of circumstances emerged in parole hearing discourse. Analytically, this category incorporates some elements of prior techniques such as denying the victim, condemning the condemners, and denying responsibility. However, it represents distinct conversational features insofar as it references elements of social life and the structure of parole. At a more general level, this could serve as a neutralization technique in myriad forms across different crime types and

individuals of varying social status. Notwithstanding the appeal to impossible circumstances, more generally, this paper attests to the collaborative nature of neutralization techniques. It is not sufficient to examine decontextualized neutralizations, assuming that individuals who receive the accounts accept them at face value. Rather, to understand how neutralizations protect deviant actors, it is necessary to understand how they are constructed in and through interaction. In this formulation, the context in which neutralizations are used has a profound impact on how they are shaped.

The hearing itself is a site where social control decision makers possess significant power in determining the future of parole petitioners. The tactics that offenders adopt, who are at the will of the parole board, indicate that they are responsive to the statements of board members. However, other characteristics of offenders, such as social position, matter as well. Specific rhetorical strategies are dependent on socially acceptable roles (Klenowski et al., 2011), and the resulting accounts differ in form and content by these roles. Similarly, social class and related socializing experiences have an impact on neutralizations, as Hazani (1991) demonstrated when analyzing car thieves "symbol banks" as a means of understanding differing constructions of accounts. In this case, the symbol banks of parole petitioners are shaped by the board, such that the tools they use to appeal for release are morphed in the hearing, according to board members' statements.

Future research should address the protective quality of neutralizations proposed by others. Do these neutralizations deflect self-blame and guilt, or do they simply appease conventional others and allow them to understand the logic behind deviant behavior? How do they impact inmates? It also remains to be seen whether those who violate parole and successfully neutralize their actions will continue to rely on similar negotiations in the event of future parole violations. Similarly, if parole violators are unsuccessful in their reliance on neutralizing their behavior, will they repeat similar techniques or alter their behavior and attitudes in an attempt to achieve a successful parole release?

ENDNOTES

1. For the purposes of confidentiality, and in accordance with internal and external institutional review board policies, the name of the state has been concealed.
2. In the transcripts, B1 through B4 indicates board members one through four. Parole petitioners' names are abbreviated first name pseudonyms, represented by the two letters of the pseudonym name.
3. Routine violations of parole include: failure to report, change of residence, failure to maintain employment, failure to complete a treatment program, and failure to pass mandatory drug testing.

4. Old code inmates were incarcerated prior to the abolition of parole. As such, their cases are wholly discretionary. However, other inmates are also eligible for discretionary parole despite the switch to a mandatory system. An individual who violates his/her parole and returns to prison also becomes a discretionary case and falls under the discretion of the parole board.
5. Shortly after the study period began, one of the board members died suddenly. He was not replaced, so the parole board had an even number of members. If there was a split vote, one of the members was required to change their vote to avoid a tie.

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Summer Cop: A Qualitative Study of Summer Police Officers

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ABSTRACT

There are approximately 18,000 police agencies employing 750,000 police officers in the United States in order to police a population over 300 million citizens. In addition, sketchy estimates state there are 400,000 police reserves assisting full-time sworn officers in their duties. One major subgroup of these police reserves are summer police officers (“summer cops”) who serve full-time during the tourist season in mostly beach communities. There has been little to no research into this subpopulation of police officers and little is known about their background and reasons for becoming summer reserve officers. In order to fill this gap in the literature, this study used participant observation and in-depth interviews to assess 15 summer officers in a Maine police department. The study presents major findings about their backgrounds, motives, and goals for becoming summer police officers, as well as their experiences in becoming summer cops and perceptions of training.

INTRODUCTION

“I just graduated with a Criminal Justice degree...my only [other] job has been landscaping. So, I wanted to become a summer officer to see if I would like a career as a police officer.”

—*Summer Reserve Officer, 2010*

As of 2008, there were 17,985 local and state policing entities responsible for providing law enforcement services in the United States that employed 765,000 sworn officers responsible for policing a population of over 300 million citizens (Reaves, 2011). Policing a population this large is a daunting task, and many police agencies struggle to address increasing requests for police services. This presents issues for police agencies that face budgetary

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restrictions and have limited personnel resources across the United States (Aragon, 1993; Arwood, Hilal, Karsky, & Norman, 2005; Gill & Mawby, 1990; Greenberg, 1984; Hedlund & Burke, 2006). Confronted with the strain of public demands, police agencies sometimes rely on non-regular (i.e., part-time and volunteer) police officers to bolster the number of law enforcement personnel deployed on the street (King, 1960; Pray, 1997; Sundeen & Siegel, 1986; Unsinger, 1972; Weinblatt, 1996a).

These non-regular police officers are usually referred to as *reserve officers* (Aragon, 1993; Pray 1997; Weinblatt, 1996a; Weinblatt, 1996b). Depending on a particular state's legislation, however, the term can carry many different meanings. In the majority of jurisdictions, reserve officers are members of the community who assist a local law enforcement agency by volunteering their time, while in some places the reserves are officers who work part-time for the agency once or twice a month (Arwood et al., 2005; Berg & Doerner, 1988; Hedlund & Burke, 2006; Hilal, 2003; Sundeen & Siegel, 1986). Other regions use the term reserve police officers to refer to paid police officers who are hired in tourist areas on a seasonal basis to deal with a vast population influx (Bushey, 1976; Weinblatt, 1996b). This latter type of reserve officers, those hired seasonally, are the primary focus of this study.

Seasonal reserve officers are typically hired in communities that experience a significant population increase during tourist seasons. For example, in Barnstable, Massachusetts, the population increases from 43,000 in the winter to 110,000 people from the end of May until the beginning of September (Weinblatt, 1996b). In order to adjust to increased calls for service, the police department adds 21 seasonal reserve officers to supplement the 91 full-time police officers employed in the town. Similarly, Panama City Beach, Florida can face an influx of 11,500 people to 125,000 on popular holiday weekends requiring an additional 40 officers to be deployed (Gidjunis, 2007).

Compared to full-time officers, these officers are used for a limited amount of time, and they may receive training through an exceptionally abbreviated law enforcement academy. Some states have required as little as 100 hours of pre-service training before giving these officers full powers of arrest, a firearm, and a badge (Maine Criminal Justice Academy, 2011; Weinblatt, 1996b).¹ If the data are accurate, the majority of summer reserve officers are college students, in their early 20s with no prior law enforcement experience, yet they are given a tremendous amount of power and responsibility given their age, training, and experience (Bushey, 1976, Gidjunis, 2007; Terrasi, 2010; Weinblatt, 2000). While there is ample information on full-time police officers, there has been little research on reserve officers and seasonal police officers in particular.

Despite the prevalence of non-regular police officers in agencies throughout the United States, not much is known about this subgroup in policing (Berg & Doerner, 1988; Gill & Mawby, 1990; Greenberg, 1984; Hilal, 2003; Siegal &

Sundeen, 1986; Woodworth, 1973). The bulk of research addressing the topic is found primarily in technical journals, and most articles tend to be descriptive in nature (Aragon, 1993; Ferguson, 2008; Hedlund & Burke, 2006; Hilal, 2010; Weinblatt, 1993, 2001). Specifically, no research to date has provided an in-depth examination of reserve officer programs other than descriptions of seasonal reserve programs in technical journals (Aragon, 1993; Ferguson, 2008; Hedlund & Burke, 2006; Hilal, 2010; Weinblatt, 1991a, 1991b, 1993, 2001), newspaper articles (Gidjunis, 2007; Graziadei, 2010; Greenland, 2010; Terrasi, 2010), or on police department websites (e.g., Ocean City Maryland Police Department, 2015; Wildwood Police Department, 2015), and a small section in one graduate student thesis (Bushey, 1976). Thus, the current research focuses on expanding the knowledge regarding summer reserve police officers.

Due to the lack of empirical research on the subject, qualitative methods were chosen to provide an in-depth examination of summer police officers. The current study employed participant observation and in-depth interviews with summer police officers employed by a municipal police department in a beach community in Maine. The author of the current research was a summer reserve police officer from May 2008 to August 2010, which allowed him to complete firsthand observations of his fellow summer reserve police officers and their transitional progress into the job (Berg, 2006; Ritchie & Lewis, 2004). Furthermore, the in-depth interviews were used to understand *who* the summer reserve police officers were, their motivations for entering the job, and perceptions of their preparation for the job (Berg, 2006; Rubin & Rubin, 1995; Ritchie & Lewis, 2004; Warren & Karner, 2005).

SUMMER RESERVE POLICE OFFICERS IN AMERICA

According to extant literature, seasonal police officers have typically been used in tourist communities where the population increases during busy months. Whether the municipality is near a popular ski mountain or a beach, seasonal officers are used to supplement the existing police force during common vacation seasons (Bushey, 1976; National Reserve Law Officers Association, 2010). In these communities, police departments face the unusual problem of increased calls for service during busy months of the year and popular holidays.

Existing police forces in these communities face difficulties in handling increased calls for service that can accompany an extreme population influx, and therefore, supplemental personnel are hired to work full-time (i.e., 40 hours per week) during the tourist season. For example, in Ocean City, Maryland, the population increases from 7,049 people in the winter to over 250,000 during the summer, resulting in the hiring of 110 summer officers. (Gidjunis, 2007). To fill these positions, police departments recruit individuals who are available when vacationers flock to popular tourist destinations.

Targeted personnel to fill these positions often include school teachers and college students who have breaks from school during common vacation seasons (Bushey, 1976). Extant reports have indicated that summer officers may possess or are in pursuit of a bachelor's degree in criminal justice and come to police departments in beach communities to gain valuable law enforcement experience (Gidjunis, 2007; Terrasi, 2010).²

Bushey (1976) examined two police departments that use seasonal officers, Huntington Beach, California, and Virginia Beach, Virginia. These departments also cited a major population influx during the summer months as a reason to hire supplemental officers who were assigned to oversee the beaches, bar districts, and other areas where tourists congregate. Summer officers patrol these areas on foot, bicycles, ATVs, and, more recently, on Segways (Wildwood Police Department, 2015).

The National Reserve Law Officers Association (2010) indicated that seasonal police officers are most commonly found in beach communities, particularly on the East coast of the United States. While qualifications for these law enforcement officers vary by state, common characteristics have been found throughout jurisdictions. In general, agencies require summer officers to be high school graduates, at least 18 years of age (Rowan College at Gloucester County, 2015), United States citizens, possess a valid driver's license, and have 20/20 vision (Avalon Police Department, 2010; Maine Criminal Justice Academy, 2011; Ocean City Police Department, 2015).

Training requirements for seasonal officers have been found to vary by state and municipality. Most police departments that employ summer officers are forced to certify these officers through abbreviated training programs. For example, in the 1990s, Massachusetts mandated that their summer reserve officers undertake the "200-hour reserve/intermittent training program at the Plymouth Police Academy" to establish state certification (Weinblatt, 1996b), and undergo a minimum of 310 training hours supplemented by 20 hours of firearms instruction (Massachusetts Office of Public Safety, 2015). In contrast, full-time officers in the state of Massachusetts must undergo an 800-hour, 20-week, pre-service law enforcement academy (Massachusetts Office of Public Safety, 2015). Maine serves as another example of an abbreviated training schedule used to certify summer police officers. In Maine, summer officers received 100 hours of training through the Maine Criminal Justice Pre-Service Academy until 2011. After 2011, the mandated training increased to 200 hours of instruction (Maine Criminal Justice Academy, 2015), after a reserve officer shot and fatally wounded an individual during an altercation that occurred during a traffic stop (Hench, 2011). On the other hand, their full-time counterparts must partake in 720 hours of training in an academy, spanning an 18 week period (Maine Criminal Justice Academy, 2011).

Abbreviated training programs cover the same materials as full-time law enforcement training curriculums, although comparatively little time is spent on each training topic. In general, full-time and summer reserve academy curricula cover topics including firearms training, Constitutional law, traffic law, laws of arrest, criminal law, and drug identification tactics (Gidjunis, 2007; Maine Criminal Justice Academy, 2011). By comparison, full-time police curricula have more time allotted for each section. In Maine, full-time officers spend a total of 47 hours on firearms training, while summer police officers undergo just 8 hours of weapons training (Maine Criminal Justice Academy, 2011). Similarly, in Massachusetts, reserve officers receive 20 hours of firearms instruction, while full-time police officers must complete 40 hours of firearms training (Massachusetts Office of Public Safety, 2015).

Despite the discrepancy in training hours, summer officers have often been used in the same capacity as full-time police officers. Upon completion of an abbreviated academy, many summer reserve officers are sent out to patrol busy bar districts and beaches on foot, bicycles, or ATVs. In some departments these officers can be as young as 18 years old, possess no prior police experience, and have received significantly less training than full-time police officers (Rowan College at Gloucester County, New Jersey, 2014). They are then issued a gun and a badge and have the same arrest powers as a full-time police officer.

Seasonal officers are also not limited regarding the type of calls they may be dispatched to. Seasonal officers could be sent to handle a noise complaint or, in some jurisdictions, reserves may respond to a murder scene (Gidjunis, 2007). Because of their proximity to bar districts, beaches, and areas where alcohol consumption is prevalent, fights are a common encounter for summer reserve officers. As bars close, these officers patrol streets infiltrated with rowdy, intoxicated persons who congregate in front of nearby restaurants still serving food. Sometimes during their first shift on the job, summer officers are dispatched to the scene of physical altercations accompanied only by other rookie summer officers. Some reserve officers may even face situations requiring them to draw their gun on perpetrators of crimes (Harkness, 2005). This is a large responsibility for many summer officers considering they are juniors and seniors in college, many in their early 20s, and have no prior law enforcement experience. This is significant considering prior research that indicates full-time officers often feel unprepared to perform job tasks upon graduation from pre-service academies (Alpert & Dunham, 1997; Bradford & Pynes, 1999; Marion, 1998; Ness, 1991; Olivia & Compton, 2011; Werth, 2011).

Because very little is known about this population, it is imperative that research thoroughly investigate this subset of policing to understand who these young men and women working as seasonal officers in law enforcement are, their motivations for entering the job, and what they expect to gain from the experience. These individuals are given an immense responsibility

considering their minimal training and general lack of experience. To date, policing researchers have not thoroughly examined this aspect of law enforcement personnel. Therefore, the intent of this study was to fill the gap in the literature by conducting an exploratory qualitative study of seasonal officers. The research used participant observation and in-depth interviews with summer reserve officers and their full-time counterparts to extensively examine a small sample of these officers. The current study also investigated the perceptions summer reserves held of the hiring process, their training, and their preparedness for the job.

METHODOLOGY

The current research was part of a larger exploratory ethnographic study that examined seasonal reserve police officers employed by a police department in a small Maine beach community. In this department, reserve officers are hired each summer to accommodate the increased demands placed on the police department as a result of a substantial influx of summer residents and tourists. During the summer months, the population of the beach community can increase from a year-round population of 15,000 residents to approximately 50,000-60,000 inhabitants. With a regular full-time staff of just 25 police officers, the summer officers were essential to ensure that the police department can fulfill its commitment to the community. On average, 15 seasonal officers were hired each summer. In the summer of 2010, 17 summer reserves were employed. The author of this research served as a summer police officer in this police department from May of 2008 to August of 2011. His prior experience and contacts within the department were used to gain access to the police department's training modules and standard operating procedures regarding summer reserve police officers. Approval from the administration of the police department to interview and observe seasonal officers was obtained by the researcher in addition to approval from the author's respective university Institutional Review Board.

Because of the lack of previous research investigating this particular population, qualitative research methods were deemed the most appropriate approach for the research. In order to gain a detailed understanding of who reserve officers are, the research used both in-depth interviews (Babbie, 2007; Berg, 2006; Gaubatz, 1995; Ritchie & Lewis, 2004; Rubin & Rubin, 1995; Warren & Karner, 2005) and overt participant observation (Babbie, 2007; Berg, 2006; Marquardt, 1986; Ritchie & Lewis, 2004; Van Maanen, 1973; Warren & Karner, 2005). By employing both of these techniques, the perspectives of the reserve officers as well as firsthand, personal experiences of a day in the life as a reserve officer were obtained.

The research was conducted from May 24, 2010 until August 31, 2010. This timeframe was selected because it encompassed the entire socialization process of a reserve police officer, from commencement of training to the

final few weeks of patrol duty. Reserve police officers were recruited from a list of new and returning reserve officers. An initial e-mail was sent to all officers explaining the research project and soliciting their participation in the interviews. This was followed by a presentation outlining the project on their first day of training. All summer officers received release forms stating that their participation was completely voluntary and that all information would remain confidential.

Extensive efforts were taken to build rapport with the new summer reserve officers to reduce the possibility of affecting their behaviors (Berg, 2006; Marquart, 1986; Warren & Karner, 2005). The lead researcher attended some of the initial mandatory training sessions with the participants, including the use of force training. The researcher also participated in an annual law enforcement charity run, workout sessions at a local gym, and pick-up basketball games with the reserve officers. Further, a barbeque was held at the researcher's home in order to build trust with the summer officers to ensure that they were comfortable in the presence of the researcher.

After building rapport with the new officers, the researcher observed the summer officers in their working environment. The participant observation in the current study occurred during regular patrol shifts and training sessions for summer reserve officers. While working his scheduled shifts, the principal investigator observed reserve officers; he also conducted observations when he was off-duty. Observations were made during both night and day shifts to examine the daily tasks performed by the reserve officers, beginning on June 18, 2010 and ending on August 20, 2010.

Thorough field notes were taken to capture the experiences of summer officers. The researcher then converted field notes into detailed accounts in a timely fashion (Babbie, 2007, Berg, 2006, Warren & Karner, 2005). Subsequent to the collection of observations, the notes were transcribed as soon as the researcher returned to the police department. This allowed for an accurate account of the research conducted on the summer officers. Also, the researcher obtained print-outs from police dispatch detailing the time of day officers handled calls, as well as the officers who were present during the calls. Observations were recorded throughout the summer to document the transitional progress of summer officers as they assimilated into the job.

The participant observation aspect of the research was accompanied by in-depth interviews (Babbie, 2007; Berg, 2006; Gaubatz, 1995; Ritchie & Lewis, 2004; Rubin & Rubin, 1995; Warren & Karner, 2005). This method permitted the study to capture first-hand accounts of the summer officers' experiences. The in-depth interviews, as Gaubatz (1995) notes, allow participants to "explain it for themselves" (p. 205), and were conducted with 15 reserve police officers. Of these 15 officers, 6 were returning officers with at least one year of experience, while the remaining 9 were new officers.³ Interviews with new reserve officers were conducted in two parts. The first

interview investigated their experiences during their first week on the job, and the second explored any changes that occurred in their perceptions of the job as the summer progressed. Returning summer reserves participated in one interview.⁴

Interviews with summer officers were conducted in private and informal settings at their homes, at the home of the researcher, or over lunches and dinners at various restaurants. All interviews with participants were recorded with a digital recording device to ensure the accuracy of the information (Warren & Karner, 2005). The information gathered during this study remained confidential in a locked safe located in the principal investigator's secure locker. There were no identifying names in the recordings, and the participant's names were not revealed to anyone (Berg, 2006; Warren & Karner, 2005). The researcher converted the recordings to his computer and stored them in a password secured folder. Upon completion of the study, the recordings of the interviews were destroyed to ensure that their contents were not released. Once the recordings were transferred to a computer file, the researcher transcribed the dialogues and stored them in the password secured file.

Shorthand field notes were also transferred into detailed depictions of observations made during work in the field. Once these transcripts and observations were completed, the researcher divided them into categories based on the general outlines of topics addressed in the interviewing protocol (Berg, 2006; Warren & Karner, 2005). For the purposes of this study, the qualitative data were divided into the following categories: (a) motivations for becoming a summer officer; (b) perceptions of the hiring process; and (c) perceptions of their expedited training.

FINDINGS

In the following sections, findings from the participant observation and interview data are used to illustrate the individuals who become a summer reserve officer, their perceptions of the interview process, training, and preparedness for the duties of performing as a summer police officer.

Motivations for Becoming a Summer Officer

Who becomes a summer officer?

Officers who participated in the interviews during the summer of 2010 were all males ranging in age from 21 to 25 years old, were currently enrolled in college, or were recent college graduates with little to no prior experience in law enforcement. The oldest summer officer was 25 years old and had been a member of the program for four years. The youngest officer, at 21 years of age, was entering his final year of college and was a rookie in the police department. In total, 1 officer was a year away from obtaining a bachelor's degree in criminal justice, 11 officers held bachelor's degrees in crimi-

nal justice, sociology, or psychology, and 3 officers were pursuing master's degrees in criminal justice. Participants learned about the summer reserve officer program in various ways. Five officers reported learning about the job through the Great Bay Community College Police Test. This test evaluates an individual's general knowledge pertaining to math, language, and reading comprehension. Once the exam is completed, test scores are sent to 42 police departments in Massachusetts, Maine, and New Hampshire. Departments receiving scores from the test then contact and recruit potential candidates for full-time and summer officer positions. One officer said:

I learned about the program here through the Great Bay Community College Policing Test. I took the tests, then the department got my scores and recruited me by sending an application through the mail and some general requirements to go along with it. I had to send in the application, a 500 word essay about who my hero was, and set up an appointment for an oral board meeting.

Two other officers learned about the summer reserve officer program through the criminal justice department at their respective colleges. One officer stated:

Every year the Criminal Justice Department at my college sends out an e-mail about police positions throughout the New England area. I thought it was interesting that I could essentially become a cop without making the commitment to start a career in it. So I contacted them and started the application process.

The remaining 8 officers heard about the summer officer positions from family members, friends, or individuals who were previously employed as summer officers in the targeted department. As one officer explained:

I learned about the summer reserve program from a high school friend that got a job in a neighboring town. I saw on Facebook that he was working as a summer cop and messaged him about how to become one. He told me about all of the reserve officer programs in the coastal communities. I found our department online and applied.

Testing the waters of law enforcement

Participants provided a range of anecdotes to illustrate their reasons to seek employment as a summer reserve police officer. The majority of summer reserve officers enter the job to gain experience in law enforcement and find out if they are suited for a career in the profession. When asked why he became a summer reserve officer one first year officer replied:

I just graduated with a Criminal Justice degree. I had two internships with police departments before I came here; one with a juvenile unit and another with a crime scene investigation unit. But most of that work entailed filing paperwork.

Other than that, my only job has been landscaping. So I wanted to become a summer officer to see if I would like a career as a police officer. I have always thought that I wanted to do it, but you never know until you try it out.

Another respondent stated:

I'm going into my last year of college. My degree is Criminal Justice, but I wanted to make sure that I don't put a ton of effort into finding a full-time job when I graduate if this isn't the right career for me. I figured that this job would give me a taste of what the job is like even though we're on bikes and foot patrol. But other than that I just wanted to get away from my old summer job. I was a mover before this, and this is a little bit better for my resume.

Career purgatory

While most summer officers were testing the waters to see if a career in law enforcement would be fitting, some had entirely different motives for entering the job. It seemed that these officers were unsure about what career to pursue after college and were in career purgatory. These participants became summer officers to buy some time before deciding on a profession. As one returning summer officer said:

I was a psychology major in college with a minor in Criminal Justice. I had no idea what I wanted to do after I graduated. My CJ advisor sent me an email telling me about the opportunity to be a summer cop. I thought why not; I never really wanted to be a cop but it would be something fun to do while I figure out what I want to do with my life.

Another officer concurred, saying that he was unsure where to go with his career so he applied for the job to earn money in the summer and travel during the winter.

It was something that fit for where I was in my life. I was graduating and becoming a summer officer didn't require a three year contract like a full-time position would. It allowed me a lifestyle that enabled travel during part of the year and guaranteed work each summer to fund it. So it just fit into the kind of lifestyle that I wanted to lead for a while after graduation. I travel in the winter and have been to 28 countries. I've had jobs in some of the countries teaching scuba diving and working in an elephant rehabilitation center. But in most of the countries it is cheap enough that I don't have to work during the winter.

Networking, résumé building, and stepping stones

In addition to considering law enforcement as a full-time profession or being in limbo about what career path to enter, participants credited their interest in the job to network or build their résumés and saw the experience as a stepping stone into a law enforcement career. Explaining the networking opportunities allotted to summer reserve officers, one officer said:

I'd like to get the experience and get my feet wet in police work. It's a stepping stone to fulltime work. I expect to meet a lot of people and build my résumé. The job is a great networking opportunity because cops (in the targeted department) are well connected. Chiefs in big cities were summer cops here. Some ended up being state troopers in New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Maine. Then some have gone onto federal jobs in the Marshals, Border Patrol, and even the FBI. Working here is a good opportunity to get contacts in big places so it will be easier to get a full-time job.

Referring to the ability to build his law enforcement résumé, a returning summer officer said he views the job as a résumé builder:

I think if you can show that you have put X amount of years into law enforcement it shows your commitment to the lifestyle in the event you want to pursue a career. Being a certified police officer for a few years will give me an edge in the job market on people that are fresh out of college and have been a camp counselor every summer. It just shows them that I'm competent enough to have worked here for a few years and have got good reviews from the administration.

Another participant said that although summer officers have not received the same level of training as full-timers, the experience is something that can be used to build a future law enforcement career on.

I wanted to develop interaction and communication skills. In police work you are always talking to people and talking on the radio. The department forces you to write parking tickets. So you get really good at dealing with angry people quick. They (the police department) also require us to go out and talk to businesses. We had to go out and be the community connection for the department. I figured after working two years here I would have a good idea of how to deal with people. Communication with the public, that's what police work is all about and I think building those skills here will help out a lot in the future.

In sum, the participants discussed three primary motives for becoming a summer police officer. Some sought to use the experience to obtain some hands-on law enforcement experience before committing to a career as a

full-time police officer. Others were unsure about their future plans, and used the job as a way to earn money while deciding on a career path. Finally, some respondents viewed the opportunity as a way to network, and build a foundation for a full-time career in law enforcement.

Perceptions of the Hiring Process

All new officers must submit an application for employment for the position, participate in a panel interview with full-time members of the police department, and submit to a background check. For most of the summer officers, the process was their first experience with a formal police interview.⁵ All participants were asked to describe the interview process they underwent prior to being hired within the police department.

Application process

The first step of the application process for a summer reserve officer is to fill out the police department's mandatory application which is very straightforward. New applicants for the job must also complete a 500 word essay about their life hero or an experience that changed their life. The essay gives the police department an idea of the applicant's writing style and ability to communicate in report writing. All participants said that this portion was by far the least nerve-wracking portion of the interview process.

Panel interview

Subsequent to completing the application and essay, select candidates for summer reserve officer positions are scheduled for a panel interview or oral board. In the panel interview, five officers and/or sergeants question each applicant. Also present in the interview is the Patrol Lieutenant, a town selectman,⁶ an administrative assistant from the police department, and a member of the community.⁷ The purpose of the panel interview is to test the character of summer police officer applicants. All summer reserve officers said that the panel interview was the most intimidating portion of the interview process, attributing their anxiety about the interview to lack of preparedness, uncertainty about what they would be asked, and the fear of being eliminated from candidacy for the position. One summer officer recalled:

In the panel interview, they (the panel) played the good cop/bad cop role. Some were supportive of your answers, and some would play devil's advocate. It really made me second guess everything I said. I thought I failed after I left.

Another participant said:

The (panel) interview was what really took me aback. I was expecting a similar interview to the ones I had been through before for non-law enforcement jobs. You know, one-on-one, relaxed, "tell me a little bit about yourself" type interviews. So this was much more intimidating with the panel. You have to sit across from five sergeants and officers that know how

to mess with you. They definitely pose some theoretical situations. Regardless of the responses you give them, they attack what you say. So it makes it stressful.

An underlying trend that emerged from participants' responses was that summer officers thought the hypothetical situations posed by panel members in the interview were what made the interview arduous. One hypothetical situation put forward in the oral board interviews involved a full-time officer who came to work intoxicated. Panel members asked potential employees what actions they would take if they could smell alcohol on the breath of a full-time officer or sergeant while at work. Participants noted that this was the toughest question to answer because they wanted to show their loyalty to other officers while assuring the panel that they would maintain the integrity of the police department. As one first year summer officer commented:

Afterwards (the panel interview) I felt like I failed because they (the panel) attack all of your answers. They asked "what would you do if a full-time officer came up to you on your first day and had clearly been drinking?" I said I would report them to my sergeant because it's dangerous to drink on the job. Then the panel started attacking me, saying that I'm a rat and can't be trusted if I am going to tell on superior officers. I thought they hated me.

A second scenario posed to interviewees of the oral board pertained to police officer gratuities. Panel members described a situation in which a member of the public offered a service to an officer free of charge. Some of the free items included coffee from Dunkin Donuts, beverages from convenience stores, and free food at restaurants. One summer reserve officer recalled being asked about receiving free food in a restaurant:

The Sergeant asked me what I'd do if he and I were getting lunch and the owner of the restaurant told us our meals were free. The sergeant said he would take the free meal, so I said I would too because I wouldn't want to disrespect him. Then a few questions afterwards they asked what I'd do if I pulled the restaurant owner over for blatantly running a red light. I said I would give him a ticket. But the owner contested that he gives cops free meals to get out of tickets like this. Then the panel members started yelling at me for taking bribes. I was so confused, and I thought there was no way in hell I would get the job after that.

Finally, some participants reported that the panel interview was the most informative portion of the application process. A few participants admitted that they had very limited knowledge of what a summer reserve officer would be required to do. According to respondents, they were unsure

of the level of police powers they would be given and what their duties would consist of. A respondent noted

In the interview, I was told I would be a reserve police officer with all of the powers of a normal police officer. I didn't realize that I would even have a baton or pepper spray, let alone a gun. I thought that we were just going to be meter maids; I didn't think I would even be able to arrest anyone. I remember thinking it was crazy that they would let us do all of that with so little training.

Another summer reserve officer responded similarly

They (the panel) asked me what I would do if I was writing parking tickets along one of the beaches, and I saw a fight break out down on the sand. I told them I would call them to report it. I had no idea I would have full arrest powers. I honestly thought we would be like a junior cop or something. When they told me that in the interview I was really shocked. We don't even get half the training that full-time officers get, so I was a little confused when I learned that.

The respondents in these two cases exhibited the general lack of knowledge that some summer reserve officers have about the program before applying. Only four respondents had prior knowledge of the job, having had friends or older siblings who had been reserve officers previously. The others were astonished at the amount of power allotted to them after minimal training. As one officer said "I was surprised, we didn't even have to pass a physical fitness test to get in. It just seemed too easy."⁸

Background check

To conclude the hiring process, summer reserve officers must submit to a thorough background check. Unlike hiring practices for full-time officers, summer reserve officers in Maine are not required to complete psychological evaluations or polygraph tests.⁹ Instead, police departments rely on thorough background checks before hiring. In the current department, officers are asked to complete a self-reported criminal history form, consisting of questions about prior criminal activity including drug use, alcohol use, drunk driving, and involvement in assaults, among other criminal activities. Rather than perform laborious and expensive polygraph examinations, the police department warns officers that if they lie on this one criminal background check, it could follow them through the rest of their career. They inform the applicants that for full-time employment, polygraph tests are mandatory and that wherever they go, their responses in this initial criminal history form will follow them. Respondents said that the threat of ruining their careers for lying was daunting. One respondent noted:

They ask you about every possible thing you could have done wrong. I mean speeding tickets, shoplifting, underage drinking, and what drugs you have tried. I was terrified. I thought if I told them some of the stuff I did when I was a kid that I'd be fired. On the other hand though, I've wanted to be a full-time cop my entire life so I didn't want to ruin those chances by lying. In the end, telling the truth worked out, but I was a nervous wreck for two weeks.

This example shows how one respondent was frightened into telling the truth in the background check. Although the method may not be foolproof, threatening an applicant's entire future in law enforcement can be a very efficient way for the targeted police department to force applicants into telling the truth. All participants noted that admitting their personal criminal history to a police department was an awkward but necessary part of the application process.

Following the completion of the personal criminal history paperwork, summer officers are asked to provide information to the police department's detectives pertaining to their previous addresses, employers, and four non-family references who know them well. Detectives use this information to delve into applicants' real history and to examine any character flaws that may not have come forward in prior parts of the interview. The detectives make phone calls to the most recent employers and the four references provided by the applicants. They also contact neighbors, college roommates, and sometimes professors to gauge the character of each applicant. Respondents commented on how it feels to have a police detective meticulously investigating your past. One officer was astonished that they called his childhood neighbor. He said:

They even called *Mrs. Smith*¹⁰! She was my neighbor growing up. Man, she hated me because I broke her window at least three times with a baseball. She yelled at me for everything; loud music, driving too fast, having too many people over when my parents were out of town. I guess she must have held back the anger towards me because I'm here now. But when I found out they called her, I was nervous. I really didn't like them prying into my past so much.

Another respondent mentioned the awkwardness the investigation created for his college friends. He recalled coming back to his dorm room after his roommate had been contacted by one of the detectives.

I got back from lunch and my roommate told me he just got off the phone with the cops. He said some detective called him, and he thought it was about the party he was at the night before. The police came and broke it up. He thought he was getting in trouble for underage drinking. But instead, the detective asked

him about all of my drinking habits, if I was an angry person, and if he could trust me. I should have warned him that I put his name down and he might get a call from the police department. But I didn't even think they would call him.

Fear of ruining the chances of employment because of the background check was an underlying theme among the respondents. Since this was the first background investigation for the majority of participants, having their past revealed to employers was a distressing experience to endure. All respondents recalled being taken aback initially by the thoroughness of the background investigation.

In summary, respondents viewed the hiring process as a nerve-wracking experience. For the majority of the participants (11 out of 17), this was their first experience with a law enforcement hiring process. Although the reserve officer employment application is not as meticulous as full-time applications are, participants indicated their concerns about obtaining employment due to insufficiencies in the interview process or their past behaviors.

Perceptions of Training

Summer reserve officers in the focus police department were required to attend an abbreviated version of the full-time police academy training consisting of 100 hours of in-class instruction and an additional 80 hours of instruction from full-time officers within the police department. Summer officers were asked to describe their feelings of preparedness to perform police duties subsequent to their training.¹¹

It should be noted that at the time of the current study, summer reserve police officers, cumulatively, received less than one-seventh of the state mandated training required to become a full-time police officer. Still, after completing the 100 hour Law Enforcement Pre-Service (LEPS) Academy, summer reserve officers are given a badge and firearm and possess full arrest powers. The observed department did, however, supplement the LEPS 100 hours training module with 80 hours of in-house instruction which is scenario-based and intends to expose summer officers to a variety of situations they may encounter. Yet, while full-time police officers received an additional six months of field training by a Field Training Officer, the summer reserve officers did not receive this at the time of the data collection; rather they had to learn on the job.

Perceptions of LEPS 100 hour course and in-house training.

Respondents' perceptions of the LEPS 100 hour course were generally negative. Returning summer officers seemed to be more skeptical and pessimistic about the amount of training they received. They attributed this cynicism to a lack of situational based training and misperceptions of what they would actually encounter while on the job. The majority of the veteran reserve officers said that the training they received was inadequate and left

them unqualified to deal with the situations they encountered. Furthermore, the returning seasonal officers viewed the training process as a way for the department to use them for patrol while escaping liability for the mistakes made by reserve officers.

When asked what he thought about the 100 hour course, one participant with four years of experience said mockingly:

The 100 hours course is a joke. It's just enough to take the liability off of the police department and onto the reserves. Myself and everyone else go down the hill¹² on our first day and think "what the hell just happened?" You're thrown all this information in a very short period of time, and we are expected to know just enough to make us dangerous. Like we know enough to be dangerous, but they document the training so it's on us if we screw up.

This anecdote indicates the frustration of one respondent with the type of training provided to summer officers. Other respondents echoed his remarks believing the course made them proficient in the law and the limits of their authority, but it failed to prepare them for the situations they would encounter. Another veteran officer responded to the same question by saying:

The training itself doesn't help. Random people talk to us and we have no idea what we are supposed to tell them. We come out of a school setting where we need to know enough to pass a test, but here you need to know these laws and how to implement them because it's *your job!* I took the in class and in-house training seriously but the real training came through working on the job not in the classroom.

One respondent shared a similar view in regards to the LEPS 100 hour course:

Oh my goodness. I consider myself to be a good learner but I thought it (the 100 hour course) was a really poor class. I wasn't impressed by it at all. I feel like I was much better equipped when I was trained by the department. I think that some of the instructors were good but most didn't teach, they were just spewing stories and information. It's just a class that allows them to remove the liability from the police department to the individual officer.

Although most returning officers had pessimistic views of the LEPS training, their comments indicated in-house training was more beneficial. They believed that the scenarios provided them with some real experience with the crimes they would encounter. One veteran summer reserve explained why the in-house training was more useful for him:

The 100 hour course was a waste compared to the in-house stuff. There is no experience like firsthand experience, so the classes taught us nothing. If I hadn't gone through the practical scenarios, I would not have been as prepared. The in-house training was much better; we did a lot of situation stuff that helped me. Like FSTs [Field Sobriety Tests], without that I would have been lost and had no idea what to do with a drunk driver. If we didn't have that training, I would have been unprepared. I wouldn't know how to deal with people lying to me. I'd be totally blindsided.

Many veteran summer officers, like this one, indicated that scenario based training is more effective. They believed that summer officers are given a large amount of responsibility with minimal experience. These participants opined that summer reserve officers would benefit from more situation based training. In-house training not only prepared them more for the job, but it allowed them to apply laws learned in the 100 hour course in simulated settings.

First year reserve officers' responses closely mirrored the views of veteran respondents toward the LEPS and in-house training. In their initial interview, rookie respondents displayed negative views of the LEPS training and favored the in-house instruction. In several interviews, participants verbalized their concern with the instruction method used in the 100 hour course. One respondent reflected on his training experience saying, "The 100 hour course was just dry, boring, and seemed like it was more to ensure liability would be lifted off of the police department." Another first year officer agreed that the course was boring and failed to prepare him for the duties of the job:

[The 100 hour course] was basically just a law class. It wasn't taken very seriously by the students. Basically the instructors were just saying they needed to cover the material for liability issues. I thought it was rushed. They didn't have much time to cover everything. I would have liked to have more hands-on practical work. The situations they told us about were extremes, not how to deal with day to day things.

They believed that the practical applications of the laws they learned in mock scenarios prepared them more adequately. In addition, the groups were smaller, and the instructors were full-time officers in the department, offering more one-on-one time with each trainee. When comparing the in-house training to the 100 hours course, one respondent said:

The in-house training is by far better than the 100 hour course. It was more interactive and it was a smaller environment. There were only nine of us out there so we had a full-time guy helping each of us individually. That was really helpful to me.

Perhaps even more alarming than the low amount of scenario based training is the firearms instruction portion of the LEPS 100 hour certification. The LEPS curriculum allots just eight hours of instruction to firearms. The only requirement for reserve officers to gain firearm certification is that they hit a target with 40 out of 50 rounds in two consecutive sessions. Firearms qualifications take place on one Saturday during the 100 hour course. On this day, as many as 100 officers are streamlined through the qualification requirements. Up to 20 officers line up with an instructor behind them and are coached through firing 50 rounds at a target from various distances. For some aspiring reserve officers, this is the first time they have fired a weapon. The majority of cadets who have experience with a firearm before have never been trained in combat fire, nor have they fired a handgun before.

Both first year and veteran participants were asked to describe their experiences at the firing range. Three respondents revealed that they had not handled or fired a gun of any type before firearms qualifications. Six participants said that they had limited experience with shooting rifles, but had never used a handgun. The remaining six respondents indicated that they had some experience with firing handguns, but had never been through a firearms qualification process. One reserve officer with no experience firing a weapon commented on the training he received.

It was my first time shooting a gun, I didn't know much about guns. I actually didn't know anything about guns. When they first gave it to us I learned about the parts and pieces. My first time shooting I was uncomfortable and didn't even know how to hold the gun. Needless to say I failed the first qualification. But they worked with me a little bit; then I was able to pass eventually.

Another first time shooter recalled:

[I] went in green. It was intense. They had us shoot at different distances, and we had to hit the target 40 out of 50 times. I could remember my hands were shaking, and I couldn't stop them from moving. I was that nervous.

Officers who indicated they had fired a weapon before were also intimidated by the qualification process. Respondents said the process itself was what was intimidating. Each qualifier was assigned one firearm instructor. Instructors stood directly behind the qualifier and picked apart their shooting techniques. Suggestions for more efficient shooting were offered, however, respondents recalled the experience as unnerving and stressful. The candidate explained:

I've been using guns since I was a kid, not a handgun though. But it's a nerve-wracking experience because you have someone standing over your shoulder telling you everything you are doing is wrong. You get through it, but I think we need more than just one day at the range.

In a similar vein, a participant detailed his apprehension about the firearm qualification process for reserve officers:

It was the first time I'd ever shot a handgun. I did well enough, but I think that the procedures could be improved. I thought our instructor who introduced the guns to us was nice. But we don't get to shoot nearly enough to become proficient. All of the officers that I talked to said that we need to shoot much more than we do and I agree...At your initial qualification you have 200 people just trying to get 40 out of 50 within the target. You're kind of rushed through, and I still don't feel comfortable drawing my weapon or shooting.

Participants' overall views of the training were negative. While most respondents viewed the in-house training they received as beneficial, they were dissatisfied with the 100 hour course and firearms instruction. Time constraints on police departments that rely on summer reserve officers necessitate the quick and abbreviated training curriculum due to time and resource constraints. Most respondents agreed that more hands-on, scenario based instruction would be advantageous to the inexperienced reserve officers.

From personal experience, the researcher's views of training procedures coincide with the respondents' depictions. Learning laws and in-class training is crucial to becoming a law enforcement officer. However, understanding through hands-on training gives the police cadet realistic settings that he or she will inevitably encounter. The participants' insights on the training process illustrate their concern with the amount and type of training they receive from the LEPS certification course. The lack of scenario-based training seems to be the most significant shortcoming of the state mandated training. Participant observation, however, revealed that full-time officers were readily available and willing to provide backup for reserve officers. Moreover, several of the full-time officers in the department had also served as reserve officers both in the reporting agency and other departments. Accordingly, the full-time officers served as mentors to the reserves and seemed understand the necessity to assist reserve officers by providing backup, giving advice, and taking the lead on more serious calls. Finally, the reserve officers patrolled on foot or bicycle in congested beach and tourist areas which restricted their mobility. Subsequently, the common calls that reserve officers responded to were petty theft complaints and parents who had lost sight of their children briefly. To be sure, the majority of the calls handled by reserve officers in this study were not very serious, and when more serious calls arose, full-time officers provided sufficient backup or took over the call.

Through participant observation of the firearms qualifications process, the researcher recognized an overwhelming anxiousness among the summer officers. For individuals who have never held a gun, let alone fired one, the experience is daunting. If an individual fails to qualify the first time, ev-

everyone at the firing range is aware of his/her insufficiency. Despite the fact that the majority of officers eventually pass, the nervousness of the officers was apparent. Nearly every qualifier was visibly uneasy with the process. However, most made it through and obtained certification.

DISCUSSION/CONCLUSION

The research findings from this exploratory study support much of the literature which describes the background of the individuals who apply to become summer reserve police officers. Summer reserve officers participating in this study were current college students or recent college graduates. The youngest participant was 21 years old and the oldest was 25 years of age. Eleven participants had earned a bachelor's degree in criminal justice, sociology, or psychology. One participant was entering his final year of college pursuing a bachelor's degree in criminal justice. The remaining three participants were currently working toward obtaining a master's degree in criminal justice. Participants learned about the summer reserve officer program through advertisements at their respective colleges, police recruit testing centers, or word of mouth from acquaintances familiar with departments employing summer officers.

The qualitative data indicate that participants entered the job for three basic reasons. First, respondents suggested they became summer reserves to test the waters of law enforcement, prior to making a career out of it. Second, some respondents indicated that their future occupational life was in a state of uncertainty, and being reserve officers gave them the time and money needed to delay a decision. Third, respondents looked to build their résumés and networking opportunities by becoming summer reserve officers, using the job as a gateway towards a full-time law enforcement position. Prior research suggests that this is the primary reason for an individual to become a reserve officer in general. Because the majority of reserve officers expect to enter a career in law enforcement, they exploit the opportunity to build a foundation for becoming a full-time law enforcement officer (Aragon, 1993; Arwood et al., 2005; Weinblatt, 1991a). Similarly, participants in this study sought to use their relationships with full-time officers to obtain employment with other agencies. Respondents recognized that their service as a reserve officer provided them the opportunity to network through their contacts with full-time officers. Furthermore, participants believed that their experience as reserve officers would make them more marketable when searching for full-time employment.

The extant literature regarding summer police officers does not allude to any of the issues found in this study regarding their perceptions of the hiring process. For 11 of the participants, this was their first experience with a police hiring process. Every participant indicated that the employment application was the least intimidating requirement of the hiring process. The

panel interview and background check, however, produced the most anxiety among respondents. Since this was the first police hiring process endured by most participants, they were unfamiliar with its seriousness. In the panel interview, respondents recalled feeling attacked and unprepared for the types of questions posed by full-time officers. The most problematic questions asked involved hypothetical situations that tested respondents' ethics and ability to remain calm in stressful situations. Some respondents believed they failed the oral interview and that their chances of obtaining employment were ruined. Furthermore, three participants admitted they were considerably unfamiliar with the functions of summer reserve officers. They said they did not know they would be afforded full arrest powers, that they would be carrying a gun, and were surprised at the level of responsibility they would be given after minimal training.

In regard to the background check, reserve officers said that they were surprised at the extent their past was investigated. They commented on their acquaintances who were contacted by detectives of the department. Respondents recalled being surprised that their past behaviors and relationships could be detrimental to their chances of being hired.

The third portion of the interview with summer officers, also unexamined by prior literature, pertained to their perceptions of the training they received. Similar to other reserve officer programs, summer officers in the examined department receive less training than full-time police officers (Aragon, 1993). Participants were generally dissatisfied with the training they received. Respondents indicated that the training was mundane, and their ability to retain information on the in class topics was limited. They recalled feeling unprepared during their first week on the job. They were more positive toward the hands-on in-house training they received. The qualitative data show that they preferred the hands-on approach because it provided them the opportunity to work through potential interactions they would encounter on the street and beach.

Summer officers were asked to specifically comment on the firearms training they received, and most indicated that they were very uncomfortable with the training. Many said that although the instructors supervising them were qualified and helpful, they believed they needed to fire their weapon more to become efficient. Sending officers to patrol with a small amount of instruction on the use of firearms is problematic. Participants all acknowledged the potential problems that could arise from their lack of training. The focus department, however, has yet to have a summer officer sued civilly for their actions or injured while on patrol. Other departments in the state have had problems with reserve officer liability. For example, one reserve in another department was involved in an officer involved shooting that resulted in the death of an individual (Hench, 2011), but this incident was ruled a justified shooting. Undoubtedly, the lack of liability issues in the responding agency are because the department ensures that full-time offi-

cers are available to back up reserve officers when needed. Specifically, reserve officers typically handled less serious calls (e.g., petty theft), and when they were dispatched to more serious situations, full-time officers provided backup and advice or completely took over the call. Moreover, the full-time officers served as mentors to the reserves; they provided feedback and advice on how to handle calls and made sure that they were quick to respond when reserve officers had questions or needed assistance.

Parallel to the findings in the current study, research regarding police officer perceptions of their ability to perform daily job requirements indicates that officers are dissatisfied with the ability of pre-service training to prepare them for the occupation (Alpert & Dunham, 1997; Marion, 1998; Ness, 1991; Olivia & Compton, 2010). These findings are problematic, for law enforcement officers' perceptions and behaviors are driven by the initial training received prior to engaging in patrol activities (Bradford & Pynes, 1999; Marion, 1998).

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Several practical recommendations for improving the experience of summer officers arose from the research. First, the hours required for the 100 hour part-time officer academy should be increased to mirror seasonal officer training in other states. For example, in New Jersey, summer officers are required to complete 460 hours of required training (Cape May County, 2015), while training for reserve officers in Massachusetts is a minimum of 310 hours with 20 hours of firearms training (Massachusetts Office of Public Safety, 2015). Summer officers indicated their preference for scenario-based in-house training versus classroom instruction. Participants believed they benefited more from simulated traffic stops, building searches, and field sobriety tests. Thus, training focus should shift from classroom instruction to scenario-based training to better prepare summer officers for their job. Second, summer reserve officers identified their dissatisfaction with the firearms training. For those entrusted with the responsibility to use such a tool in a high-risk situation, one would hope for better training in this area, to include more firearms and shoot/don't shoot training. Finally, respondents often indicated the need for a field training officer mentor, a service that could be provided by veteran summer officers. New summer officers should be teamed with veteran summer officers during their first several weeks on the street to streamline the learning process and familiarize rookies with their patrol tasks.

It should be noted that the Maine Criminal Justice Academy has (on its own) increased the training provided to seasonal officers after the conclusion of this study. Specifically, the 100 hour LEPS course has been increased to 200 hours of instruction. Seasonal officers are now mandated to attend 40 hours of online training, accompanied by 80 hours of in-class scenario

based instruction. Additionally, Maine now requires that seasonal officers meet physical fitness requirements, including a one-minute pushup test, one-minute sit up test, and a 1.5 mile run. Finally, police departments are now required to complete 80 hours of on-the-job observation, to evaluate the performance of seasonal officers during their initial transition into the job (Maine Criminal Justice Academy, 2015).

Similar recommendations have been made to improve the training of full-time law enforcement officers. Many studies suggest a shift from traditional law enforcement training to Problem Based Learning (PBL) practices. For example, Werth (2011) studied the use of PBL in law enforcement training to enhance officer preparedness through “building problem-solving, decision-making, multi-tasking and collaboration skills” (p. 326). The goal of PBL is the use of situational learning to expose trainees to realistic calls for service and problems. Through PBL, cadets are better prepared to adequately respond to calls while working in the field (Werth, 2011). Perhaps PBL methods would be beneficial to improve the preparedness of summer police officers as well.

While providing the first data-based study of the unique role of seasonal police officers in the field of policing, this study is not without its limitations including the relatively small size of the examined police department. This limitation is attributable to the accessibility of the research department, for during the time frame of the research, the department employed just 17 summer reserve officers and 25 full-time police officers. Further, only 15 out of 17 summer reserve officers participated in interviews. The small sample size restricts the generalizability of the findings to larger police departments with more seasonal officers. However, due to the dearth of knowledge pertaining to summer reserve officers, the findings in the current study are significant to policing research.

Second, the lead researcher’s prior status as a summer reserve officer could have limited his ability to be objective during the research. Because the researcher was employed by the targeted department for two years prior to the study, some experiences portrayed by respondents could have been taken for granted. To address this issue, the researcher took extensive efforts to remain unbiased. He continually probed respondents to elaborate on their responses when they discussed topics he was familiar with. Furthermore, the researcher requested that participants treat him as an outsider possessing little to no knowledge about summer officers during the interviews. Despite the researcher’s previous experience as a summer reserve, he was constantly cognizant of the importance objectivity played in the study.

Summer reserve officers make up a substantial population in police departments that serve coastal tourist communities in the United States during the summer season. Prior policing research has failed to examine this unique form of sworn law enforcement personnel. This study provides insight into

the training and occupation of summer reserve officers, in an attempt to address this gap in the literature. Due to the small sample size, the current study does not generalize about all reserve officers or programs; rather, it aims to provoke further investigation of seasonal police officers in other jurisdictions. Future research should focus on how summer officer perceive their role and ability to function and their capacity for learning their patrol tasks in such a short time frame. There is also the need to explore the relationship between new and veteran summer officers, as well as all summer officers with full-time police officers of the department. This research should include interviews with full-time officers, as well as focus groups that include full-time and seasonal officers. This would allow for a more complete picture of the relationship between seasonal officers and full-time personnel. Moreover, research should examine additional types of seasonal officers used in other jurisdictions that do not carry firearms (Howard County Police Department, 2015). Specifically, some jurisdictions use unarmed police cadets to increase their forces during peak seasons; future studies could compare the experiences of non-sworn, seasonal police cadets with those of sworn summer officers. The addition of further studies pertaining to summer and seasonal reserve officers will help build an understanding of this unique subgroup of police officers in America, the summer cops.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Since the current study was conducted, the Maine Criminal Justice Academy training has been extended to 200 hours of instruction that must be completed before certification as a law enforcement officer. Specifically, seasonal officers are required to complete a 40 hour online training curriculum. Additionally, the officers receive 80 hours of instruction using scenario based instruction in the classroom. Seasonal officers are now required to complete a physical fitness assessment that incorporates a one-minute pushup test, one-minute sit up test, and requires cadets to run 1.5 miles. Finally, the curriculum has been updated to include an additional 80 hours of on-the-job observation by their sponsoring police department (Maine Criminal Justice Academy, 2015).
- 2 Some police departments also use police cadets to supplement extant police personnel during busy tourist seasons (Howard County Police Department, 2015). The focus of this study, however, is on officers that are specifically employed by law enforcement agencies during the summer months.
- 3 There were 17 summer reserve officers employed during the time of the study. However, 1 summer officer refused to participate in interviews, while the second officer abstaining from partaking in the interviews was the lead researcher in this study.

- 4 Interviews with returning summer officers combined aspects of the new reserves' first and second interviews.
- 5 For eleven of the 15 summer reserve officer participants this was their first police hiring process experience.
- 6 Town selectmen are elected officials similar to a city council member.
- 7 The community member must be a person who is not affiliated with the police department or any town employer (i.e., the Parks and Recreation Department or the Town Manager's Office).
- 8 In 2011, the State of Maine made it mandatory that reserve officers pass the same physical fitness requirements as full-time officers. However at the time of the research there were no physical fitness tests required to be eligible for the job.
- 9 In other states (e.g., New Jersey), seasonal officers, called Class II Special Officers, must complete a psychological evaluation and polygraph test (Rowan College at Gloucester County, 2015).
- 10 All names used in the participants' responses will be substituted with false names to protect the confidentiality of the respondent.
- 11 Again, it should be noted that the Maine Criminal Justice Academy has extended the 100 LEPS training to 200 hours of instruction. This training has been extended to include a 40 hour online training curriculum, 80 hours of in-class scenario based training, and 80 hours of supervision by their sponsoring agency, prior to certification as a Maine law enforcement officer (Maine Criminal Justice Academy, 2015).
- 12 All areas patrolled by summer officers are within walking or bicycle distance from the police department. The police department is located on a hill to the east of all patrol areas. When making reference to the "hill" the respondents are referring to leaving the police department to begin their patrol shift.

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Book Review:
Rachel Zimmer Schneider, *Battered Women Doing Time: Injustice in the Criminal Justice System*

First Forum Press, 2014; 152 pp.;
ISBN: 978-1-935049-79-1

Reviewed by: *Cortney A. Franklin, Sam Houston State University, USA*

Advocacy and scholarly attention directed toward the plight of battered women began in the mid-1970s (del Martin, 1975). Since that time, a host of research has been conducted on the incidence and prevalence of domestic violence, the dynamics of battering relationships (LaViolette and Barnette, 2014), the predictors of why men batter, and the risk of increasing harm for survivors who are courageous enough to leave domestically violent relationships. As Lenore Walker (1977) so insightfully recognized in her early work using a sample of sheltered women who had escaped a domestically violent partner, these relationships are characterized by specific stages and psychological symptoms that manifest as an inability to see a way out, illustrated by the battered woman's syndrome (BWS). Several seminal works have been published on BWS (Walker, 2009), including research on battered women who kill their abusers (Ewing, 1987) and the often disappointing legal response that seems to protect a male-centered justification for self-defense in instances of lethal harm (Gillespie, 1989).

Schneider's qualitative work is a unique and important contribution to this literature because it provides details drawn from a selection of cases from 120 Ohio women who were imprisoned for murdering their batterers and who subsequently applied for clemency in the 1990s. This marked a period of time during which the state of Ohio was reconsidering its court decision-making in light of evidence to support BWS and the legality of self-defense in this context. The majority of these women were denied their clemency requests; however, Schneider's book illustrates, with painstaking detail, the lives of the 26 women granted freedom, their early histories of relationship abuse, and the long-term challenges they faced upon being released from prison decades after their incarceration. Her interviews span a range of subjects over 20 years, including 13 women granted clemency and 12 women who were denied clemency. Conversational interviews were conducted in homes, restaurants, and at the women's places of employment. Interviews with the women still incarcerated took place at four correctional institutions in the state of Ohio. For those women who were granted clemency, Schneider's stated focus for this research was to better understand the

depth of challenges faced by the women in their interpersonal relationships, the array of mental and physical health challenges they faced post-abuse and post-incarceration, their spirituality, and the way their life experiences impacted their “sense of self” (2014, p.9); included were their histories of profound abuse. The book is organized chronologically to follow the lives of the women she interviewed. We learn of their childhood histories, their dysfunction with adult relationships, their court experiences, the clemency process, and their struggles during the aftermath of their release.

Schneider’s interviews uncover an all-too-common pattern in the lives of battered women. Indeed, their histories of adult abuse began in what would have appeared to be benign relationships but these trajectories quickly transitioned into escalating violence. Women described regular beatings, a lack of police protection (Lutze & Simons, 2003), and a sense of helplessness. Consistent with existing research, these women became adept at surviving within the bounds of a toxic relationship (Walker, 1977). Many women experienced childhood violence in their families-of-origin and identified the extent that this played a role in later revictimization (Widom, 1989); they characterized this violence as turning-points in their life narratives. Reading through detailed case histories in Schneider’s early chapters, it is evident that these women’s lives are textbook examples of the worst and most violent relationships. To be sure, women killed their batterers during violent physical confrontations or after severe beatings, being stalked, or having their children threatened. Two women shot their abusers as the men slept—a fundamental sign of distress and learned helplessness.

After the murders took place and once the women entered the criminal justice system, many found that even mention of abuse in their relationship negatively influenced their system processing. Indeed, research on gender and court-decision making has consistently demonstrated that an “ideal victim” is looked upon more favorably than those less worthy, and this has influenced case outcomes (Franklin & Fearn, 2008). For battered women who killed their abusers, fighting back only furthered exacerbated the negative stereotype of women in domestically violent relationships. Rather than enhancing empathy, women were met with increasing hostility. Until the 1990s, BWS was often inadmissible in court, little knowledge was available to the average community member or juror, and expert testimony provided by clinicians was not typically permitted.

After conviction and sentencing, Schneider’s interviews reveal the women’s sense of betrayal by the justice system, which was compounded by the lack of police protection during the 1970s and 1980s when battering was a private family matter. To make matters worse, Schneider exposes the conditions under which these women were incarcerated. Women were kept in facilities that fostered further abuse and were without gender-responsive or gender-appropriate programming. This is something that remains problematic into the 21st century despite the expansion of the female prison pop-

ulation (Sharp & Muraskin, 2003). Adjustment to prison for many women assuaged illogical feelings of fear that their batterers, though dead, would seek revenge. In essence, they felt safer behind bars. Surprisingly, they found themselves transitioning from victims to survivors—a pseudo-healing process ensued in the most unlikely of places.

Perhaps one of the most instructive components of Schneider's work is the way she juxtapositions the women who were denied clemency with those whose clemency was granted. Two chapters are devoted to detailed interviews and discussion. Among these two groups of women, little differences emerge in terms of family histories of abuse or the battering trajectories in their adult relationships. Despite this lack of significant difference, those denied clemency remained convicted murderers incarcerated in correctional facilities with options for transformative programming and prison consciousness-raising groups while reassuring themselves that they were not "bad people" (2009, p. 65). They found themselves empowered but unable to flourish. Many looked to spirituality for healing. The prison environment required that they navigate the dangers of male correctional staff, the subpar health care provisions, the loss of connection to children and loved ones, and the "tortuous" (p. 83) and "abusive" (p. 84) parole process. These sentiments are not surprising given the male-dominated nature of the prison complex and the ways in which correctional institutions have been designed by men for men; there has been little consideration for women inmates (Rafter, 1997), particularly the majority of whom who have significant abuse histories (Chesney-Lind & Pasko, 2004).

In contrast, those granted clemency, whether pardoned or commuted, were no longer sitting in prison. Schneider notes, however, they had their share of demons with which to reconcile. In one substantial way, these women were different, for they felt vindicated. Knowing the Governor believed them, they felt it would be easier to explain their situation to others. The aftermath of release did not prove easy. Women had difficulty with life on the outside as it pertained to dealing with questions about where they had been, and why they were unable to navigate the fast-paced environment to which they were not accustomed. Several suffered PTSD symptoms which were only exacerbated by the whirlwind pace of life in the free world and the fear and hypervigilance this produced. Women struggled with housing, community service for domestic violence shelters, and the stigma of a felony conviction for those who were only pardoned and whose sentences were not commuted. Women often turned to alcohol as a coping mechanism and struggled with long-term mental and physical health consequences from their abusive relationships, difficulties re-establishing relationships with their children, and significant hesitation in entering intimate partnerships with men. Their post-traumatic growth process was lengthy, difficult, and plagued by serious hurdles.

The contribution made by Schneider's book cannot be understated. Interviews provided in her book directly support much of what we know about

domestically violent relationships and battered women, but add to that knowledge through careful consideration of the criminal justice processing of battered women who kill and the lackluster support they received by police and court officials, particularly as was the case in the 1970s and 1980s. As readers, we are engulfed in the difficulties these women face in navigating a prison environment that simultaneously protected and disempowered them and are equally devastated by the palpable disappointment for those women denied clemency who had to live out their days in Ohio's correctional institutions. Similarly, the plight of those released, while not as bleak, brought a host of unanticipated challenges that shed light on the long-term consequences of abuse, serving time in prison, the stigma of battering, the difficulties in reconnecting interpersonally, and the unabated stereotypes still fostered by society's general population about domestically violent relationships and battered women. Schneider succeeds in producing empathy for these women and outrage at a justice system that has fallen short in fulfilling its responsibility to look out for the most powerless among us.

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Book Review:
Alice Goffman, *On the Run: Fugitive Life in an American City*

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ISBN: 978-0-226-13671-4

Reviewed by: *Dzhamilia Makashova, Kansas State University, USA*

Alice Goffman's *On the Run* is an ethnographic study of the impacts of the war on drugs and policing in an American urban neighborhood. Her research started during her sophomore year at the University of Pennsylvania in Dr. David Grazian's urban ethnography class. As a part of the class, Goffman's assignment was to pick a site to observe and take notes, and she got a job at a cafeteria at the west edge of Penn's campus with Miss Deena, a Black woman in her sixties who managed the staff. Through this job, Goffman was introduced to Miss Deena's family and their local Black community. These connections made it possible for Goffman to spend six years in a segregated Black neighborhood in Philadelphia (pseudonymously called 6th Street). During her years of intensive research, Goffman explored the impact of mass incarceration in the United States, and tough on crime policies on this poor Black community, particularly on the lives of young Black men who circulate in and out of prisons and the lives of their loved ones.

On the Run focuses mostly on participants Mike, Anthony, Chuck, Reggie, and Tim, individuals in their late adolescence and early adulthood. Chapter by chapter, Goffman details their legal entanglements, drug dealing involvement, arrests (some of which occurred at an early age) and negotiations with the penal system. These young men constantly flee from search warrants, parole violations, and/or unpaid court fees. As detailed in Chapter 2 ("The Art of Running") evasion becomes an important part of their daily routine. As the author writes, "For young men around 6th Street who worry that police will take them into custody, the everyday relations, localities, and activities that others rely on for their basic needs become a net of entrapment" (p. 52). By evading the criminal justice system, these participants subsequently avoid work, funerals, and hospitals (which would necessitate turning to illegal or illegitimate means for medical attention when injured).

In Chapters 3 and 5, Goffman describes the social life of the fugitives and how their family members are affected by their legal problems. Since these young men may become involved with the criminal justice system early on, courtrooms, probation centers, prisons, and juvenile detention centers replace the educational system for most of them. As a result, relationships be-

tween participants and their family members are tested through attendance at court hearings, visits in jail, and efforts to hide fugitives from police. For example, sometimes a mother may help hide her son from police and, when caught, she may visit him regularly in prison, give him money for commissary items, write letters, and organize parties for her son's return from prison. In addition to their mothers, their girlfriends' loyalty and dedication are also tested through these repeated visits in jail, phone calls, and support at court hearings.

These chapters also reveal how relatives became targets for police who seek information on the fugitives' locations and status. The techniques that are used by police to pressure the family members can be brutal: they may destroy property, physically hurt family, and present threats of eviction. Indeed, Goffman herself became a victim of police brutality and was interrogated as well. All these events together reflect how much collateral damage follows the legal troubles of these young men.

Throughout the book, Goffman repeatedly reflects on the heavy police presence in the neighborhood. However, she stresses that these poor people on the 6th Street cannot turn to police for help, since for them police present more danger than a reliable source of justice. These circumstances encourage the participants to settle disputes among themselves instead of turning to police. In addition, prior incarceration also presents difficulties for the young men; criminal records prevent them from getting a job, having a bank account, or obtaining a valid driver's license. As a result, they repeatedly get in trouble with law for using fake IDs or selling marijuana, since no other employment is available for them.

Although most of the book is devoted to examining the lives of a small group of young men with legal troubles and their dealings with police and courts, Chapter 7 talks about "Clean People." By "Clean People" Goffman describes those who generally avoid trouble, keep their distance from the legally precarious young men, or help these young men in some ways but still manage to stay clean themselves. This chapter echoes the discussion of "street" and "decent" families from Elijah Anderson's (1999) *Code of the Street*, in which residents label themselves as either being decent or from the street.

This book may leave many readers with feelings of guilt or resentment about the state of race and poverty in America, particularly in regard to crime and criminal justice. Goffman does an incredible job detailing the everyday lives of young Black men and the price they pay for their legal entanglements. Despite the overall strength of the book, there are some weaknesses worth acknowledging. For instance, Goffman's research sample was small; it was limited to this one Black neighborhood. This issue, however, is not Goffman's alone, for it reflects a limitation of ethnographic research generally. In addition, there are times where Goffman's writing comes off as overly negative toward the denizens of 6th Street. The entire book talks about not only crimi-

nal actions of young Black men, but their failures in personal life. Because relatively little time is afforded to discussing so-called “clean people,” one may come away with the impression that almost all young black men in this area are criminal and “dirty.” Regardless of these weaknesses, *On the Run* stands as a remarkable work exploring the lived consequences of tough on crime policies and the devastating effects of war on drugs in urban settings.

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Book Review:
Sharon S. Oselin, *Leaving Prostitution: Getting Out and Staying Out of Sex Work*

New York University Press, 2014; 206 pp.;
ISBN: 978-0814770375

Reviewed by: *Melisa M. Jaris, University of Houston, USA*

Leaving Prostitution highlights the critical role that prostitute-serving organizations (PSO) can play in prostitutes' efforts to leave the sex industry. PSOs can provide prostitutes subsidized housing, employment opportunities, food, transportation, counseling, education, and mentoring. These fundamental amenities offer prostitutes the life choices and confidence needed to leave the sex industry.

Author Sharon Oselin researched street prostitutes associated with PSOs for ten years. She traveled the nation and immersed herself in four PSOs, where she interacted with and interviewed clients and staff members. The analysis illustrates how society's perceptions about criminal and deviant behavior, personal life experience or crisis, and other factors such as drugs and alcohol often perpetuate and compound the decision to enter into, remain in, or return to prostitution. *Leaving Prostitution* is comprised of six chapters that explain Oselin's research methodology and intent, as well as illustrate some prostitutes' experiences. PSOs are highlighted as the central lifeline for the women's success.

The first chapter discusses street prostitution as a small portion of the sex industry and how it is viewed by society. Prostitutes are often viewed as victims, deviants, or criminals. Oselin intended to research only street prostitutes that had already exited prostitution, to examine the prostitutes' complete cycle. Her research introduced her to PSOs because they offer services and resources to prostitutes who want to leave sex work. These organizations' services range from full-time live-in programs to simple part-time programs and counseling. Oselin interviewed 40 clients and 14 staff members at four PSOs. She worked as a researcher and intern for three months. The testimonies of the staff and clients make it clear that the PSOs offering more in-depth services also provide the greatest opportunity for successful exit from the sex industry.

Chapter 2 challenges popularly held perceptions of sex workers. Exploring factors which contribute to prostitution, *All in a Day's Work: The Good, Bad, and Ugly* explores personal accounts of prostitutes' entrance to, life inside of, and exit from street prostitution. These include factors such as a need

for fast money, disadvantaged backgrounds (addiction, homelessness, abuse, etc.), and drug and alcohol abuse. The latter was discussed as a contributor to persistence in prostitution. Their testimonies also indicate the toll that long-term prostitution takes, including the fear of violence, drug and alcohol abuse, and multiple arrests. Such perils often contribute to “role exit” or leaving prostitution.

Chapter 3 details why the women left the sex industry and how they ended up in a PSO. Oselin examines two internal and two external factors that expedite the initial exits. The internal factors include personal reasons and pivotal events that prompt the change. The external factors are their knowledge of PSOs and personal bridges (assistance from trusted people). Although women may leave the trade on their own for these reasons, they are normally coupled with PSO accessibility.

The following chapter, *Getting On: Role Distancing* explains how PSOs encourage women leaving prostitution to adopt mannerisms and speech consistent with their new roles. Because of the stigma attached to prostitution, women are usually eager to distance themselves from the association when given the chance. Oselin takes note of some women who had trouble distancing themselves with this identity, which led to role conflict. This dissonance stalls their exit efforts and can quickly create a path back into prostitution.

Chapter 5 focuses on the women as they embrace their new lifestyles. At this stage, the women exhibit acceptance and understanding of their new social positions. Oselin discusses the importance of organizational roles in this phase, because positive influences and strong guidance can have a significant impact on the women’s overall success. Control mechanisms within the PSOs are significant in helping the women to achieve their goals. Coercive control mechanisms compel clients to talk and behave according to their new roles, maintain responsibility for themselves and accountability to others, and follow program rules. Normative control mechanisms include mutual monitoring of clients, helping them to form bonds with other clients, and providing them with role models.

Getting Out: Remaining Out of Sex Work summarizes Oselin’s research findings and implications. The women face a great challenge in completely changing their lives and their identities while working with PSOs. The temptations of their old roles will always be there in the form of drugs, alcohol, and former friends or acquaintances. Upon transforming into a new role, the women will be better equipped to set goals and make commitments. These commitments solidify the foundations of their new roles. Oselin’s research provides clear indication that solid structure and positive, continued support are paramount for the women who want to make significant lifestyle changes.

Lastly, Oselin offers recommendations for improving the quality of life for street prostitutes through harm-reduction programs, the spread of PSOs nationwide, and additional funding for such organizations. Oselin indicates that

legalizing or decriminalizing prostitution could serve to provide a safer working environment for prostitutes as well. As her research indicates, full-time PSO programs have tremendous impact on successfully exiting the sex industry. Oselin recommends further research to provide a larger cross-section of PSOs which may reveal other vital resource options not observed in this research. Perhaps future research or increased awareness of PSOs will help to penetrate the other PSOs that were reluctant to be part of Oselin's research.

Leaving Prostitution provides unique insight into the lives of street prostitutes. Many people may not truly know what it is like to be abused, abandoned, homeless, unemployed, or addicted to drugs. Oselin sheds light on what some people thought of as glamorous, exciting, empowering or easy money, but turned out to be a disenfranchising mirage. A glimpse of their fears, their struggles, and their achievements provides proof that they do have viable alternatives through some PSOs. Oselin's work is of particular value to sociology or criminology students and professionals, for they may be inclined to address issues of prostitution. The efforts of both fields of study could result in the development of additional PSO services or spur changes in prostitution laws.

Overall, the book is enlightening and informative, but may leave the reader wanting to know more in terms of the women's individual stories. The testimonials add a personal tone that validates the critical role of the PSOs, but the reader mostly gets snippets of the individual stories. Oselin has first-hand knowledge about what transpired for other women in the programs. The reader would benefit from having an appendix of case studies for some of the women (even one from each PSO) that includes a more inclusive look at their journeys. This may further humanize the perceived deviant or criminal, while highlighting the significance of PSOs.

Book Review:
S.F. Sharp, *Mean Lives, Mean Laws: Oklahoma's Women Prisoners.*

Rutgers University Press, 2014; 190 pp.;
ISBN: 978-0-8135-6275-9

Reviewed by: *Kerri Bellamy, Kansas State University, USA*

Using a feminist strain approach, Susan Sharp's *Mean Lives, Mean Laws: Oklahoma's Women Prisoners*, investigates the impact of incarceration on women in the Oklahoma prison system and their families. Oklahoma incarcerates women at a rate of 135 per 100,000, the highest in the nation. The book examines this high incarceration rate by investigating factors such as childhood abuse and neglect which may continue into adulthood and that contribute to women's imprisonment. Sharp makes it clear that once in prison there are few avenues for the women to obtain education and healthcare or to maintain relationships with family on the outside.

When discussing a major point in the book, the "mean laws" of Oklahoma, Sharp argues that drug laws disproportionately affect women because women often tend to have more serious drug problems and are disproportionately in the lower ranks of drug dealing enterprises which make them easier targets for law enforcement. These women are thus referred to as "doubly deviant" (pp.7)—they commit less serious crime but they tend to continue their criminal behavior. Their recidivism may be due in part to their addiction or the need to support their children. Contributing factors to recidivism in Oklahoma include long sentences, the scant instances of probation granted, the 85 percent rule, and a complicated parole process.

Among incarcerated women in Oklahoma, Sharp found multiple factors that lead to drug addiction and higher incarceration rates. First was a lack of basic education. Over a quarter of these inmates were released without ever having received education in prison. Second, Sharp noted that over half of the women had major psychiatric problems, mood disorders, psychotic disorders, and post-traumatic stress disorder. Third, most incarcerated women were generally not the first individuals in their families to be incarcerated.

To mitigate some of these issues, the prison system attempted to provide programming, but with little to no funding, the programs were often short lived. In addition, programs were found to be limited in many ways including admission capacity, the number of beds for substance abuse recovery, medical care, work opportunities, and educational opportunities. As a result of such programming deficiencies, the majority of women released were not well prepared, if at all, to succeed.

With these factors in mind, Sharp also studied the problems surrounding reentry, for these women faced difficulties with employment, housing, health, substance abuse, and their families. Many also dealt with homelessness, a lack of transportation, debt, and the crushing stigma of a felony conviction. All of these factors contribute to higher risks of recidivism.

Few of the formerly incarcerated women led productive, law-abiding lives upon release. Those who were successful, according to Sharp, used temporary housing, maintained sobriety, and returned to more stable families and jobs. Luckily, most of these women did not have serious health problems because few were fortunate enough to have health coverage like Medicaid. The women who were successful upon release cited a positive attitude as a significant contributing factor as well.

Sharp's study also spotlighted the fact that the outlook for children with incarcerated mothers was grim. These children were more likely to live in poverty and had unstable living arrangements, as well as multiple caregivers; they were more often placed in foster care. Maintaining mother-child contact during incarceration provides better outcome opportunities for both parties, but such arrangements were often difficult and expensive. Caregivers of these children were also burdened financially with the care of the child. As a result of these circumstances, the children were often depressed and had little opportunity to seek medical care and mental health treatment.

A key weakness of Sharp's book is that the analysis and arguments for changes to the system could be strengthened by conducting and comparing these findings to data on women serving time in other states. A key strength is the use of Tables throughout the book to graph data. Much of the data were listed in paragraph form throughout the text, and without the visual aid of tables, the information and statistics would have been muddled. Another strength was that chapters 5 (written by Juanita Ortiz) and 6 (written by Susan Sharp) make such a convincing argument about the reasons women recidivate. They point out that it should not be surprising that women recidivate. Rather, it is more surprising when they *do not* reoffend.

The book was effective at showing the reality for these women and their families. *Mean Lives, Mean Laws* was persuasive in showing the extent of the flaws in the prison system such as the lack of educational opportunities for the women. Strategies to attempt to fix the issues are offered; for example, allowing more women into the education program and getting more qualified instructors would strengthen the education program. Sharp's book also has important implications for policy with insights that could shape and craft corrections policies to more efficiently help women and their families with the issues described throughout. Overall, *Mean Lives, Mean Laws* is an easy yet informative read for students, academics, and laypersons alike. Sharp has accomplished an impressive piece of research that contributes to literature on mass incarceration and women in prison.

Book Review:
Nickie D. Phillips & Staci Strobl, *Comic Book Crime: Truth, Justice, and the American Way*

New York University Press, 2013; 289 pp.;
ISBN: 9780814767887

Reviewed by: *Jordan E. Mazurek, Eastern Kentucky University, USA*

In what can be described as an ethnographic content analysis of (super) heroic proportions, Nickie D. Phillips and Staci Strobl's *Comic Book Crime: Truth, Justice, and the American Way* provides an in-depth exploration of crime and justice discourses presented in the medium of the comic book in the first decade of the 2000s. The authors employ years of in-depth participant observation in the comic book subculture along with group interviews to inform their analysis of the story arcs in two hundred popular comic book series, along with a number of graphic novels, in the post-9/11 American context. Drawing on a cultural criminological framework, Phillips and Strobl skillfully weave in a host of intellectual perspectives as diverse as postcolonial theory, theology, and Freudian psychoanalysis in their interrogation of comic books as cultural artifacts in which they argue the "repetition of cultural meanings... reinforces particular notions of justice, especially the punishment philosophies of retributive justice and incapacitation... meted out by crime fighting heroes and superheroes who are depicted as predominantly white males defending a nostalgic American way of life." (p. 3)

The authors begin by establishing a brief history of the development of the comic book industry and the medium itself. Rooted in gritty detective dramas that arose in the 1930s, the industry rapidly expanded in popularity among youth via the gory and violent depictions of its crime and horror genres through the 1950s. However, a moral panic spearheaded by parental and religious crusaders and fueled by Frederic Wertham and his book *Seduction of the Innocent* soon ensued; the (anecdotal) causal linkage of the violent graphic and textual stories with the villainous specter of juvenile delinquency was proclaimed. The comics industry recoiled at potential sanctions and in the 1950s instituted self-imposed plot restrictions known as the Comics Code. The puritanical restrictions of the Code and its explicit directive to uphold the status quo "ensured that comic book content would thereafter perpetuate the interests of the ruling class and reaffirm stereotypical ideas about gender, race, and sexuality" (p. 27). The formulaic imposition of the Code, that "in every instance good shall triumph over evil," set the stage for the dominance of the superhero genre in the industry. The 1970s and 80s saw the gradual erosion of the Code's authority as publishers found it economically viable to publish outside its restrictions to more mature audiences.

Having situated the historical context of the industry, Phillips and Strobl begin their sampling with the culturally contemporary terrorist attacks of September 11th, 2001. They lay out a post-9/11 comic book formula in which nostalgic longings for an idealized past are juxtaposed with a dystopian present overridden with crime and threats of apocalyptic proportions along with inept and corrupt law enforcement and government officials. These forces drive and necessitate the intervention of messianic superheroes on a quest for apocalyptic justice; they constantly gaze toward utopias perpetually out of reach, utopias largely defined by their adherence to distinctly Judeo-Christian and Western values of goodness, justice, and individual accountability—an American cultural hegemony of globalized proportions. The mass anxiety generated by the real-world events of 9/11 and its aftermath are revealed to induce a “bipolar response” in comic narratives. With the threat of terrorism easily incorporated into this formulaic plot, many narratives fell into more predictable xenophobic riles of patriotic fervor. Importantly, however, other comics broke from the unquestioning loyalty displayed in previous wartime eras and, sometimes indirectly and sometimes more explicitly, challenged the erosion of civil liberties and problematic tactics of the Bush administration’s War on Terror. Unlike the nearly unanimous racist comic depictions of the Japanese in World War II, post-9/11 comics witnessed a significant increase in positively portrayed Muslim and Arab superheroes.

Much of the book is devoted to analysis of the growing diversity and potential counterhegemonic depictions of superheroes in the sample along the lines of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, and sexual orientation. Despite the expanded diversity of the early 2000s, the comic book medium, overall, lags far behind other popular culture mediums—the vast majority of its characters (hero and villain alike) conform to a White, male, heterosexual cultural script. Black, Latino, Asian, Native American, gay, lesbian, and female characters, while present, are few and far between. Usually taking on supporting roles, these characters often conform to essentialist stereotypes (while occasionally displaying more nuanced character development) and suffer from significantly shorter lifespans. The counterhegemonic potential of these diverse characters is perpetually blunted as they are continuously Othered through the hegemonic gaze of White male heteronormativity that dominates the perspectives of both publishers and fans alike.

For the criminologically minded, the most interesting segments of the book delineate the fairly narrow parameters in which crime causation and just punishment are presented. In terms of crime causation, Phillips and Strobl note that the most common explanation provided for the origins of the supervillain is the same explanation posited by a number of positivistic criminological theories: deep-seated childhood trauma which in turn leads the individual down a path of criminal psychopathy. If not crazed psychopathy, the other most common explanation provided for criminal behavior sits comfortably among other conservative criminological theories: the villains

are acting out of calculated rational choice. At the expense of any critical criminological explanations of crime causation that implicate racist, patriarchal, capitalist social power structures, the two preferred causal explanations in comics situate crime entirely at the level of the individual. These individualistic criminal origins, the superhero's utopian strivings, and the graphic nature of the medium itself result in formulaic means of street-level justice and punishment meted out in the forms of incapacitation and retribution, while almost completely ignoring (or degrading) deterrence, rehabilitation, or restorative justice as viable options. Indeed, the serial nature of comics makes temporary (violent) incapacitation the method of choice; there are action-packed panels, but the villain eventually goes on to terrorize another day, allowing the saga and sales to continue. This incapacitation, however, is combined with a retributive tease in what Phillips and Strobl call "apocalyptic incapacitation" (p. 205). Apocalyptic incapacitation toys with the possibility of total eye for an eye retribution while rarely completely delivering. Nevertheless the readers thoroughly enjoy the transgressive pleasure of seeing how far the superheroes will push their own ethical boundaries in the deliverance of justice.

While the book does an excellent job of tracing the parameters and identity-intersections of crime and justice discourses expressed in the various comic narratives, there is a glaring lack of subcultural exploration beyond the glossy pages of the comics. With only limited dialogue, excerpts from the focus groups, and references to online posts and podcasts sprinkled throughout, the reader is left with scant description of the inner nuances of comic book culture beyond a note of its insularity and male-dominated social base. While slightly ambiguous in the beginning, it becomes clear throughout the book that participant observation and focus groups are used exclusively as tools to enrich their overall content analysis. As a self-admitted neophyte to all things comic book related, however, the book made me want to not only go pick up a few comic titles but also learn more about the extensive subculture that has arisen around them and how its participants negotiate the themes of crime and justice in other mediums. (Perhaps material for a second book?)

Overall, Phillips and Strobl do an excellent job of expanding the cultural criminological project into the largely un-interrogated worlds inhabited by the likes of Batwoman, Superman, and the X-men. Their self-proclaimed exercise in "popular criminology" (p. 6) points toward the need of those of us with a critical bent to further craft our own public criminologies, lest the forces of positivist and rational choice theories continue to dominate the realm of popular culture. I believe *Comic Book Crime* is an endeavor of popular public criminology capable of capturing the attention of multiple audiences; it offers an academic insight into comic book discourses on crime and justice, but perhaps more importantly, it offers the non-academic (and in particular comic book enthusiasts) an accessible introduction to the criminological imagination.

Book reviews typically focus on new noteworthy books based on topics relevant to the particular journal. For JQCJC, this means qualitative studies and research methods books focusing on qualitative methodologies. Once a book has passed its expiration date—typically one to three years after publication—the book is no longer considered fresh and worth reviewing. Over time, however, some books which should not be forgotten or neglected seem to fall by the wayside. Here at JQCJC, we believe that it is worth revisiting these works and evaluating their contributions (or potential contributions) to the discipline. With that goal in mind, most issues of JQCJC include a historical book review of a noteworthy but underappreciated work with the intent to make the old relevant once again. Hopefully these reviews will encourage scholars to sift through the academic waste bin, as Jeff Ferrell might say, to find works which have been discarded or overlooked but still have much to offer Criminal Justice and Criminology.

*Kevin F. Steinmetz
Book Review Editor*

Historical Book Review: Sutherland, Edwin H., *The Professional Thief*.

University of Chicago Press, 1937; 257 pp.;
ISBN: 0-226-78051-1

Reviewed by: *Jurg Gerber, Sam Houston State University, USA.*

INTRODUCTION

Perhaps because he was the son of a minister and raised in a very traditional home (Geis & Meier, 1977, p.24), Edwin Sutherland (1883-1950) had a populist streak and is known for two major contributions to American criminology: the theory of differential association (DA) and the concept of white collar crime (WCC). His classic book entitled *The Professional Thief* is at the intersection of these two interests, although its influence has been more acknowledged with respect to DA than WCC. This review traces scholarly reactions to the book and its enduring contributions to American criminology.

SUMMARY OF THE BOOK AND PREVIOUS REVIEWS

This book consists of two parts; the first eight chapters were apparently written by the thief Chic Conwell (aka Broadway Jones) and represent an account of the world of theft at a particular time in American history. It is a highly entertaining, descriptive, and folksy account of a social milieu. The last two chapters were written by Sutherland; he uses these chapters to establish the criminological context for the book.

The Professional Thief is a book that has been in print for nearly 80 years and has already been discussed, reviewed, praised, and critiqued many times. By October 2014, it had been cited 878 times in *Google Scholar* (retrieved October 27, 2014), which re-enforces Vasoli and Terzola's (1974, p. 132) assessment that "one can scarcely open a modern criminology text which does not in some way pay homage to Conwell's fascinating reminiscences and Sutherland's annotative and interpretive supplements to them."

As is so often the case with a book that has been published many decades ago, the earlier reviews and discussions are more positive than the more recent ones. This fact can be expected, for with the passage of time, novelty wears off, empirical reality changes, and new theoretical perspectives and methodologies are developed. A work that has once been at the cutting edge of a field becomes more run of the mill. A book review published in 1937, the year *Thief* was published, was very positive:

The reader of *The Professional Thief* gets the impression that the book is to a certain extent the joint product of a man well versed in the practical experiences of crime and a man well versed in the general field of criminal behavior. (Locke, 1937, p. 186)

The reviewer saw the concept of professionalism as a positive contribution to the criminological literature (it was a time when most criminologists studied the urban underclass as the source of all crime, but did not give a voice to criminals).

Snodgrass (1973) was considerably more critical than Locke (1937) had been. Among other issues, Snodgrass accused Sutherland of not knowing Conwell particularly well; furthermore, he accused him of falsifying some issues in Conwell's past in order to protect the latter's identity. Around the same time, Vasoli and Terzola (1974) published a detailed and fairly critical analysis of the book, in which they questioned Sutherland and Conwell's methodology and substantive findings: "Sutherland's annotations in combination with Conwell's text provide at best a narrow view of professional theft" (p. 149).

ENDURING THEMES AND CONTRIBUTIONS

What are the enduring themes and contributions of this work? This is particularly a relevant question as "the bulk of Conwell's experiences and observations describe the state of the profession between 1905 and 1925" (Vasoli & Terzola, 1974, p. 134). Clearly the terminology used is archaic and, as Vasoli and Terzola (1974) argued, the rackets that Sutherland had identified did not exist any longer in the 1970s. The substantive contributions that the book made to the study of theft are at best marginal in the early 21st Century, and likely non-existent. However, there are some enduring contributions.

White-collar crime v. street crime and differential association. Sutherland's two major contributions to American criminology are the theory of differential association (developed in his text book that has been published in 11 editions between 1924 and 1992: Sutherland, 1924; Sutherland, Cressey, & Luckenbill, 1992) and the concept of white-collar crime (Sutherland, 1940; 1949). His theory of differential association was developed, in part, by his publications on white-collar crime and *The Professional Thief*. In essence, he looked at crime in the streets and the suites to develop a theory that was not dependent on low socioeconomic status, what was referred to at that time as feeble-mindedness, or biology, the prevailing explanations of the day. However, whereas he made contributions to both fields, it seems very clear in retrospect that he respected the professional thieves for their honesty to identify themselves as criminals, while white-collar offenders had a non-criminal self-concept:

It becomes evident that in some ways Sutherland came to admire and glamorize the professional thief and to loathe the

white-collar offender, a loathing that translated into his claim that businessmen are the most subversive force in America and his equating of the advertising tactics of the power and light utilities with the propaganda of the German Nazis (Geis & Meier, 1977, p. 25).

Although the theory of differential association could have been developed without the publication of *The Professional Thief*, it is undoubtedly the case that this book, along with books such as Cressey's *Other People's Money* (1953), contributed to the rising popularity of sociological approaches among criminologists. Generations of researchers have been able to rely on the sociological foundations Sutherland built, both theoretical and substantive, for their work. *The Professional Thief* directed attention away from fairly crude biological theories of the day and explanations that blamed the urban underclass and recent immigrants for the crime problem.

Qualitative methods. A debate has been raging in criminology over the relative merits of quantitative v. qualitative research. This forum is not appropriate to rehash the various arguments, especially since Sutherland contributed to both research traditions. However, it is clear that *The Professional Thief* relied on the research approach of life histories (Wright, 2005). This approach has been used heavily by qualitative researchers who would be well advised to consult this study for guidance. This is not to say that there are no problems with this study; Sutherland has been criticized that he was very selective in his reporting:

Even worse, speculation has surfaced that Sutherland misrepresented certain details...Broadway Jones was heavily addicted to narcotics; Sutherland downplayed this part of his biography...Sutherland insisted on the highest level of academic integrity among scholars towards whom he was critical (the Gluecks, Hooton, and Sheldon); the idea that he may have violated these same standards suggests a troubling hypocrisy (Wright, 2005, p. 1629).

However, in some ways he was ahead of his time. The term *data triangulation* was not in vogue during the 1930s, but Sutherland tried to verify Conwell's experiences by relying on a variety of sources including other thieves, two former police officers, and accounts in the popular press. As is so often the case, when researchers develop new techniques (or, in case of quantitative research, new statistical analyses), they make mistakes. However, subsequent researchers can learn from them and improve on their work, but should not forget to give credit where credit is due.

Convict criminology. Perhaps the most surprising contribution of *The Professional Thief* is to the relatively newly defined field of convict criminology:

Convict Criminology represents the work of convicts or ex-convicts, in possession of a Ph.D. or on their way to completing one, or enlightened academics and practitioners, who contribute to a new conversation about crime and corrections...The convict scholars are able to do what many previous researchers could not; merge their past with their present and provide a provocative approach to the academic study of their field. The convict criminology perspective is also based on perceptions, experiences, and analytical ideas that originate with defendants and prisoners, and are then developed by critical scholars (Convictcriminology.com).

Academic criminology has been the domain of predominantly White, male, and middle class scholars. Other viewpoints have been underrepresented. It was not until the appearance of New Criminology that voices of the previously silent have been heard: women, ethnic and racial minorities, victims, and offenders. What is noteworthy is that the very people who live crime and are the frontline participants of the criminal scene, the offenders, are often not heard in the academic discourse. Sutherland let Chic Conwell speak for himself and introduced a new and different criminology. What had been a relatively sterile academic enterprise became messy, but also more real (to use methodological terminology, the reliability of measures decreased, but their validity probably increased). Modern criminological approaches such as convict criminology owe a debt of gratitude to Chic Conwell and to Sutherland. The latter practiced convict criminology before convict criminology became cool.

Crime as craft or work. It is in vogue to consider criminals as relatively unskilled, not very reflective or self-aware, not capable of planning, and not concerned with the long range consequences of their acts. While this characterization may be accurate for some criminals, others clearly do not display these personality characteristics. There are some crimes that require their perpetrators to achieve skills and the honing of techniques. Forging documents or embezzling money may be committed by relatively unskilled amateurs, but they are likely to be caught relatively quickly. Forging documents or embezzling money successfully may be very different, requiring skill, planning, and consideration of long range consequences. The criminal reality that Chic Conwell (and, by implication, Sutherland) faced may be very different from the reality of street crime today, but the idea of crime as work or craft is found today in other criminal realms.

As Steinmetz (2015) pointed out, hacking is one such realm. Similar to Sutherland's thief, a hacker becomes one when s/he has mastered skills and is recognized as a hacker by others with that specific brand of expertise:

Regardless of the domain in which one hacks, the honing and exercising of skill is characteristic. Just as Sutherland (1937: 14)

states that ‘a thief is not a professional until he is proficient,’ a person is not a hacker until they are skilled. By and large, acts which do not stem from a degree of skill are not considered hacking (Steinmetz, 2015, p. 132).

Cultural criminology. In a related vein, cultural criminology (e.g., Ferrell, 1993) owes a debt of gratitude to Sutherland. *The Professional Thief* is an early example of cultural criminology:

Cultural criminology is a theoretical, methodological and interventionist approach to the study of crime and deviance that places criminality and its control in the context of culture; that is, it views crime and the agencies and institutions of crime control as cultural products—as creative constructs. As such they must be read in terms of the meanings they carry. Furthermore, cultural criminology seeks to highlight the interaction between two key elements: the relationship between cultural constructions upwards and cultural constructions downwards. Its focus is always upon the continuous generation of meaning around interaction; rules created, rules broken, a constant interplay of moral entrepreneurship, political innovation and transgression. (Cultural Criminology, 2014)

Cultural criminology studies the meaning of crime in its cultural context. *The Professional Thief* sets the world of theft in its cultural milieu, beyond which it loses most of its meaning. Although the specific findings are no longer relevant, the approach still is. Similar to convict criminology, Sutherland practiced cultural criminology before cultural criminology was developed.

CONCLUSION

There is a tendency not to pay tribute to who has gone before us. Criminological research of yesteryear is seen as outdated and no longer relevant. Contemporary researchers either have to reinvent the wheel, commit errors that others before them have committed (“Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it”– Santayana, 1905, p. 284), or fancy themselves as having invented or created an approach, methodology, or idea. Sutherland’s book *The Professional Thief* may not be relevant in terms of its actual substance (the world of theft), but as this review demonstrates, his book is an early forerunner of contemporary criminological approaches. To paraphrase Sir Isaac Newton’s famous quote, criminologists should consider saying, “If I have seen further, it is by standing on the shoulders of one of our giants, Sutherland.”

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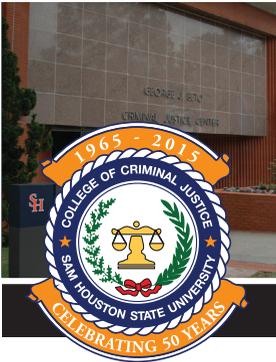
Twenty-five years ago we started The Qualitative Report (TQR) in a world much different than we see today in education, business, and technology; and in our lives in general. The degree to which qualitative research was practiced, published, and appreciated was in distinct contrast to its wider distribution, acceptance, and popularity today. How this quarter century of expansion and proliferation predicts the next twenty-five years for qualitative research is debatable, but we at TQR want to explore this topic in a year long inquiry into yesterday, today, and tomorrow. We started the process in earnest at the sixth The Qualitative Report annual Conference when Sally St. George, Dan Wulff, and Ron Chenail presented some of the main trends of qualitative inquiry, product, and training from 1980's to 2014 and suggested some possible new and novel trajectories for 2015 and beyond. We then outlined the activities the TQR community will sponsor all 2015 culminating in the 2016 TQR conference with its theme, "The Futures of Qualitative Inquiries." Following what author William Gibson once observed, "The future is already here— it's just not very evenly distributed," we think many things which will become typical and widespread in the next two decades and half could very well be slightly obscured and overlooked today. We want to spend the next year surfacing some of these soon-to-be difference makers.

So, please join us in this time traveling adventure by submitting your presentation ideas for The Qualitative Report Seventh Annual Conference. Every year since 2010, we have invited qualitative research practitioners, faculty, and students from around the world to join us on the Nova Southeastern University campus for TQR16 so please consider coming to South Florida in January of 2016 for our three day event organized around our theme "The Futures of Qualitative Inquiries" by sending us your creative ideas for paper and panel presentations, as well as, intensive workshops. We encourage prospective presenters to submit proposals that will inspire conference attendees to consider and re-consider qualitative research's future.

We will be accepting submissions from February 1st to April 30th, 2015. The Conference will be taking place at Nova Southeastern University from January 14-16, 2016. Over the next few weeks we will share more details about [TQR 2016 conference page](#). As always, please let us know your questions and comments by sending us your emails to tqr@nova.edu posting to our Facebook page, or by tweeting us!



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