

# FURTHERING PERSPECTIVES

Anthropological Views of the World



Anthropology Graduate Student Society of CSU

2008 Vol 2

# Furthering Perspectives: Anthropological Views of the World

Volume 2:2008

Published by:

Anthropology Graduate Student Society (AGSS)  
Colorado State University

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ISSN 1941-1731

# *Table of Contents:*

**Editors' Note.....iv**

## **I. Literature Reviews:**

1. Gender and Power in Childbirth Discourse: An Analysis of  
Two Popular Books  
April Biasioli.....3
2. Indigenous Land Rights in the Amazon: A Landscape  
Approach  
Kristina Pearson.....34
3. Shattered Dreams: Insanity and the Implications of Loneliness,  
Isolation, and the Failed Promises of the American Frontier  
Leslie Johnson.....56
4. Gender and Sexuality Construction, as Informed by Hip Hop  
Kulture within the African American Community  
Andrew Kumar.....69

## **II. Original Research:**

5. Mormon Women: Negotiating Identities in the Face of  
Conflicting Demands  
Henri Jean-François Dengah II.....103
6. Vertical Analysis of Four Units of Debitage from the Kinney  
Spring Site (5LR144c): A Multiple Occupation Site in  
Northeastern Colorado  
Heather Horobik.....130
7. Incentives of a Commuter Cycling Community  
Melanie Graham.....147

## *Editors' Note:*

The Anthropology Graduate Student Society is indebted to many people from the anthropology department at Colorado State University who contributed their time, research interests and expertise to the creation of *Furthering Perspectives: Anthropological Views of the World*, Volume 2. This is the second volume of what we hope will be a long series of editions that foster greater academic cooperation and excellence for both graduate and undergraduate students. We would like to express our sincere appreciation to the members of the editorial board, whose expertise and insights have raised the standards of the papers that encompass this journal. We were fortunate to draw upon former and current professors of the anthropology department, all of whom selflessly dedicated time and energy to this project. Thank you to: Dr. Barbara Hawthorne, Dr. Lynn Kwiatkowski, Dr. Sonya LeFebre, Dr. Ann Magennis, Dr. Eden Welker and Dr. Chris Zier.

This publication would not have been possible without the guidance and assistance from Drs. Mary Van Buren, Kathy Galvin, and Kathy Pickering. We would also like to thank all of the contributors for their hard work. We hope that everyone who submitted articles for consideration has benefited from the review process and has become more confident in your research and writing capabilities. We would also like to give a personal thanks to Rosalie Samaniego and Lynn Stutheit, the wonderful staff members in the CSU anthropology office, for helping us communicate with the students and faculty, and for general encouragement.

This volume was made possible by the generous financial contributions of the College of Liberal Arts at Colorado State University, and Dr. Charles and Margaret Mizushima.

Finally, we thank you for purchasing a copy of this journal. Such a project could not continue without your support.

The AGSS Journal Committee welcomes and encourages feedback from the anthropological community. The more students of anthropology can communicate and collaborate, the more we can facilitate the sharing of knowledge.

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# Gender and Power in Childbirth Discourse: An Analysis of Two Popular Books

April Biasioli

**Abstract-** *Women's power over birth declined from the Revolutionary period until the mid-twentieth century. This stemmed from declining trust in natural processes and increasing reliance on technology. Women's power over their births increased in the second half of the twentieth century. Knowledge about pregnancy and birth can help women to have control over their children's births. However, not all knowledge is equally empowering to women. One must consider the type of knowledge, the way it is presented, and the context in which it will be used in order to understand if knowledge will empower women. These factors have gendered considerations. In this paper, I analyze two popular books about pregnancy and childbirth and the effects they might have over women's knowledge and birthing experience. The knowledge that women have about birth and their subsequent birth experiences have serious consequences both for the individual and the society.*

*"The organization and provision of maternity care is a highly charged mix of medical science, cultural ideas, and structural forces." (DeVries et al. 2001:xii)*

## **Introductory Remarks**

Reproductive anthropology is a relatively new area of study. Early work includes that of Margaret Mead, who observed

childrearing practices, and Brigitte Jordan, who conducted cross-cultural investigation of childbirth (Davis-Floyd and Sargent 1997:2-3). Birth is a fruitful area for anthropological inquiry. It is a universal human experience, one that will shape the lives of all women either directly or indirectly. It is at once biological and culturally shaped. Because it represents both personal and social reproduction, every culture must find a way of integrating birth into its core belief systems. In the US, this is shaped by a historical and modern devaluing of women and privileging of science and technology. In this paper, I analyze two popular books – *What to Expect When You're Expecting* (Murkoff et al. 2002) and *Our Bodies, Ourselves for the New Century* (Boston Women's Health Book Collective 1998) – about pregnancy and childbirth. I will argue that not all knowledge from these sources is authoritative and that this impacts the level of power that women have over their birthing experiences. I will also explore gendered implications of the birth paradigms represented in these book, and knowledge and the effects that they may have on a woman's birth experience.

### **Theoretical Background**

The knowledge that women have about pregnancy and childbirth has profound implications for the experience and power that they will have during their deliveries. Foucault explicitly connects knowledge and power: the ability to produce knowledge – to make assertions about reality regarded as true – is a form of power (2005:25-26). Because “there is no coherent sense to an experience that is not informed by conceptual structures” (Gutting 2005:76) knowledge affects the way that women understand their bodily experiences (Abel and Browner 1998:321-3). This understanding will come from several sources, including pregnancy books. These books cannot provide value-free information; power relations are embedded in, and reproduced by, discourse. These books tend

to be paternalistic in tone and to rely on stereotypical conceptions of women (Dobris 2004:26-7). Pregnancy books do not merely describe pregnancy but create a particular way of understanding pregnancy and birth while constraining others (Breheny and Stevens 2007:114-15).

Embodied	Woman's physical and emotional experience
Medical	Medical training and doctor's medical opinion; hospital protocols
Technological	Scientific testing or technology

For this analysis, I draw on Davis-Floyd's (2003) conceptualization of different kinds of knowledge that may be called into play in the birthing chamber: embodied, medical, and technological knowledge (Table 1). These types of knowledge have gendered implications, based on their association with nature vs. culture (Ortner 1974: 371-384) and those who have held them historically. Embodied knowledge is perceived to be feminine, whereas medical, and especially technological, knowledge are symbolically masculine. In childbirth, some type(s) of knowledge will be ignored and other type(s) will be used to make decisions. Jordan (1997:58) calls this authoritative knowledge:

It is important to realize that to identify a body of knowledge as authoritative speaks, for us as analysts, in no way to the *correctness* of that knowledge. Rather, the label "authoritative" is intended to draw attention to its status within a particular social group and to the work it does in maintaining the group's definition of morality and rationality. *The power of authoritative knowledge is not that it is correct but that it counts...*By authoritative knowledge I mean, then, the knowledge that participants agree counts in a particular situation, that *they* see as

consequential, on the basis of which they make decisions and provide justifications for courses of action. (Emphasis in original)

The type of knowledge that will be authoritative depends on its context (Jordan 1997:59-60). Davis-Floyd (2003:154-186) identifies the two major paradigms of American births as technocratic and holistic. Their characteristics are compared in Table 2. This comparison demonstrates two things: the gender biases inherent in the technocratic model and the type of knowledge that will be considered authoritative in the two paradigms.

The technocratic paradigm – whether the practitioner is male or female – reflects a devaluing of the female and feminine embodied knowledge and a privileging of the male and masculine medical and technological knowledge.

According to the technocratic model of birth, the human body is a machine. The male body is metaphorized as a better machine than the female body, because in form and function it is more machine-like – more consistent and predictable, less subject to the vagaries of nature (i.e. more cultural and therefore ‘better’), and consequently less likely to break down. [Davis-Floyd 2003:52]

Emily Martin (1990:69-82) found that gender ideology and Fordist production shaped the discourse on menstruation in medical textbooks. She argued that the body was often understood as a factory; female ‘factories’ were less productive (only one egg per month) and often idle (during the menstrual period) whereas male bodies were terrifically productive (billions of sperm!) and therefore regarded more positively. She also found that women often internalize these negative attitudes toward their bodies (2001:108-9). Both of these mechanistic metaphors devalue the female body. In the technocratic paradigm, technological knowledge has the most authority, followed by medical knowledge. Embodied

knowledge has little or no authority. In contrast, in the holistic model embodied knowledge is equally or more authoritative with medical and technological knowledge.

Table 2: Technocratic vs. Holistic Paradigms of Birth	
<i>Technocratic</i>	<i>Holistic</i>
Male-centered	Female-centered
Woman = object	Woman = subject
Male body is norm	Female body is norm
Body = machine	Body = organism
Female body = defective machine	Female body = healthy organism
Doctor = technician	Midwife = nurturer
Best interests of mother and fetus may be antagonistic	What is good for the mother is good for the child
Action based on facts and measurements	Action based on body knowledge and intuition
Only technological knowledge is valued	Experiential and emotional knowledge valued as highly or more than technological knowledge
Source: Davis-Floyd 2003:160	

Hospital routines fall squarely in the technocratic model, whereas midwives are usually holistic. The majority of practitioners are in what Davis-Floyd (2003:154-186) calls the humanistic paradigm, which mediates between the technocratic and holistic models by drawing from both of them. However, when a humanistic practitioner works in a hospital setting, hospital routines generally force him or her into the technocratic paradigm. Approximately 99 percent of US births take place in a hospital (Murphy and Fullerton 1998:462). Although some of these births are called ‘natural,’ meaning no

analgesia was used, they are still considered technocratic because a wide range of other interventions are routinely used in hospitals for virtually every birth. Because the authority of a type of knowledge varies by setting and paradigm, one must consider both the type of knowledge that women are given and the context in which it will be used in order to determine if that knowledge is authoritative for a particular woman's birth experience.

### **Historical Background**

Women in the US have had varying levels of power over their births in different historical moments. In the colonial period, birth was a social event. Many women, usually including a midwife, would attend births. They would then stay to take over the new mother's household responsibilities so the mother could "lie in" for a few weeks. Women therefore had sole control of the birth process, which was generally secluded from the male members of the household (Wertz and Wertz 1989:1-4) although the fathers participated in assembling the attendants, preparing boiled water and cloth, or even assisting the midwife if no other attendant was available (Reed 2005:79). During the eighteenth century, as health and nutrition improved and maternal mortality declined, birth began to be regarded with less fear and more matter-of-factness. "Nature appeared to follow regular laws that people might understand and act upon" (Wertz and Wertz 1989:24). In other words, women's bodies and the birth process could be trusted. Male doctors did not begin attending births until the revolutionary period (Wertz and Wertz 1989:2). This coincided with the discovery of the sperm; the egg, though it is much larger, had not yet been discovered (Duffin 1999:250). Doctors promoted themselves as having more knowledge and skills than informally-trained midwives in dealing with complications (Wertz and Wertz 1989:25). The increasing availability of

technology had many implications. Auscultation, or listening via a stethoscope, began to be used in 1819 (Hanson 2004:3). With it, “the doctor’s objective indication could bypass the mother’s perception of movement” to determine fetal viability (Duffin 1999:254). Interventions increased during this period as doctors “came to adopt a view endorsing more extensive interventions in birth and less reliance upon the adequacy of nature” (Wertz and Wertz 1989:47). By the nineteenth century, the majority of American births were attended by physicians, the majority of whom were male. A reliable pregnancy test was developed in 1928 (Duffin 1999:263); this scientifically-derived knowledge came to replace women’s embodied knowledge in diagnosing pregnancy. Through the Victorian era, women were considered too “delicate” to study and practice medicine, so with few exceptions women did not enter the medical profession until the twentieth century (Wertz and Wertz 1989:47).

This history shows two trends: the decline in trust in nature and increasing reliance on medically and technologically-derived knowledge. I would like to suggest that this is not simply a historical trend but one that has gendered implications. In a classic article, Ortner (1974:371-384) argues that women are subordinated because they are associated with nature while men are associated with culture. Culture, she says, is the attempt to control nature. This interpretation may apply to US birthing culture. The history of pregnancy and birth in the US is that of increasing control over a natural process via technology; one can symbolically interpret this as increasing control of the feminine (associated with nature) by the masculine (associated with technology). This interpretation is supported by the fact that women entered the medical profession late and continue to be a minority, although they are better-represented among practitioners that attend births (with the exception of anesthesiology) (Table 3).

Obstetrics / Gynecology	41.0%
General Practice / Family Practice	30.9
All specialties	26.6
Anesthesiology	21.6
Source: American Medical Association 2006	

Davis-Floyd (2003:252-280) argues that the years-long rite of passage that is medical training in a male-dominated profession means that female doctors' praxis may differ little from that of their male counterparts.

Women's power over their births reached its lowest ebb in the 1930s and '40s. During this time women routinely gave birth under total anesthetic or under the influence of scopolamine, the drug that causes 'twilight sleep.' "The increasing use of scopolamine in American hospitals gave rise to rampant abuse. Scopolamine did not actually render a woman unconscious; it merely made her lose her memory. Physicians and nurses felt justified in slapping, gagging, and strapping down women" (Davis-Floyd and Sargent 1997:10). By the 1950s, women began publicly complaining about the horrific treatment they received. Women reported being tied down and left alone, without anesthetic, for hours or days; scopolamine did not always wipe out their memories of this mistreatment (Daviss 2001:70). The 'natural' childbirth movements were largely in response to the abuses of the scopolamine era (Davis-Floyd and Sargent 1997:10).

This trend for completely technocratic births began to reverse in the 1960s and 1970s as the Alternative Birth Movement began to demand less medicalization and more choice in birth. As a result of this movement, partners were allowed in labor and delivery rooms; women were allowed to be "awake and aware" during their deliveries; the practice of

moving women to different rooms for labor, delivery, and recovery was largely eliminated; alternative birthing centers were created within and independent of hospitals; women were allowed to eat and drink during labor; and pregnancy and birth education, and thus, presumably, more informed choice, were made available to women (Daviss 2001:70-86).

## Methods

In this paper, I examine two books – *What to Expect When You're Expecting* and *Our Bodies, Ourselves for the New Century* – for their messages about pregnancy and birth. These materials are significant because they may provide a great deal of a woman's information about pregnancy – she will spend only a few hours in her practitioner's office but a book is always available. Martin (1990:69-82) found that many women internalized the medical profession's conception of their bodies as unproductive factories. Davis-Floyd points out that pregnant women are in a unique psychological state: "Because of the psychological state of openness and receptivity that pregnancy tends to induce, the manner and direction of a woman's personal transformation is very likely to be heavily influenced by the sort of treatment she encounters in the public domain" (Davis-Floyd 2003:25). The books she reads during pregnancy will therefore be more influential than informative reading she may do at other times in her life.

Martin (1990:69-83) suggests a polyvocal sampling technique, in which the researcher listens to multiple, perhaps contradictory, voices. I have therefore chosen two books that represent the major childbirth paradigms. *What to Expect When You're Expecting* represents the technocratic view. It is one of the most widely-read pregnancy books in the US, currently in its third edition. Its website reports that it "has been called the pregnancy bible, with almost 14 million copies in print" (Murkoff 2007). USA Today (2004:B9) reported that 93

percent of women who read a pregnancy book read *What to Expect When You're Expecting*. From this data, one can assume that this book has a good deal of impact on US women's understanding of pregnancy and birth. *Our Bodies, Ourselves* represents the holistic paradigm. It was first published in 1970 by the Boston Women's Health Book Collective. This collective continues to publish books about women's health and periodically issues new editions of *Our Bodies, Ourselves*, which is now in its eighth edition. The book has never been out of print; the most recent edition has sold over 4 million copies (Boston Women's Health Book Collective 2006). While less widely-read than *What to Expect When You're Expecting*, this book is nevertheless influential.

Feminist criticism attempts to reveal the myriad ways that conceptions of gender shape culture. Feminists believe that women have been oppressed by patriarchal power and that this power is expressed in a variety of ways, including popular discourse. By analyzing the themes in discourse, one can understand the underlying cultural assumptions and power structures. Dobris (2004:28) points out that "patriarchal positions are often so embedded in the discourse as to appear invisible" so close scrutiny is warranted. Birthing paradigms and constructions of authoritative knowledge are the themes explored in these books.

### **Analysis**

#### ***What to Expect When You're Expecting***

This book implicitly reflects mainstream American understanding of pregnancy and birth: it moves from humanistic to technocratic when discussing pregnancy and birth and it uses a discourse of choice. This book socializes women into mainstream childbirth experiences; it may make women more satisfied with their births but it does not give them authoritative knowledge.

In keeping with Americans' desire for autonomy and options, *What to Expect When You're Expecting* presents a rhetoric of choice:

Never before have women had so much control over having babies. For millennia it was largely nature's whims that decided a woman's obstetrical fate. Then, in the early twentieth century, it became the physician who decided how she was to deliver. Today, though nature still holds a few cards and physicians still have a say, more and more of the decisions are falling to women and their spouses...The array of birthing options is dizzying, even in a hospital setting. Leave the hospital, and there's yet more to select from. [Murkoff et al. 2002:13-14]

Note the use of the word "whims" to describe nature. This reflects a technocratic devaluing of nature and, by extension, women's bodies, while assuring women that they have a "dizzying" array of options. The post-modern rhetoric of choice has dominated discourse on birth since the 1980s, but this is due to Americans' desire for autonomy and choice rather than a reflection of reality. According to Davis-Floyd and Sargent (1997:11):

In spite of the apparently vast range of options for childbirth in the 1990s, technobirth remains hegemonic: 98 percent of American women give birth in hospitals; in many hospitals, 80 percent receive epidural analgesia<sup>1</sup>. Around half of all labors are augmented with pitocin<sup>2</sup>, episiotomies<sup>3</sup> are performed in over 90 percent of first-

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<sup>1</sup> Epidural analgesia is pain relief medication, administered through a spinal catheter, which numbs the lower half of the body. If administered too early, it may slow labor and necessitate the use of pitocin.

<sup>2</sup> Pitocin is an artificial hormone that speeds labor but makes it more painful and increases the chance of uterine rupture. It is associated with more use of analgesia.

<sup>3</sup> Episiotomy refers to cutting into the vaginal wall to increase the size of the birth passage.

time births, almost everyone is hooked up to electronic fetal monitors, and the cesarean rate stands at 21 percent.

By 2005, the C-section rate reached 30 percent, a record high for the US (Hamilton et al. 2005), reflecting an ever-increasing medicalization of birth. I suggest that *What to Expect When You're Expecting* actually presents a *false* rhetoric of choice, one that does not reflect reality and is not supported by the subtler messages in the book.

*What to Expect When You're Expecting* reflects the humanistic paradigm when discussing pregnancy but the technocratic paradigm when discussing birth. Browner and Press (1997:113-131) found women would sometimes disregard doctors' advice about prenatal care if it conflicted with their embodied knowledge. However, they rarely questioned information derived from tests or machinery. That is, their embodied knowledge had some authority during pregnancy, but it had less than technological knowledge. However, this did not hold true for their births; embodied knowledge had virtually no authority in birth. "During labor, American women are highly acquiescent to biomedical authority at the expense of embodied knowledge" (Browner and Press 1997:126). *What to Expect When You're Expecting* reflects this common attitude. For example, at the beginning of the book, several different types of practitioners are discussed, including obstetricians, family practitioners, certified nurse-midwives (CNMs)<sup>4</sup>, and direct-entry midwives (DEMs)<sup>5</sup> (Murkoff et al. 2002:10-11). Women are encouraged to choose

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<sup>4</sup> CNMs are practitioners who have completed both standard nursing training and additional training in midwifery.

<sup>5</sup> Direct-entry midwives, also called lay midwives, may be trained via a medical or university program, via apprenticeship, or some combination of these. They may or may not be certified by an organization such as the Midwives' Alliance of North America (MANA) or the North American Registry of Midwives (NARM).

a practitioner based on their personal preferences and philosophy (Murkoff et al. 2002:12-13). When discussing pregnancy, the terms “practitioner” or “doctor or midwife” are used. However, when discussing labor and delivery, and especially complications, this turns into simply “doctor.” Likewise, the phrase “hospital or birthing center” becomes simply “hospital” when discussing any kind of complication. Home birth is discussed rarely, usually in the context of an emergency delivery. This move from humanistic to technocratic reinforces the idea that birth is dangerous and that a doctor-attended hospital birth is the safest. This idea is refuted by many studies (e.g. Johnson and Daviss 2005; Murphy and Fullerton 1998; Remez 1997; Mehl 1977) showing that midwife-attended home births are as safe or safer than doctor-attended hospital births and are associated with lower levels of interventions.

The percentage of women who choose each type of practitioner is included except for direct-entry midwives, giving the impression that no one really chooses them. No data is given about the relative outcomes of various types of practitioners. That is, women are encouraged to choose their practitioners based on personal preference rather than objective data. This encouragement may lead to women being more satisfied with their birthing experiences, as Davis-Floyd (2003:187) found that the most important predictor of a woman’s perception of and satisfaction with her birth experience was how closely her birthing paradigm matched her practitioner’s. However, it also means that a woman who makes a less common choice (e.g. to hire a midwife or to give birth outside a hospital) will have no authoritative knowledge to legitimate her decision. It will simply be a preference, which carries little authority. In this way, *What to Expect When You’re Expecting* subtly reinforces the hegemony of hospital-based technocratic births.

*What to Expect When You're Expecting* urges women both to feel as if they can make decisions about their births and to acquiesce to their practitioners. For example, it suggests creating a "birthing plan," which is a written document that details a mother's wishes concerning her labor and delivery. "Hopefully, once you've passed your approved birthing plan on to your practitioner, it will become part of your chart and find its way to your delivery" (Murkoff et al. 2002:276; emphasis mine). The book goes on to suggest that extra copies of the plan be made in case it is lost. The woman is cautioned against "thrusting" the plan into the nurse's face but rather to "offer it in a pleasant, non-threatening way," perhaps with "a small basket of goodies" (Murkoff et al. 2002:276). This not-so-subtly creates the impression that a woman's wishes are not likely to be respected, especially if she is insistent or unpleasant. In fact, Kitzinger (1997:228-229) found that practitioners sometimes punish women who are not cooperative enough. "A woman's hand is slapped as it reaches out to contaminate the 'sterile area.' She is slow to turn to the correct position, and the nurse slaps her bottom. A woman screams, and someone puts a pillow over her face" (Kitzinger 1997:228). She found that lengthy or unnecessary vaginal exams, manual stretching of the cervix<sup>6</sup>, or episiotomies against the mother's will were sometimes performed punitively. The fact that her informants often used the language of sexual assault to describe these actions (Kitzinger 1997:229) suggests that this experience is uniquely gendered. Ryan (2005:323) discusses the concept of the "patriarchal bargain," in which women conform to patriarchal norms in order to receive a measure of protection. *What to Expect When You're Expecting* seems to be urging women to make a similar "technocratic bargain," in which they acquiesce to practitioners' demands in order to be spared punishment.

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<sup>6</sup> The cervix is the entrance from the vagina into the uterus.

The discussion of pain relief options in *What to Expect When You're Expecting* reflects a similar mixture of empowerment and acquiescence. It urges "a careful weighing of risk against benefit" (Murkoff et al. 2002:277) but also cautions women not to "make up and close [their] mind[s] in advance" (Murkoff et al. 2002:283). This advice is belied by the fact that pain medication is discussed as part of the "seventh month" chapter (Murkoff et al. 2002:276-283) – long before delivery. As early as the "sixth month" chapter women are urged to "**Be ready to accept pain relief if it's needed.** Asking for or accepting medication is not a sign of failure or weakness...sometimes pain relief is absolutely necessary to keep a laboring woman at her most effective" (Murkoff et al. 251; emphasis in original). This advice is misleading at best; some pain medications, such as the widely-used epidural, can slow or stop labor. It also supports the idea that technological interventions, in the form of anesthesia, make labor more effective and reveals a distrust of labor as a process that can proceed safely on its own.

The information about pain relief options includes possible side effects but not their likelihood. In other words, women are not given complete, medically authoritative knowledge that would allow them to make informed decisions or to challenge their practitioners' recommendations. This discussion also reflects a subtle bias by presenting options in order from most technologically complex to least, giving the technological options precedence. Some non-medical options, such as hypnosis and hydrotherapy, are discussed. However, options that interfere with hospital protocols or are not socially acceptable are not mentioned. For example, walking and changing positions interfere with IV lines and electronic fetal monitoring. Vocalization (yelling, grunting, and growling) and sexual stimulation (of the nipples, clitoris, or vagina) are not socially acceptable in a hospital setting. However, all of these have been found to help women manage pain and some can

speed labor. This emphasis on medical over non-medical pain relief reinforces the technocratic model of birth while *appearing* to offer women choices. The book then confuses the issue by saying that “pain relief medication can play a role in natural childbirth” (Murkoff et al. 2002:277).

The emphasis on the practitioner’s authority over the mother’s intensifies as *What to Expect When You’re Expecting* discusses the phases of labor and delivery. When listing things that may happen upon arriving at the hospital or birthing center, it says, “Depending on the policies of your practitioner and hospital , *and hopefully your preferences*, an IV may be started” (Murkoff et al. 2002:363; emphasis mine). Similarly, the position in which a woman delivers “will depend on hospital policy, your practitioner’s predilection, the bed or chair you are in, and, hopefully, what is most comfortable and effective for you” (Murkoff et al. 2002:370). Note the fact that “or birthing center” has been omitted, leaving only “hospital,” and the use of the word “hopefully” in relation to the woman’s wishes. This reinforces the technocratic model as hegemonic and one in which women have little say.

The illustrations in the labor and delivery chapter of *What to Expect When You’re Expecting* reinforce the technocratic idea that the doctor, not the mother, delivers the baby (Davis-Floyd 2003:161). The chapter includes four line drawings of women in labor (Murkoff et al. 2002:349,358). The use of illustrations rather than pictures desubjectifies women. Each one becomes a generic woman, not an individual. Only one position shows the woman being physically supported by a partner or labor coach. One illustrates an emergency home delivery. There are six line drawings of birth (Murkoff et al. 2002:355,371). Each of these shows only the uterus and fetus. Two show vacuum- or forceps-assisted births, and one shows a gloved hand holding the infant’s head. This disembodied uterus, shown alone or with medical assistance, gives the impression that the laboring woman is tangential to

the process. It supports the technocratic ideas that the uterus is a machine that operates separately from the body and that the doctor, not the mother, delivers the child.

During the actual delivery, women are urged to “Give it all you’ve got...But keep your efforts controlled, coordinating your rhythms closely with the instructions of your practitioner, nurse, or doula. Frantic, disorganized pushing wastes energy and accomplishes little...Do what comes naturally. Push when you feel the urge, unless otherwise instructed...your practitioner, nurse, or doula will help direct your efforts” (Murkoff et al. 2002:372). These contradictory messages urge women to listen to their embodied knowledge, but not if it conflicts with a practitioner’s medical or technological knowledge. This clearly demonstrates which type of knowledge has authority (medical and technological) and which lacks it (embodied). As Jordan (1997:58) points out, knowledge can have authority without being correct. “The physician’s basing of judgment concerning readiness to push on the arbitrary standard of full cervical dilation eliminates the more physiologically efficacious possibility of basing such judgment on the woman’s urge to push” (Davis-Floyd 2003:117). It also sets up a situation in which the woman, rather than the practitioner, can be blamed for anything that goes wrong. This is common in the technocratic model: “when something goes wrong during pregnancy or birth, it is the woman’s fault, due either to her refusal to follow doctor’s orders, to the inherent defectiveness of her body, or to her own inadequacy as a person” (Davis-Floyd 2003:193-194). The instructions about how to push reflect this devaluation of women’s bodies and personalities.

*What to Expect When You’re Expecting*, though humanistic when discussing pregnancy, becomes more and more technocratic when discussing labor and delivery. This reflects more than the privilege that medical science and technology have in American society (Martin 1990:72); it also

has strong gender implications. Embodied knowledge – the knowledge that women derive from their physical and emotional experiences – lacks authority in the technocratic paradigm. Jordan (1997:62-64) tells a poignant tale of a woman in labor. This woman felt the urge to push. The nurse gave her a vaginal exam and observed that her cervix had dilated ten centimeters, the arbitrary measure of full dilation and benchmark at which a woman is allowed (or commanded) to begin pushing. However, the woman was not allowed to push until the doctor verified the dilation and gave his permission. This starkly illustrates the lack of authority the mother's embodied knowledge held – it could not be used as the basis of the decision to begin pushing. This reflects distrust in women's bodies and their ability to give birth successfully. It also shows that the two women – the laboring mother and the nurse – though present for a longer time and possessing, respectively, embodied and medical knowledge, were nevertheless not empowered to make this decision without consulting the doctor.

Giving embodied knowledge no authority means that women lose power over their births. Because medical and technical knowledge have authority, women may regain some of this power by acquiring this type of knowledge. Davis-Floyd (2003:215) found that in one case: “[A woman's] own knowledge enabled [her] to use the technocratic model itself against the obstetrician who attended her...She knew that she had strong grounds for a suit if the doctor could not put in writing a strong medical indication for a Cesarean section; she also knew that there was no such reason.” This woman understood hospital protocols and was therefore able to challenge her doctor's advice successfully. Medical professionals, similarly, are able to have a great deal of control over their own births because they have medical knowledge. However, it is difficult for even women medical professionals to gain technological knowledge in the context of their own

births, as they are unlikely to know how to operate or interpret the appropriate technology, or to be allowed to do so.

Does *What to Expect When You're Expecting* give women power over their births? It does provide women with a conceptual framework for understanding their experiences, which prevents them from being overly frightened and entering an especially vulnerable psychological state during their births, as Davis-Floyd found (2003:39). By socializing women to accept the model of birth that is mainstream, the book may increase women's satisfaction with their birth experiences. However, this book does not give women knowledge that would be authoritative in a technocratic situation – the medical language, statistics, and resources that a woman would need to successfully challenge her practitioner's decisions and therefore have true power over her labor and delivery. Nor does the book provide much information about non-technocratic alternatives, in which the woman's own bodily knowledge would have authority. Without knowledge that is authoritative to the other people involved in their births, women cannot have this power.

### ***Our Bodies, Ourselves for the New Century***

This book is less commonly-read than *What to Expect When You're Expecting* but nevertheless well-known and influential. It places itself within the holistic paradigm. This is made clear by statements such as “Women's bodies grow and flourish in pregnancy,” (Boston Women's Health Book Collective [BWHBC] 1998:445) “Trust your intuition,” (447) “Trust your instincts,” (450) “Labor is a total experience involving your mind, body, emotions, and spirit...You know how to give birth...You need to respect your body's wisdom and the rhythm of your unique labor” (474), “In order to nurture your baby you need to be nurtured yourself” (458) and “When you are in labor you are very sensitive to the energy around you”

(486). This language demonstrates trust in the female body as a healthy organism, not a defective machine, and gives women's embodied knowledge authority. The book promotes the idea that midwives should be the primary caregivers, with physicians as a back-up. The very word midwife means "with woman," which reflects a woman-centered paradigm.

Despite this explicit use of holistic ideas, this book is more accurately described as humanistic, because it often endorses "middle of the road" choices and relies on both medical and embodied knowledge for authority. When discussing practitioners, *Our Bodies, Ourselves for the New Century* first discusses certified nurse-midwives, then direct-entry midwives, then physicians, who are lumped together rather than being separated by specialty (BWHBC 1998:451-454). On places to give birth, it discusses birth centers, home, and then hospitals (BWHBC 1998:456-457). Since certified nurse-midwives complete a traditional nursing program before going on to midwifery training, they are likely to fall into a humanistic paradigm. Birthing centers are designed to be home-like but are often affiliated with hospitals; they have medical equipment on hand and obstetricians on call. Since they, too, straddle the technocratic and holistic paradigms, they can be considered humanistic. By listing the humanistic options first, *Our Bodies, Ourselves for the New Century* gives them literal and figurative precedence. Though this belies its holistic outlook, it reflects the attitude of the majority of American women, who tend to be in between the two paradigms (Davis-Floyd 2003:239). The book does not provide information about how many women choose each type of practitioner, but it does discuss the relative outcomes of different practitioners and locations. There is a positive discussion of planned home birth (BWHBC 1998:449).

*Our Bodies, Ourselves for the New Century* gives embodied knowledge authority in its discussion of labor and delivery. It assures women that the knowledge of how to give

birth is “genetically encoded in [the] body” (BWHBC 1998:474). While one doubts that this is literally true, it is a powerful metaphor placing knowledge within the body. It is interesting to note, though, that it draws on scientific terminology for legitimacy; this shows the authority of scientific discourse even within an alternative paradigm. The book urges women many times to trust their bodies. It says this about ultrasounds:

These days it is very common for families to show their ultrasound photo or video to family and friends, which makes the pregnancy ‘more real’ for others but which can incline some women to discount their own sense of how their pregnancies are progressing. When practitioners insist upon using it to confirm the date of conception, rather than trusting a woman’s knowledge of her cycle, they are often just plain wrong. It can become one of the first medical instruments of control of your pregnancy. [BWHBC 1998:462]

This is a poignant critique of the technocratic privileging of technological over embodied knowledge.

Because *Our Bodies, Ourselves for the New Century* does not support the idea that the medical and technological knowledge has more authority than embodied knowledge, it does not encourage women (subtly or otherwise) to follow a doctor’s orders if they conflict with what she feels is right. On the contrary, it contains a section on “standing up to hospital routines” (BWHBC 1998:485-486). When discussing the position in which to give birth, the book says, “The lithotomy position – lying on your back, feet up in stirrups – is the worst, most dangerous, and most ineffective position for labor. It is still used in many hospitals out of habit or convenience of the doctor. Insist on not being in this position” (BWHBC 1998:477). This advice is presented in bold face. This stands in stark contrast to *What to Expect When You’re Expecting* in which the woman’s preferences are considered secondary to

the doctor's preferences and hospital policy. Townsend (2002:4) defines a hegemonic norm as one that requires no explanation. The lithotomy position fits this definition: using it requires no explanation, but deviating from it does. *Our Bodies, Ourselves for the New Century* resists this hegemony by simply explaining the reasons for its use – and making them seem unimportant. Keeping in mind Kitzinger's (1997:209-262) work, though, one must remember that standing up to hospital routines may be not only ineffective but also subject a woman to punitive measures. In fact, *Our Bodies, Ourselves for the New Century* includes a section on the possibility of being dissatisfied with one's birth experience. In contrast with the technocratic paradigm, which considers any negative outcomes the mother's fault, it encourages women to consider the institutional factors – poverty, racism, medical attitudes about women, and hospital protocols – that shaped her experience (BWHBC 1998:493-494). This further reinforces the idea that birth is a natural process for which a woman's body is completely adequate.

In *Our Bodies, Ourselves for the New Century* the discussion of pharmacological pain relief comes late in the chapter on childbirth. Non-pharmacological methods are discussed extensively and early, giving them precedence (BWHBC 1998:470-473). Interestingly, this information is presented in shaded boxes separate from the main text. It is interspersed with a discussion of how our culture creates a "climate of doubt" (BWHBC 1998:468) about birth. Over the course of a few pages, this information takes up more and more space as the "climate of doubt" discussion takes up less. This may send a visual message that this knowledge can eclipse doubt. Pharmacological pain relief, by contrast, is discussed quite negatively. "Interventions necessitate more interventions. They flow from attempts to 'manage' birth and eliminate pain and often come at great cost to you and your baby...No drug used for anesthesia has been proved safe for mothers and

babies” (BWHBC 1998:490). Interestingly, the book invokes drugs’ FDA status to show them unsafe, thus using technocratically-authoritative knowledge to refute the technocratic paradigm. Rather than urging mothers not to make up their minds in advance, and therefore be more open to practitioners’ suggestions, *Our Bodies, Ourselves for the New Century* says to “do your research before labor begins, and go into labor with clear intentions about how you want to handle pain relief” (BWHBC 1998:490). The book does not, however, offer knowledge that would allow a woman to insist on her wishes in a technocratic paradigm, but it does include an extensive resources section for women who wish to learn more. Because this section is so strongly opposed to medical pain relief, it may make women who choose it, or think they might, feel guilty; it may unduly influence women’s decisions rather than facilitating their making their own choices.

Rather than presenting a (false) rhetoric of choice, *Our Bodies, Ourselves for the New Century* acknowledges the forces that limit women’s childbirth options. “The fact that the medical establishment is the dominant system curtails your choices” (BWHBC 1998:450). It warns that even prepared women may not always be able to “stave off hospital practices” (BWHBC 1998:449). The book critiques popular pregnancy books, including the one that “bases its content on worry” (i.e. *What to Expect When You’re Expecting*), as contributing to a climate of doubt surrounding pregnancy (BWHBC 1998:451). The authors acknowledge that financial issues may curtail a woman’s ability to choose her practitioner and therefore have that level of control (BWHBC 1998:440). They discuss how race and class impact the care that a woman receives (BWHBC 1998:447-448) as do regional circumstances, doctors’ attitudes, and laws (BWHBC 1998:450). Though this may not be uplifting, it is important that the book acknowledges the structural factors that impact women’s ability to have power over their births.

*What to Expect When You're Expecting* bases its discussions on the premise that all pregnant women are white, middle-class, and heterosexual (Dobris 2004:29). In contrast, *Our Bodies, Ourselves for the New Century* is inclusive. It includes discussions of teen pregnancy (BWHBC 1998:457-458), abuse during pregnancy (458-459), pregnancy of single women, pregnancy of lesbian couples, issues relating to disability (459-460) and concerns for women who have been circumcised (460). It includes anecdotes about the unique experiences of lesbians and women of color. Many of the pictures feature women of color (e.g. BWHBC 1998:438). This acknowledges the fact that each pregnancy is unique and that a woman's personal characteristics affect her experience. It subtly contradicts the technocratic understanding that reproductive organs operate independently of human experience and the idea that birth can be standardized.

The illustrations in *Our Bodies, Ourselves for the New Century* are striking: there are photographs of nude women laboring and giving birth. Davis-Floyd (2003:69) points out that part of the reason that births generally take place in hospitals is that birth is taboo. To see real women giving birth, rather than sanitized line drawings of uteri, forces one to confront this taboo. The chapters on pregnancy and childbirth contain fifteen black-and-white photographs and seven line drawings of women laboring or giving birth (BWHBC 1998:437-494). Of these twenty-two illustrations, fifteen show the mother being touched or held (I do not include purely medical touch in this group). One shows a woman dancing; another shows a C-section. This contrasts sharply with *What to Expect When You're Expecting*, in which women are generally shown alone, often in passive poses. The individuality of these pictures (which include people of color) reinforces the uniqueness of each birth and woman as subject, not object, reflecting the holistic paradigm.

*Our Bodies, Ourselves for the New Century* provides an interesting contrast to *What to Expect When You're Expecting*. Although it espouses the holistic model, it acknowledges the fact that most American women will not give birth in this paradigm. The text attempts to create a "climate of confidence" (BWHBC 1998:466) about birth and to make women feel capable and confident about giving birth. Unfortunately, women may read this book and create a cognitive matrix that will not be supported by her actual labor and delivery experience. Davis-Floyd (2003:187-240) found that women whose cognitive matrices clashed with her birth paradigm were often dissatisfied or even traumatized; they often had to do 'psychological work' later to mesh their experiences with their understanding of birth. *Our Bodies, Ourselves for the New Century* may contribute to the need to do such work. Although the book explicitly rejects the technocratic paradigm, it nevertheless suggests resources that will allow women to gain knowledge that would be authoritative in that paradigm. The extensive resources section includes not only popular but medical sources (BWHBC 1998:495-501). In this way, it may offer women a way to gain knowledge that would be authoritative within a technocratic paradigm and allow them to have more control over their births.

## **Discussion**

The technocratic paradigm dominates birth in this country; 99 percent of births take place in hospitals, which are (with few exceptions) technocratic. The technocratic paradigm is inherently anti-woman. It views the female body as a defective machine and birth as a dangerous process in need of management. This view creates medicalized births: induced, augmented, anesthetized, 'assisted' by technology, and sometimes surgical. The Cesarean section is the ultimate in medical birth. The World Health Organization (2002:176)

estimates that 15 percent of births will involve life-threatening complications requiring C-section; in 2005, 30 percent of American births were via C-section. That is, half of these surgeries were probably unnecessary. In contrast, midwife-assisted home births use far fewer technological interventions and have equal – or better – outcomes (Johnson and Daviss 2005; Murphy and Fullerton 1998; Remez 1997; Mehl 1977). It is clear that most medical interventions are not only unnecessary but sometimes detrimental to a successful birth: “Unnecessary interventions [in the birth process] result in harm” (WHO 2002:176). Linke (1997:559-573) demonstrates that bodies that are devalued – especially female bodies – are often subject to violence. The technocratic paradigm, by devaluing female bodies, creates an environment in which it is acceptable to perform medical, including surgical, procedures unnecessarily on otherwise healthy bodies. I would like to argue that this is a form of structural violence against women: cultural beliefs about women held by medical personnel allow and even cause harm to women, mentally and physically.

Because the technocratic paradigm devalues female bodies and makes overly-medicalized births socially acceptable, it is tempting to argue that a book which socializes women into this paradigm – such as *What to Expect When You're Expecting* – is, at best, disempowering to women. However, Mahmood (2005) demonstrates that a social system that is considered anti-woman by scholars is not experienced in the same way by all women. Women can be empowered even by a patriarchal system; one cannot assume that all women are feminists or resisting the system under which they live. Davis-Floyd (2003:187-240) found that women could experience a technocratic birth as empowering, either by mentally distancing themselves from it, or by viewing the technology and experts, which have prestige in US American culture, as being in their service. Abel and Browner (1998:321-3) found that women sometimes used biomedical knowledge to legitimate embodied

knowledge. It is therefore impossible to simplistically regard *What to Expect When You're Expecting* as “bad” and *Our Bodies, Ourselves for the New Century* as “good.” *What to Expect When You're Expecting* will help to socialize a woman into the most common type of birth experience in the US – technocratic – and may therefore make her more satisfied with it. It does not provide women with knowledge that is authoritative within the technocratic paradigm and would therefore allow them more control over their births. Nor does it offer a framework for understanding the factors that might result in dissatisfaction with a birth. Any birth which results in a healthy baby (as most do, with or without interventions) is treated as good. On the contrary, *Our Bodies, Ourselves for the New Century* encourages women to be critical of technocratic birth (although this is sometimes belied by its use of technocratically-authoritative discourse). This may result in less satisfaction if a woman finds herself giving birth in this paradigm. However, the book does suggest resources that would help a woman either opt out of technobirth (by giving birth at an alternative birthing center or at home) or to have greater control over a hospital birth. Further, this book offers women ways of dealing with a dissatisfying birth.

### **Concluding Remarks**

Birth is a complex biological, personal, and social event. Women's unique experiences are shaped by a variety of factors, of which her choice of pregnancy book(s) may seem minor. However, the way that a woman understands pregnancy and the level of authoritative knowledge she possesses, all influenced by these books, will have a profound effect on her birth experience. Davis-Floyd (2003:39) describes how lack of information about birth pushes a woman into a psychological state in which she is very vulnerable. Knowledge that increases a woman's ability to understand her experience prevents her

from entering this vulnerable state. Women can also use their knowledge more directly to have power over their births (Davis-Floyd 2003:215). If they understand medical jargon and the rationale for procedures, they may be able to challenge their physicians' decisions in an effective way. This has implications both for her personally and for her culture in general. As Bordo (1993:181) points out, the body is not simply biological but "an historical construction and medium of social control." Therefore the politics of the body are significant for women, and especially so when she is engaged in (social and physical) reproduction.

### **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank Lynn Kwiatkowski for her patient encouragement and insightful comments.

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# Indigenous Land Rights in the Amazon: A Landscape Approach

Kristina Pearson

**Abstract-** *Humans have lived in and extensively modified the Amazon rainforest for thousands of years. Only recently with the advent of modernity and the incorporation of the Amazon into the world-system has this region been caught in a tug-of-war between conservationists with their notion of a pristine environment and the extractive industries which threaten to degrade the land beyond productive human use. Caught in the middle of this battle are the indigenous peoples whose ancestors have fundamentally altered and sustainably managed the Amazon region productively for millennia. By taking a 'landscape approach', this paper will reframe the debate between conservation and exploitation to one of sustainable land use based on indigenous knowledge and ancestral territory rights. Through an analysis of the historical contingency of contemporary landscapes and how this dialectic is constantly being renegotiated, land rights in favor of indigenous peoples have more credence over Western-centric notions of conservation or exploitation for capitalist growth. By looking at indigenous conceptions of land, we can see the importance of land and how they have transformed physical places into culturally-constructed meaningful places as a basis for modern day indigenous land rights struggles. With the landscape as the unit of analysis, this approach can help us to engage the social and natural sciences in reframing popular environmental debates and policy in favor of a more humanizing praxis that informs attempts to create a more just world for all life.*

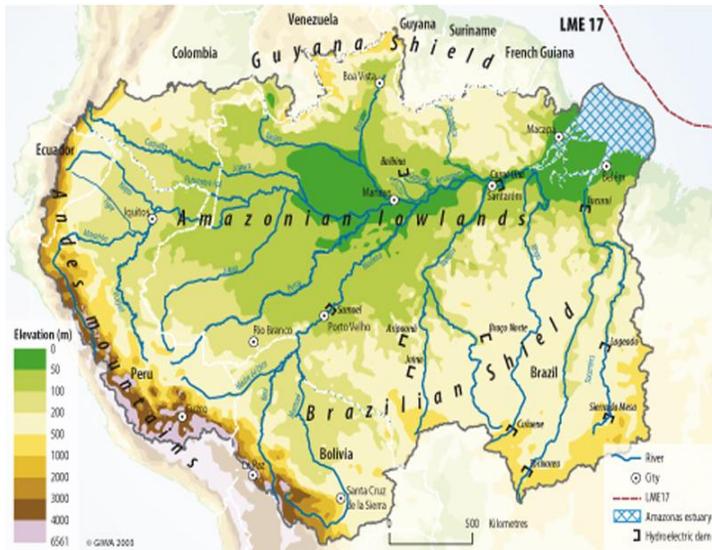
## **Introduction**

In the time it takes to read this paper, 200 acres of Amazon rain forest will have been destroyed (Wallace 2007). Humans have lived in and extensively modified the Amazon rainforest for thousands of years without this level of destruction. Only recently has the degradation of the Amazon (see map below) been seen by popular audiences and academics as an approaching global catastrophe. With the advent of modernity and the incorporation of the Amazon into the world-system this region been caught in a tug-of-war between conservationists and their notion of a pristine environment and the extractive industries which threaten to degrade the land beyond productive human use. Caught in the middle of this battle are the indigenous peoples whose ancestors have fundamentally altered and sustainably managed the Amazon region to fit their use for millennia. The Amazon basin plays an important role in global climate and biogeochemistry systems such as water cycling and carbon sequestering (the region is a carbon sink that moderates global temperature and cleans the air) (Wallace 2007), as home to millions of endemic species, and as a sacred cultural landscape to thousands of diverse indigenous groups. Therefore, this region and its inhabitants have the right<sup>1</sup> to protect their land against the forces of modernity and may be decisive in determining the future course of life on Earth. Indigenous peoples helped to shape the current landscape in its valued form and should be allowed to continue to do so.

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<sup>1</sup> According to international law, such as the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (of which Amazonian countries are signatories) and the International Labour Organization Convention 169.

**Map:** The ‘Amazon’ “vaguely defined, takes in most of the northern and central tropical lowlands of South America, and is not restricted to the Amazon basin. Sometimes it stretches as far as the southern Caribbean coast or the Orinoco or Paraguay” (Cleary 2001: 67) to the Andes in the West – an area about 90% the size of the continental US (Terborgh 2007).



## The Landscape Approach

By taking a “landscape approach” this paper will reframe the debate between conservation and exploitation to one of sustainable land use based on indigenous management and rights to ancestral territory. The landscape approach holds that landscapes “...include humans, their anthropogenic ecosystem and the manner in which these landscapes are conceptualized, experienced, and symbolized” (Fisher and Thurston 1999:630). “This is the antithesis of the wilderness so beloved by conservationists” (Erickson 2003:182 see also Anschuetz 2001; Coones 1985; Crumley and Marquardt 1987; Knapp and

Ashmore 1999). This approach assumes that nature<sup>2</sup> and culture<sup>3</sup> were actually co-created and continue to co-adapt to one another in a nature-culture dialectic while offering the landscape as the unit of analysis (Scoones 1999).

Sustainable means as it allows for the adaptability and productivity of landscapes as they maintain for human use and for the coexistence of a diversity of species. Sustainability is dependent on differing scales of time and space. One of the most popular definitions of sustainability was from the Brundtland Report (1987), which refers to sustainability as not compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. The term sustainability has been overused and politicized since the Brundtland report with a variety of definitions and connotations rendering the word virtually meaningless. The landscape approach can be an important contributor to a better understanding about what is sustainability in a more holistic manner, which involves looking at the past to better understand the present and plan for the future.

The landscape approach uses many premises from the “New Ecology” (see Biersack 1999 and Zimmerer 1994 & 2000). Many of the ideas behind Western-style conservation assume landscapes are static, pristine, and “natural” and that landscapes can revert to some ideal type. Environmental dynamism is an important idea that has its base in the new ecology and its critique on previous notions of balance or equilibrium in nature. This approach also throws out common ecology terms such as limits and carrying capacity. In fact, change should be seen as the norm in environmental study according to S.E. van der Leeuw (1998). Complexity and

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<sup>2</sup> I use the words environment, nature and landscape interchangeably to mean the tangible world both as it exists and is cognized including humans and their modifications to that world.

<sup>3</sup> I use the words culture, humans, and society interchangeably.

uncertainty are the standard. It is all a matter of scale—the greater the scale temporally/spatially the more dynamic landscapes appear to be. The Amazon rainforest is no exception. It has been and will continue to be a dynamic environment that changes through time by human fruition and geologic, climactic, and ecological forces: “Interaction, rather than responsiveness, is the key to understanding the human-environment relationship” (Bereza 2007).

Scaling is another important feature of the landscape approach. Variability in both time and space including spatial boundaries and temporal dynamics are important loci of investigation (Scoones 1999). For example, it is necessary to historicize landscapes and view change from different temporal scales (i.e. geologic, human history) in order to fully understand present and future conditions (Raffles et al. 2003) because of the time delay in ecosystem responses to change (Hayashida 2005). Therefore, environments are given history as are the humans that helped to shape them. Humans as a keystone species play an integral role in all landscapes. By acknowledging that this nature-culture recursive connection is constantly being renegotiated, the Amazon is not viewed as a pristine forest, but instead as a culturally-constructed landscape according to indigenous principles of productivity.

The landscape approach attempts to break down many of the dichotomies that exist in modernist epistemology such as the nature-culture divide, materialism vs. idealism, and agency in opposition to determinism, which allow the approach to be informed by the complexity of these recursive and pluralistic connections (Descola and Palsson 1996; Biersack 1999). This approach encourages the recognition of multiple natures (both material and cognitive) (Scoones 1999). By taking a biocultural approach to analyzing human-environment interaction this view sees the Amazon as both shaping and being shaped by its inhabitants in both the past and present. Humans are not independent from their landscapes and are therefore subject to

them to some extent. This approach has implications for many conservation projects that seek to protect the environment from the very people who helped to construct it (Raffles et al. 2003). Amazonian peoples have modified and continue to modify the environment in a way that increased its value for them whether it be economic, political, spiritual, or cultural value: “Rather than a relationship with an absolute part, there is a dialogue between humans and the environment” (Bereza 2007).

### **Critical Theories**

Land and resources in the Amazon have become commodified in the process of global capitalist expansion with the advent of modernity. Modernity is defined as the unified global economic system and divided political space, or world-system, that began with the “Long 16<sup>th</sup> Century” (circa 1492-1650) that emphasizes rationality, capital accumulation, and a temporal shift that looks at time as linear and progressive (Taylor 1996). The world-system rewards unequal exchange between the core and the periphery through core development and peripheral impoverishment. The core and the periphery are comparative positions of subjects (i.e. culture groups, nation-state) in relation to the global economic system. The core is the center of industrial production and the periphery is the source of raw materials and cheap labor (Hall 2000).

The Amazon, as a peripheral region of the world, has been a significant site of resource extraction since the 1800s with a dramatic increase in the past decade. Today over twenty million tons of soybeans are exported to Europe; millions of barrels of oil and countless illegal hardwoods are exported to the US from the Amazon—both core regions (Wallace 2007). With oil at over \$90 a barrel, political leaders are calling for the increased exploitation of hydrocarbon resources in the Amazon to supply core demand. As their land is taken away and resources exploited, “the indigenous peoples (receive) little

of positive value in exchange. Instead, the world-system has brought them poverty, European diseases, and environmental degradation” (Pearson 2007:97).

In periods of interhegemony as we are currently experiencing between global hegemony, resource extraction by core nations vying for this power increases substantially as they promote their own national development at the expense of the periphery (Taylor 1996). For example, Chinese, Japanese, European, and American companies are in hot pursuit of many of the oil reserves in the Western Amazon. With the arrival of modernity and European colonization, the Amazon’s economy and society turned from an inward network of production and exchange to one looking outward toward Europe and other colonial powers focused on extraction and exportation of resources (Mann 2006).

The Amazon and its indigenous inhabitants have been the object of modernist epistemological inquiry and environmental determinists who fail to recognize Amazonian people's agency in creating an environment that has suited their needs for millennia. The landscape approach, however, is a moderating means of analysis that tries to avoid the extremes of deterministic perspectives and find a balance between structure and agency. Similar to Anthony Giddens’ (1984) theory of structuration but in this case applied to the nature-culture dialectic on the contrary to opposing forces within society. Though these “discursive linkages between indigeneity and nature carry a danger of (neo) colonial domination, as indigenous peoples are either displaced (cognitively, and often physically) from landscapes, or equated with nature itself and simply collapsed into the landscape” (Stetson et al. 2007:3). When indigenous peoples are inherently tied with “nature” – that pristine wilderness created by modernity’s nature-culture dichotomy – they often lose their agency to act in favor of or against conservation or exploitation. They are described as having lived in “harmony” with nature as opposed to actively

managing and changing their landscapes to suit their needs. Yet, when they fall too far on the side of culture in the dialectic, they are often stripped of their legitimate habitation of that landscape (Stetson et al. 2007). Allowing for indigenous peoples' rights to their ancestral territory can balance the dialectic between structure and agency.

### **The Historical Contingency of the Contemporary Amazon**

By looking at the historical contingency of contemporary landscapes and how this dialectic is constantly being renegotiated, land rights in favor of indigenous peoples have more credence over Western-centric notions of conservation or exploitation for capitalist growth. As mentioned earlier, looking at the history of landscapes and the people that created them is an important facet of the landscape approach. Historically, the Amazon has five major phases of landscape alteration – 1) hunter/gatherer modifications in the first wave of human settlement; 2) increased management of the forests over the course of around 10,000 years; 3) human depopulation by epidemic disease and the flux of unmanaged forest growth; 4) human repopulation and resource extraction, most notably in the 'Rubber Boom' era (circa 1850-1920) (Barham et al. 1996); 5) and the contemporary period of rapid landscape change due to overexploitation of resources “most of it unnecessarily destructive” (Cleary 2001:68). The domestication and subsequent wide-scale cultivation of manioc led to increased human settlement in the Amazon. This marks the transition between the first and second phases of historical Amazonian landscape alteration.

Betty Meggers was one of the first archaeologists to undertake extensive archaeological research in the Amazon. In 1971 she published the popular *Amazonia: Man and Culture in a Counterfeit Paradise*, which has had a lasting influence on Amazon conservation policies. Through her environmental

determinist perspective she believed there were too many environmental constraints on Amazonian peoples to ever develop complex civilizations. She also made claims that Amazonian soils were too fragile to support intensive agriculture (Meggers 1996). Many archaeologists have since proved her wrong and continue to uncover compelling evidence for large, complex civilizations in the Amazon that extensively modified and managed their environments, both forests and rivers, for thousands of years (Raffles et al. 2003). Archaeologists continue to go back and forth about the extent of human modification on the region (Mann 2006).

The anthropogenic origins of many savanna areas, ridged field sites, and even river channels and islands in the Amazon are more pieces of evidence that tend to indicate wide-scale human modification during the second phase of historical Amazonian landscape alteration (see Cleary 2001, Raffles et al. 2003, Erickson 2000, and Heckenberger 2003). Heckenberger's (2003) archaeological research in Brazil's Xingu region has revealed that large earthwork structures such as roads and other forms of infrastructure were built according to indigenous cultural aesthetic of symbolic and social importance and reflect large-scale social organization. The most recent published research looking at paleodata from charcoal and fossil pollen in soil cores provides evidence that in some areas of the Amazon, especially along river bluffs, human modification was extreme, while in certain vast stretches of forest human influence seems to have been minimal (Bush and Silman 2007). Clark Erickson (2000) would disagree that human influence was minimal on any part of the forest. He believes the term anthropogenic landscape is almost synonymous with all parts of Neotropical environments.

Much of the present-day biodiversity for which the Amazon is famous is actually the result of long-term human habitation and alteration of the Amazonian landscape. The indigenous peoples planted what had productive value to them.

Heckenberger (2003) refers to much of the Amazon as “working forests”. There are considered to be 138 different domestic plants in the Amazon (Clement 1999). As Charles Clement, an anthropological botanist working in the Amazon, notes, “[v]isitors are always amazed that you can walk in the forest here and constantly pick fruit from trees...That’s because people *planted* them. They’re walking through old orchards” (Mann 2006:341). Peach palm distribution is an interesting example of human-environment interaction. Peach palms are managed by the indigenous inhabitants in a variety of ways. Like other forms of environmental management in the Amazon, peach palm management is somewhere between wild gathering and farming that makes the distinction between human managed and wild forest difficult to impose because “forests can be tame and gardens wild” (Cleary 2001:70) in Amazonia. Pollen evidence from several archaeological sites suggest that human intervention was one of the causes of the immense biological diversity as the environment adapted to human presence over thousands of years (Cleary 2001).

In my own experience with present-day, indigenous-managed reforestation projects in the Amazon, one project leader explained to me why each plant was cultivated where and for what use<sup>4</sup>. It was a highly calculated endeavor with each tree and plant being planted for such diverse purposes as food, medicine, seeds for jewelry-making, to ward off evil spirits, to draw macaws to the area solely for aesthetic purposes. Every plant had a reason, a use. It amounted to an area of overwhelming biodiversity and a home to countless non-human species that too enjoyed the human touch on the forest ecosystem. If indigenous peoples were integral in

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<sup>4</sup> I have been given extensive tours of community-based reforestation projects in indigenous Shipibo communities in the Peruvian Amazon over the past two years, and have had numerous conversations with other individuals undertaking similar efforts in communities throughout the Western Amazon.

forming the biodiversity that makes the Amazon important today, and in my experience continue to do so, the cultivators of the biodiverse forest should be given the legal right to their lands to continue the human side of the dialectic.

Besides the anthropogenic biodiversity of the Amazon, nutrient rich soils in the typically poor soils of the tropical forest are emerging as the best evidence of large-scale landscape formation in the Amazon (Lehmann et al. 2003). Soil quality is referred to solely in a relative sense to other soil types in the world, not in any kind of absolute terms (van der Leeuw 1998). The investigation of Amazonian Dark Earths, black soils, or *terra preta do Indio* – the nutrient rich soils found in the Amazon – are some of the most convincing data that humans were managing the Amazonian environment for millennia. It is estimated that up to 10% of the Amazon's soil is very rich—meaning that it contains high levels of many “plant-available” nutrients that make it more favorable to human-managed ecosystems because it better retains nutrients and moisture (Mann 2006). This *terra preta* soil is thought to regenerate itself due to its biotic activity. Evidence of *terra preta* shows that the action of native Amazonians has been favorable to the environment based on changing the landscape to suit their needs. This is different than the usual Western dichotomy of preservation of nature or degradation (Lehmann et al. 2003). As well, researchers have discovered other types of extensive soil management practices such as organic matter harvesting, sediment trapping in floodplains, in-field burning and concentric ring agriculture (Raffles et al. 2003).

The range and extent of these *terra preta* deposits illustrate the magnitude of pre-Colombian landscape formation. *Terra preta* sites, according to archaeological evidence such as extensive ceramic remains, seem to be the result of composting and long-term mulching. The secret to long-term productivity of *terra preta* is the fact that it contains up to 64% more charcoal than the average Amazonian soil. After a carefully

managed process of creating charcoal through controlled burning of organic matter, indigenous farmers mix the charcoal into the soil. The nutrients bind to the charcoal and this combined with human-produced organic wastes creates an environment ripe for microbial biomass and hence a rich soil. The soil-enrichment techniques of the current-day Kayapo indigenous group in Brazil illustrate a contemporary example of the creation of dark earth deposits (Hecht 2004). The *terra preta* sites indicate that the Amazon underwent a period of agricultural intensification and associated population growth in Pre-Colombian times. Before the Industrial Revolution, the cultivation of large-scale agricultural surpluses of manioc and maize on “fragile” Amazonian lands was actually more successful than their contemporaries in Europe at the time (Cleary 2001). Early European explorers such as Francisco de Orellana and Gaspar de Carvajal reported huge settlements along the Amazon’s riverbanks. Discoveries of the scale and magnitude of *terra preta* deposits indicate that those large settlements actually made this region one of the most densely populated in the world at that time (Mann 2006). The historical peoples of the Amazon created an environment that could sustain one of the world’s highest population densities and utilized large expanses of the Amazon without detriment.

So if the Amazon had such prolific civilizations what happened to all the people when European colonization began? When the first Europeans began to settle in the Amazon, they thought the region to be a sparsely populated, dense jungle. Little did they know that their diseases had preceded them, wiping out many of the largest riverine groups in the third phase of historical Amazonian landscape alteration. By the time Victorian writers began to introduce the world to the Amazon many of the most densely populated areas were overgrown by secondary growth leading to the notion of a pristine jungle. Amazonian history is punctuated by massive

human depopulation followed by forest recolonization (Cleary 2001).

The first European colonists “never fully grasped that the people (they) saw as remnants of the Paleolithic Age were actually the persecuted survivors of a recently shattered culture. It was as if (they) had come across refugees from a Nazi concentration camp, and concluded they belonged to a culture that had always been barefoot and starving” (Mann 2006:10). The first Europeans viewed the indigenous peoples of the Amazon as timeless and essentially cheated them of the dignity associated with creating sustainable and productive landscapes by claiming the Amazon to be a pristine expanse of wilderness. Even today in neo-colonial fashion, conservation organizations, NGOs, governments, and corporations deny indigenous peoples’ agency in deciding the future of their landscapes and the landscapes shaped by their ancestors. Many conservationists claim that indigenous people’s ancestral knowledge of sustainable environmental management has been lost to modernity, and therefore they (the conservationists) must be the rational decision makers. Although 90-95% of Amazonian populations were wiped out over an extended period of time after first contact with European diseases, some indigenous Amazonian groups did survive and their populations have now almost rebounded to pre-contact levels.

### **The Amazon Landscape Today**

If we begin to think of the Amazon as a sphere of agency, as a constructed landscape, we can begin to be better informed about current and future land rights decisions. Some environmentalists claim that looking at the Amazon as having the ability to withstand wide-scale human disturbance for millennia is equivalent to giving the extractive industries the go-ahead to exploit (Mann 2006). Yet, this approach actually aims to do the opposite. Acknowledging the contribution of

indigenous Amazonians' knowledge on how to sustainably manage their environments recognizes their agency in determining their past, present, and future landscapes.

In many current policy and academic circles humans are seen as a contaminant or invasive species to a natural world prized for its non-human wilderness. Many indigenous groups are strategically framing themselves as the "Ecological Indian" in order to gain international support for their causes in a tactical political move by buying into Western notions of pristine nature, but "the evidence for human manipulation of landscapes in the past and today requires a reconsideration of key aspects of the politics of Amazonian conservation, beginning with a recognition of the accumulated labor through which this valued landscape has been and continues to be produced" (Raffles et al. 2003:181-2).

Conserving the Amazon became a part of global environmentalist dialogue after the publication of Meggers' work and the first Earth Day (Mann 2006). Wide-scale extraction of the Amazon's resources had been in progress for more than a century with the beginning of the 'Rubber Boom' era. When rubber and other major resources were discovered in the Amazon there was a major land and resource grab which marked the fourth phase of Amazonian landscape alteration.

The contradiction of Western-style conservation is that it often attempts to protect the environment from the very people who created the environment in its current valued form. In this way, much conservation actually further trivializes and takes power away from those groups whose active participation is necessary to the future course of a productive and treasured landscape (Raffles et al. 2003).

Recently, Davi Kopenawa Yanomami, an indigenous Yanomami shaman, spoke out internationally against Western efforts to "buy" the rainforest in order to protect it. He said, "The forest cannot be bought; it is our life and we have always protected it...without us, it is dead land. The time has come for

you to start listening to us. Give us back our lands...before it's too late for us and too late for you" (Ross 2007). Besides buying Amazonian land, many conservation organizations have set up protected areas, then evicted the indigenous inhabitants or deemed certain indigenous land use practices illegal (see Chapin 2004 for an excellent discussion on this phenomenon).

Many times the large conservation organizations (for example, World Wildlife Fund, the Nature Conservancy, and Conservation International) will prevent indigenous people access to land and resources but make concessions to large corporations in the name of sound management plans allowing timber companies logging rights or other industries to extract "tropical forest products" in protected areas (Chapin 2004 and Cleary 2001). Many times the large conservation organizations refuse to be involved in indigenous land rights struggles or to speak out against large corporate interests claiming that advocacy is too political. Yet, they have close political and financial ties to national governments and multilateral funding institutions that actively promote resource extraction often times on indigenous lands and in other areas of ecological importance, not to mention their corporate funders (Chapin 2004).

Many of these conservation organizations believe that the natural sciences should be the guiding principle in conservation policies. Yet, they have an outdated view of ecology based on notions of pristine nature and carrying capacities (Chapin 2004). This is where the landscape approach can be practically applied in the field. By recognizing indigenous peoples both as essential to their constructed landscapes as well as important political actors, conservation organizations could instead partner with indigenous peoples to create management policies based on indigenous knowledge and rights, as well as use their geopolitical positions in the world to advocate for and gain access to resources in alliance with indigenous peoples. First Western notions of

“‘conservation’ and ‘preservation’ are probably the wrong terms to use when discussing a moving target such as a dynamic and complex...landscape” (Erickson 2003:200). Efforts to freeze a landscape at some ideal moment in time will destroy it. Instead, landscapes need to be actively managed by those who created, maintain, and live in them (Erickson 2003).

The protection of the Amazon seems more imperative now than ever before – “During the past 40 years, close to 20 percent of the Amazon rain forest has been cut down—more than in all the previous 450 years since European colonization began” (Wallace 2007:49). The region has been in the news in recent decades for its staggering rates of deforestation, yet few people know that it is fast becoming one of the world's biggest oil producing regions with 70% of the Peruvian Amazon sold off to multinational oil companies and the situation is even worse in Colombia, Ecuador, and Venezuela (see [amazonwatch.org](http://amazonwatch.org) for more information). The Amazon appears to be a resilient landscape when looking from a distant temporal scale, but the amount of degradation and environmental contamination, in this fifth phase of Amazonian landscape alteration, has the potential to be globally detrimental. The degradation and future potential for damage caused by the extractive (mining, timber, hydrocarbon, and pharmaceutical) and large-agro (especially soy and cattle) industries on the contemporary landscape is detrimental to the ecosystem in the present and foreseeable future. The sicknesses and political violence that tends to follow massive resource extraction threaten the livelihoods of the Amazon's indigenous inhabitants (Wallace 2007). If we kill off the holders of the traditional ecological knowledge, it would take humanity many generations for us to relearn how to maintain the forests for sustainable and productive human use. Further, the massive scale extraction of resources is causing an unprecedented rate of extinction of non-human species many that could be potentially beneficial to humans for their medicinal and other

properties. Hecht and Cockburn (1990) have actively spoken out against this misguided development in the Amazon. They argue for a type of “socialist ecology” that abolishes bureaucratic management and allows for and encourages collective organizing as a means to protect and manage the Amazon ecosystem.

This is exactly what defenders of indigenous land rights in the Amazon seek to do. More than 162 million acres of the Amazon have been protected through designation as indigenous territories (Ross 2007). Kayapo, Panara, Shipibo and many other indigenous groups are using satellite imagery and other geographic technologies to locate illegal settlements and deforestation on their lands, because it shows “where Indian land begins is where deforestation ends” (Wallace 2007: 68). In a recent study (Oliveira et al. 2007), legally titled indigenous lands in the Peruvian Amazon accounted for only 11% of total forest disturbance and 9% of deforestation. These results indicate that titled indigenous lands are the most effective for sustainable forest management. The socially-embedded economies and normative frameworks of many indigenous communities not only encourage sustainable landscape management but inhibit overuse and self-interest overriding the common good.

By looking at indigenous conceptions of landscapes, we can see their importance and how they have transformed physical places into culturally-constructed meaningful places as a basis for contemporary indigenous land rights struggles in the Amazon. The landscape approach can be a powerful tool in indigenous movements’ arsenals against industrial interests and conservationists. Showing that the landscapes and resources valued by environmentalists and corporate shareholders were actually constructed by the indigenous inhabitants and only they have the key to its future survival as a valued ecosystem gives indigenous peoples the upper hand as they actively negotiate modernity (Stetson et al. 2007).

## **Conclusion**

“The construction of the nature-culture dualism is our problem, not theirs” (Cleary 2001:70) and indigenous peoples will continue to struggle for the rights to the lands of their ancestors, while corporate interests will continue with their business-as-usual. Debates between conservation and exploitation are inevitably ethical and political, yet the landscape approach allows the debate to be informed by a wide variety of disciplines necessary to give a holistic understanding of the landscape. The landscape approach, therefore, requires a broad array of researchers and other actors to take active roles in informing policy and popular audiences (Hayashida 2005). Analyzing such concepts as landscape management, degradation, or other types of human-landscape alteration, one could lose their moral compass within differing scales and depending from which cultural perspective, but “understanding that nature is not normative does not mean that anything goes” (Mann 2006:365). With the Amazon’s role in atmospheric processes and the current popular concern about global warming, its importance as a region will continue to grow. Conservation will ultimately fail to protect the Amazon without an active management role by the Amazon’s indigenous inhabitants. Therefore, academics have a valuable opportunity to inform present and future policy and practice using a landscape approach that illustrates the importance of indigenous land rights as the means to sustainable stewardship of the Amazon.

## **Acknowledgements**

Many thanks to the editors for all of their hard work in editing our drafts and putting this journal together. Thank you also to Dr. Chris Fisher for teaching me to question “nature” and introducing me to the ‘Landscape Approach.’

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# Shattered Dreams: Insanity and the Implications of Loneliness, Isolation, and the Failed Promises of the American Frontier

Leslie Johnson

**Abstract-** *The opening of the American western frontier for settlement inspired grandiose dreams as countless individuals and families uprooted and migrated West. No matter what specific dream spurred the move, these people all migrated with the hope of a better life. However, the harsh reality was much different than popular notions. The goal of this paper is to reveal what happened to these individuals who failed to achieve the success promised by frontier dreams. As many individuals sank into poverty, loneliness, and even depression, going West may have ultimately resulted in admittance to insane asylums for some emigrants.*

## **The Colorado State Insane Asylum**

To provide a context for the Colorado State Insane Asylum cemetery population, it is important to understand the reasons why individuals were committed to asylums during the latter half of the nineteenth century. The admittance records for the Colorado Insane Asylum were reviewed for common causes of insanity during this time (see Johnson 2007) and some relatively frequently listed causes included intemperance (alcoholism), infectious diseases, business failure, disappointment, and domestic trouble. To better understand these admittance records, a literature review regarding common

causes of insanity during the nineteenth century is required. Although many individuals were admitted to asylums during because of illnesses, the effects of old age, or a violation of social norms, this particular paper focuses on the loneliness and social isolation that many people experienced during the time of westward expansion, and the madness that may have resulted.

### **Westward Expansion**

The opening of the American western frontier for settlement inspired grandiose dreams as countless individuals and families uprooted and migrated West. They went for a myriad of specific reasons, but no matter what dream spurred the move, these people all migrated with the hope of a better life. They invested heavily in this new venture by readily purchasing land, equipment, housing materials, and the myth of the American West. The harsh reality was much different than popular notions suggested, as the land did not always bestow success to those who worked it (Deverell 1994). The goal of this paper is to reveal what happened to these individuals who failed to achieve the success promised by frontier dreams. As many individuals sank into poverty, loneliness, and even depression, going West may have ultimately resulted in admittance to insane asylums for some emigrants.

### ***Promises of the West***

From the beginning of Westward expansion, an abundance of land fueled the promises of aspiring settlers and prompted their migration to and across the American West (Mackin 2003). Early propaganda promoted migration through promises of endless development and success:

Our land is ringing with the din of her internal improvements, cottages are springing up far away to the west upon sunny acres where but yesterday roamed the Indian and the buffalo. Grand lines of railroad are stretching out across the continent... We want yet more people to wake our sleeping wealth... to 'tickle our prairies with a hoe that they may laugh with a harvest' [Goddard 1869:12]

Promises such as these lured farmers to the Great Plains between 1870 and 1890, through "the illusion of better prospects, the promise of cheap land, and the dream of great (or at least greater) wealth" (Stegner 2003:353). Escape from crowding, economic failure, hierarchical farms, and the filth of industrial cities also provided motivation for individuals and families to migrate West. Additionally, the search for mineral wealth continued to prompt migration. Unfortunately, this journey often ended up in disappointment rather than success.

### ***Those Attracted by the Promises***

The people who came out West were brave, strong, hardy folks; aggression and ambition were venerated characteristics of these settlers (Stoeltje 1975). Young men without families went West in search of adventure and fortune. Even men *with* families migrated West during the gold rushes. Families went West in search of a better life, through owning their own land and building stable communities.

### **The Reality**

For many of the people who migrated to the frontier, there was a "failure of the western farm landscape to generate the wealth and security that the story of progress had promised" (Warren 2005:548). An infinite and bleak prairie awaited many settlers (Stegner 2002). Farming was hard work. Breaking sod,

planting, threshing, and harvesting were hard on individuals working the land; and so were cooking, washing, tending children, and hauling water. Wood for building homes could be scarce and expensive. Weather extremes, like droughts, high winds, and snowstorms, decimated crops and livestock. Ranching also did not work out for many settlers. As a supposed precursor to farming, ranching was supposed to be a step in the process of civilization. However, the failure of farms in cold and dry climates meant that ranching could not progress to farming, settlement, and civilization (Warren 2005). Pests such as rattlesnakes, flies, grasshoppers, mosquitoes, and other insects also plagued settlers (Jones 1998). Illnesses due to weather, water-borne infections, and malnutrition were common on the prairie. Other illnesses, such as the common cold, scarlet fever, smallpox, pneumonia, consumption, and toothaches ravaged individuals and families. Life was hard, and accidents resulting in physical trauma were also common. In addition, establishing a business out West was practically doomed, as an estimated 95 percent of American businesses failed between 1873 and 1893. This shattered the myth of a self-made man through spirit, hard work, and perseverance (Warren 2005).

### ***Shattered Dreams***

Social instability near the end of the nineteenth century resulted from unfulfilled dreams of the West and increasing discontent from class disparities. This friction was exacerbated by “[s]ocial conflict [which] became the rule rather than the exception, and cohesiveness [that] degenerated into narrow morality” (Hine and Faragher 2000:389). Even during this time of unrest, many people continued to take comfort in the myth of the West, where ambition and hard work were still valued, and “family, hard work, and willingness to take risks [were] all virtues of the middle-class family”(Warren 2005:5). One must

wonder about the people who lost faith in this scenario: those ambitious, hard-working risk-takers who failed to realize this dream. Did these individuals become susceptible to a degenerate morality? Did this loss of hope and morality lead to madness? As Dorman Eaton suggested in 1881, even individuals of the late-nineteenth century did not fully understand the answers to these questions: “[t]he common people are perplexed whether to regard ...[insanity] ...as a mysterious disgrace, a natural disease, or an avenging dispensation of Providence” (Eaton 1881:263). Indeed, the classification of types of insanity was complex and confusing to the untrained individual (Church and Peterson 1889). Clinical psychologists also struggled to find a definition for insanity: late nineteenth century doctors proclaimed that insanity was difficult to confine to a narrow and rigid definition because it could be expressed in a variety of forms and could be the result of wide range of pathologies (Church and Peterson 1899:603). However, a diagnostic manual from 1899 broadly describes insanity in this way:

A disease of the brain...affecting the integrity of the mind, whether marked by intellectual or emotional disorder...A special disease, a form of alienation characterized by the accidental, unconscious, and more or less permanent disturbance of the reason...Morbidity derangement, generally chronic, of the supreme cerebral centers...giving rise to perverted feeling, defective or erroneous ideation, and discordant conduct, conjointly or separately, and more or less incapacitating the individual for his due social relations [Church and Peterson 1899:604]

Loneliness in the West was common and widespread. Family members who acquired separate parcels of land through the Homestead Act often built their homes at adjoining boundaries to combat this loneliness. Even so, the colossal expanse of the frontier and sparseness of population resulted in feelings of

insignificance, loneliness, and depression. Women experienced the affects of daily drudgery through feelings of “hopelessness... exhaustion, and...yearning for release” (Jones 1998:184,193,201). Social withdrawal was another symptom of loneliness (Stoeltje 1975). These feelings were not gender-specific, however, as both men and women were susceptible. Insanity was one possible result from these feelings of loneliness and isolation (Jones 1998; Stegner 2003).

The desolation, isolation, loneliness, and great distances between neighbors was all but intolerable. Living in a covered hole in the ground with a minimum of crudely fashioned furnishings, no pictures on the walls, no books, no music but the wind and the thump of grasshoppers on the roof, and nobody to talk to, it's a wonder they didn't all go stark, raving mad. Some did. [Stegner 2003:365]

These issues were portrayed in fictional literature by the early twentieth century. In the novel “Giants in the Earth,” a Norwegian family migrated westward to work the land. Instead, they struggled with hardship, poverty, and loneliness. The mother Beret, upon seeing a wagon caravan approaching, is moved to warn the occupants: “[s]uddenly a strong impulse took hold of her to do something to save these people; she felt as if she ought to go and tell them to turn back; yes, turn back - turn back - before they had strayed any farther into destruction!” (Rolvaag 1927:157). In the novel, Beret withdrew further into herself as a reaction to the loneliness and depression she felt. Although this fictional tale was published in 1927, it is a timeless testament to the loneliness felt by many in isolated prairie homes.

Lonely sentiments can also be seen in individual accounts from settlers. A song relating the pleas of a man who does not want to be buried on “The Lone Prairie” urges others not to migrate: “Don't listen to enticing words/From men who own large groves and herds/Oh, comrades brave, take warning,

pray/Don't leave your home for the lone prairie" (Clemens 1872). Children were also susceptible to the affects of loneliness and isolation, as illustrated in an account of a child in an isolated homestead who asked his mother if they would always have to live there. The mother replied "yes" and the anguished child asked "and will we have to die here too?" (Hine and Faragher 2000:363-364). The child was distraught at the prospect of living his life out in such a lonely place.

It was thought that the "emotional balance" of women not adapted to the hardships and loneliness of frontier life could be upset, thus leading to withdrawal (Stoeltje 1975). In fact, homesickness was considered a frequent cause of melancholia (Church and Peterson 1899), which was a prevalent diagnosis during this time. Social isolation was the cause of distress for many women, since the companionship of other women was not a regular feature of life (Hine and Faragher 2000). Additionally, a refined woman might not be strong enough to endure the hardships of the West and become an adequate "helpmate" to her husband. Helpmates often exhibited bravery, strength, initiative, and nurturing abilities; she was often economical, industrial, capable, and even perceived as asexual (Stoeltje 1975:39-41). A woman who did not embody these traits was thought to be too delicate to make it out West, and could be subject to mental ailments.

Afflictions such as hysteria and nervous exhaustion may fit with this hypothesis. Hysteria was categorized (among other symptoms) as "lack of logical coherence and sequence of thought, but with perfect intelligence, defects of memory...extreme uncontrolled and morbidly changeable emotions...conduct and speech are based upon emotional impulsiveness, uncontrolled by ethical considerations of any kind"(Church and Peterson 1889:640). Nervous exhaustion was caused by "stresses of various kinds, mental or physical" and this description lists "hardships" among the physical causes, which could be interpreted any number of ways.

“[E]motional irritability with an undertone of depression” was one physical symptom of this disorder (Church and Peterson 1889:641). Moral causes of insanity included “domestic troubles, grief over death of friends, business worries, anger, religious excitement, love affairs, fright, and nervous shock” (Church and Peterson 1889:644). Those with hereditary nervous dispositions were most susceptible to these moral downfalls, which affected women more than men. Insanity in the form of “actions induced by disorders of the emotions” could lead to “suicidal attempts...homicidal assaults, arson, and other forms of crime and violence” (Church and Peterson 1889:669).

Perhaps “domestic trouble” as a cause of insanity for women was due to loneliness, or a lack of hardiness or compliance with family life. One must also wonder if the withdrawal or rebellion from a wife who was not considered an adequate “helpmate” was construed as “domestic trouble” that may have therefore resulted in her admittance to an asylum.

### **Insanity in the United States**

Jacksonian ideology informed popular and professional ideas about insanity and its causes in the United States. By the 1830s, it was determined that providing for the basic needs of the insane was not curing the problem, and the focus turned to society and its many ills. In addition to other things, loss of property, disappointed ambition, intemperance, fear of poverty, sleepless nights, fears of failure, extraordinary stress in the quest for success, and anxiety over improving one’s condition were chief causes of insanity (Rothman 1971). An asylum superintendent in California conferred that “disastrous enterprises, sudden reverses of fortune, intemperance, fast living and an unsettled condition of life [were] the chief causes of mental disorder on the Pacific Coast” (Torrey and Miller 2002:251). The “struggle for existence” and “mental or bodily

strain” were also listed by an early diagnostic manual as causes for insanity (Church and Peterson 1899).

Poverty, homelessness, and physical disability were also often classified as madness during the nineteenth century (Sutton 1991). This is related to the idea that dependency, such as that which poverty placed on society, should not exist in the new republic of the United States. It was surmised that there was enough land and demand for labor to keep everyone employed and therefore self-reliant. The poor were generally distrusted and not viewed as fully belonging to the community (Rothman 1971). Additionally, it was the poor themselves that were to blame for their economic condition. Idleness and intemperance were thought to be root causes of poverty. Poverty became a national social concern, and communities were initially expected to be responsible for the poverty-stricken.

Poverty presented opportunities for the onset of madness, as “the struggle for subsistence, the constant threat of ill health, the domestic squabble and the temptations to vice - all helped to make the lower classes...susceptible to mental illness” (Rothman 1971:124). The poor were distrusted, as they were at a higher risk of surrendering to vices. This was ultimately viewed as a loss of social stability and cohesion, and the poor were increasingly marginalized as a “separate, distinct, and hostile class” (Rothman 1971:124). By 1832, social elites had determined that community support of dependants such as the poor was no longer desirable. They decided that these people should be removed from society and placed in an environment where temptations would be limited and their behavior controlled through a system of rewards and punishments (Rothman 1971). Thus, the beginning of institutionalization: almshouses and later, insane asylums.

The increased emphasis on insanity as a social problem can be seen by comparing the increase of the general population with the increase of the insane. Although the

American population increased only thirty percent between 1860 and 1870, the number of “insane” increased one hundred and thirty five percent (Alamosa Journal 1884). This increase reflects society and perceived societal problems more than it reflects an increase in actual madness. The emphasis of insanity as a national social concern is also illustrated by the plethora of advertisements addressing the issue of preventing the condition. Popular conceptions of insanity were used in ads promoting medicinal products. The influence of the nervous system on the brain was thought to be one cause of insanity, and medicinal tonics were considered to be a preventative measure (Alamosa Journal 1884).

## **Conclusion**

Social isolation, economic hardship, and loneliness were prevalent on the American frontier, and cannot be ignored in considerations of nineteenth century emigrant lifestyles. These lifestyles, as revealed through historic documents and modern chronicles, give a rich depth to individual narratives of the West, rendering this topic significant to research regarding the Colorado Insane Asylum. The unfulfilled promises of the West were pivotal to these narratives, and resulted in the descent into madness for many individuals.

The admittance records for the Colorado Insane Asylum confirm popular ideas of insanity during the nineteenth century. The occurrence of intemperance, infectious diseases, business failure, disappointment, and domestic trouble appear to be representative of common “causes” of insanity. Many of these causes result from the inability of individuals to comply with prevailing social norms. However, as revealed in the literature review, many of the causes may also be indicative of conditions resulting from social isolation, economic hardship, and loneliness. These conditions were products of westward migration, and they were especially devastating given the

sacrifices that individuals and families made to undertake this journey, and the hopes and dreams of success held so dearly by people who bought into the myth of the American West so heartily.

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# Gender and Sexuality Construction, As Informed by Hip Hop Kulture within the African American Community

Andrew Kumar

**Abstract-** *Identity is a complex network of interrelated thoughts and actions informed by social, historical, and political contexts manifesting in gender, sexuality, ethnicity and class (among others) in both individuals and groups. This literature review seeks to explore how these notions are informed within the African American community through the vehicle of Hip Hop Kulture (HHK). It is the author's assumption that dominant ideology works its way through HHK essentializing the Black experience along lines of hyper-sexualization, violence, individualism and consumerism, which are all tenants of dominant western capitalist ideology. This essentialization and commodification is just a later manifestation within the historical trend of inequitable treatment of African Americans based on ethnicity and class, which mutually inform each other. In addition to this, conceptions of feminism within both the African American community and HHK will be articulated.*

*"Rap is American, but with a defiant shout. The sexism, violence, and nihilism that are depicted in Rap are a byproduct of that which exists in this country." (Bynoe 2002:89)*

## **Introduction**

Like many artistic expressions, interpretations of Hip Hop Kultures (HHK) are situationally specific to their time and place, and are rooted in the social and economic past that precedes them. HHK is tied into the neoliberal capitalist system, and produced by people involved in a patriarchal and oftentimes misogynistic society that values consumerism and individualism over the needs of the community. Manifestations of HHK such as Rap, deejaying (disc jockeying: DJing), graph art (graffiti or tagging), or breaking (dancing) can only be utilized in terms of participants' choices of description and direction. In numerous cases the economically and socially disenfranchised adopt this ideology of dominant culture at the expense of their local ethnically or geographically situated community.

This paper is an attempt to review the existing literature on HHK and determine how it informs gender and sexuality construction in the African American community (AAC). A discussion of the history of Hip Hop and the extant literature's neglect of recognizing women's roles in Hip Hop from its inception will begin this analysis. This will be followed by interpretations of how identity, gender, and sexuality all intersect HHK. Using academic feminist lenses, this paper seeks to describe some of the institutional and social structural constraints that affect how identity and gender are formed, and how concepts of race, class and gender identity in Hip Hop are tied to larger American culture. By analyzing the context and content of HHK's most visible ambassador, "Rap" music, this paper will expose the inherent gender, ethnic, and class inequity of both the dominant culture and its manifestation within HHK. This follows with an exploration of how identity formation and performance are impacted. Finally an assessment of the intersections between feminism and HHK

will exemplify a more gender equitable frame from which possibilities for future action and analysis may emerge.

Also discussed is the fact that while Hip Hop, which started with Afro Caribbeans and Latinos, and is now a global phenomenon, seems to be a historically African American construction that is rooted deeper still in West African traditions. While the contribution of others are profound, the musical element of Rapping has a deep connection with African American identity through slave traditions, and later African American music creations like blues, jazz, R&B (rhythm and blues), and soul. The inception of HHK was part of a fluid process of identity formation and reaction to structural maladies that facilitated the impoverishment of the AAC in the middle of the twentieth century. HHK cannot be separated from the context from which it was born, or the complex network of circumstances and themes linking ethnic identity with gender and class construction. Due to this interrelated web of circumstances, discussions of ethnic identity, or Blackness, as well as class status will be interlaced with the review of gender construction.

While the complexity of gender construction and sexuality is evenly distributed across a binary understanding of identity (male versus female) this paper will focus on women and construction of femininity more than on construction of masculinity and concepts of manhood. The surplus phalocentrism in academic study elsewhere should more than make up for the unequal focus found in this paper. It is additionally important to place myself as a researcher in the context of this work. While born at the same time as Hip Hop Generation members I am not African American, and was raised in an upper middle class setting. This differential access to education and resources distances me from the community being discussed. However, HHK had already made in-roads into white suburbia where I lived and I was able to witness the commodification and transition of Hip Hop into its current

form. Additionally and perhaps more importantly, I have been raised and conditioned in the same patriarchal capitalist system that greatly informs HHK and its production and dissemination. In essence we are cut from the same cloth in our gendered and class acculturation yet the specific cues and pathways followed are more than subtly different. This paper is not only an attempt to describe the intersections between race, gender and class in HHK, but also a means to place myself and own biases within the context of dominant ideology and Hip Hop.

Some important themes to appear in this analysis are described here by prominent HHK scholars. Gaunt (2006:108) posits "...power works in both directions between males and females, but the popular (read: mass culture) context of hip-hop tends to eclipse our comprehension of the dialogic and interdependent social formation of a Black musical identity and popular music." Nelson George (1998) adds that the spirit of rebellion that has made HHK so desirable to people world wide has been co-opted by the media industry who exhibit little sense of responsibility to the communities that produce and consume the particular strains of Rap music that are supported and distributed by corporate interest. Russell Potter (1995:14) qualifies this: "In their material icons, as with their political messages, Hip Hop texts themselves are no less conflicted than the multiple cultural positions which produced them." In summation this analysis contends that HHK is a contested space that is informed by ideology of the dominant culture from which it erupts and can be used to both liberate and disempower people and groups based on their gender, class or race within a system that values hierarchical differences among these groupings.

**Academic and Social Relevance of HHK Studies**

HHK is of considerable academic and social importance based on a number of important cultural themes and attributes it exhibits. It is a reflection of dominant ideals centered on specific subcultural practices that help define identity. It is a global force in popular culture, and is now a facet of westernization. It is a microcosm in which one can observe the social, economic, and cultural pressures that neoliberal capitalism and western patriarchy, both frames of dominant American ideology, have elicited. During this global phenomenon "...Black American youth remain its most visible ambassadors. Because they occupy such a visible position within American society, and more recently within global mass media, African American youth stand at ground zero for issues of race, nation, gender, age, and sexuality" (Hill Collins 2006: 3). The intersection of HHK, specifically Rap music, and western ideology is a productive nexus to observe the interplay and interdependence of these categorizations that often have dichotomous or divergent goals and motivations.

HHK is of particular importance and influence within the African American community. Rap has played an instrumental role in informing communities of political and social changes. Public Enemy (an early mainstream politicized Rap group) was quite successful in politicizing an entire generation of young people. The definitive aspect of HHK that makes it a postmodern creation also makes it an easily commodified product of globalization, adaptability. While the values of rebellion, materialism and street culture are fixed, it is the very flexibility of this communicative style that has allowed all aspects of Hip Hop culture to be turned into tangible product for profit (George 1998:155). This profitability has led to some very dichotomous interactions between artists, the industry, and the community, as values are abandoned, reconstituted or reified in the struggle for definition.

Rap first began reaching large audiences when music videos emerged in the early eighties. By 2001 over 89 million Hip Hop CDs were being sold (commercially), and currently suburban white adolescents represent sixty percent of the market. The global Rap market is worth billions and is partially controlled by multinational conglomerates like Sony, Warner Brothers, EMI (Electronical and Musical Industries), MCA (Music Corporation of America), and Polygram. These companies see little responsibility to the communities whom consume and produce the damaging racial/sexual images that they distribute in their overriding goals of profit making (Cole & Guy-Sheftall 2003:184). HHK is an important component of the media industry that influences ideology, culture and ethics across the globe. Understanding the complexity of such an influential force can only be of benefit to the social sciences and beyond.

HHK's varied musical manifestations of Rap create a flexible genre that informs its participants about a great many things, dichotomous or not. Due to a variety of structural inequalities such as access to education, and upward economic mobility, large portions of the African American community lack access to information concerning politics, social movements, and world events. Manifestations of HHK such as Rapping and graph art (graffiti) have elicited desperately needed dialogue in the community. It has had so strong an effect that Chuck D refers to Hip Hop as "the CNN of the Black community" (Gladney 1995:291). HHK provides a space for "heads" (Hip Hop fans or Hip Hop heads) and community members to share information and ideas about what is important, impactful, or entertaining. In this, HHK is an important arena of analysis for the study of identity formation in the African American community and beyond.

## **History**

Rapping has deep roots, which stretch all the way back to Africa. Throughout much of this history the role of women has been downplayed, or negated outright. This section will provide interpretations of the evolution of Rap, and highlight some of the many contributions of women. Additionally, this historical analysis explores the trend of employing music and rhythmic vocalizations to describe structural ills (social, cultural and economic) as well as personal grievances.

African Americans were first brought to the US by way of the Caribbean Islands from West Africa, primarily the Yoruban Congo. In Africa, abusive poems and songs were used to vent frustrations and are employed as social weapons:

Lampoons are not only to be used between groups but can also be a means of communicating and expressing personal enmity between hostile individuals. We hear of Galla abusive poems, for instance, while among the Yoruba when two women have quarreled they sometimes vent their enmity by singing songs at each other, especially in situations-like the laundry place- when other women will hear. Abusive songs against ordinary individuals are also sometimes directly used as a means of social pressure, enforcing the will of public opinion. [Toop 1984:31]

Here we find that women are, at the earliest documented inception of Hip Hop, part and parcel of the historical tradition of performative resistance. In West Africa this pressure is embodied by a caste of musicians known as griots (male performers) and griottes (women performers), which acted as musical guns for hire. Mixing gossip and satire, these performers attacked people in positions of political or economic power (Watkins 2005).

In the fields of the Southern United States, African American Slaves were trading “big lies” and verbally

assaulting one another in a practice known as *Pattin Juba* where one would slap thighs, stomp, and clap in contests. These evolved into epic tales and salutes to characters and community members. This practice continued and was taken to the urban cities in the north (Bynoe 2002). In the 1950's and 1960's a folklore student by the name of Roger D. Abrahams recorded many of these verbal contests as they took place in Camingerly, Philadelphia. He described them as “ a semi ritualized battle of words which batted insults back and forth between the players until one or the other found the going too heavy” (Toop 1984:32). William Labov documented the same activity in Harlem in the 1960's, and later these interactions would transform into the emcee (Microphone controller, MC) battles that came to be definitive in Hip Hop as it carved out a space in American and later global culture.

The well-known story of the inception of HHK began formally, in the early to mid seventies, in the thriving cultural underworld of the Bronx. “When the historic aftershocks of urban renewal, re-segregation, and capital flight settled, a new social and economic order had emerged in America” (Watkins 2005:9). Poverty and violence, both structural and individual, were rampant in the Bronx during the 1970s. Corrupt government policies and paid off thugs, only exacerbated an already difficult gang situation while federal operations like COINTELPRO (the US government's “counter intelligence program” formed to dismantle disruptive social movements in America) tore at the fabric of social organization overtly and covertly (Chang 2005). The gangs that carved up the Bronx in 1968 had disintegrated and called for civility five years later. As youth became more focused with flash and block parties, music came to the center stage once more. At the forefront of this redefinition were pioneers like Afrika Bambaataa and DJ Kool Herc, who used music to describe their discontent with their political and economic miseries, while seeking to slow violence and build community.

1967 was a tumultuous year in New York City and Kingston, Jamaica. Both cities were experiencing political unrest and violence due to structural inequalities, poverty, as well as class and ethnic based discrimination. It was in this environment that a young Clive Cambell and his family moved from the Trenchtown yard in Jamaica that Bob Marley grew up in to the birthplace of HHK, the south Bronx. At the time Jamaica was experiencing the initial influences of “dub” Reggae that needed big sound systems, multiple turntables, and complex mixing techniques. Clive Cambell’s father brought such a system with his family to New York. By adapting dub techniques Clive started his journey to becoming “DJ Kool Herc,” who is popularly considered a “godfather” of HHK (Chang 2005; Toop 1984; George 1991). Herc’s sister had been arranging house parties in the neighborhood and convinced him to start playing. Herc and other DJ’s of the time played at her house and later at block parties that served as meeting grounds for Hip Hop heads and a wide range of people that were being attracted to the emerging phenomenon. These parties provided a space where gang members were able to battle it out as MC’s, DJ’s and B-boys/girls (break-dancers), instead of resorting to the violence that had been plaguing the streets there for quite some time.

From out of Black Spades, rivals to the Savage skulls, two of the more notorious gangs in New York, came a young lieutenant named Kevin Donovan, or Afrika Bambaataa, who became a DJ with a large following. Using his gang clout and DJ appeal, he held parties that became a way to force drug dealers off the streets. Employing Black Spades members as security, “Bam” was able to minimize violence at the parties and beyond. HHK participants like b-girls, b-boys, and DJs were the foundation of what later became the (Universal) Zulu Nation, which was partially a platform for one of Hip Hop’s first street philosophers. Bam and the Zulus worked tirelessly to use elements of emergent HHK to bring the community up

(Watkins 2005:23-25). “Bambaataa and his Zulu nation used their knowledge as consumers of popular music to become skilled producers of it... ..Hemmed in by urban renewal, crime and police surveillance, and silenced by neglect from the culture industry, the school system, and city government, they found a way to declare themselves through music” (Lipsitz 1994:26).

With this, Bambaataa successfully politicized the house and block parties that Kool Herc had started and turned them into ceremonies of new faith (Chang 2005:107). This was a nation of break-dancers; the Zulu Kings and the Zulu Queens were the first subdivisions of many crews that were to push b-boying to the limits. Much of the literature has discounted the importance of dance in African-inspired music, and Hip Hop Kultural interpretations are no exception. However, Susan McClary (1994:34) notes: “The musical power of the disenfranchised -whether youth, the underclass, ethnic minorities, women or gay people- more often resides in their ability to articulate different ways of construing the body, ways that bring along in their wake the potential for different worlds.” Bambaataa was instrumental in recognizing the contribution of people of all ethnic backgrounds, and helped found the *Zulu Queens*, an all women break dancing crew that played an important role in this new cultural movement. While the role of women and other ethnic minorities is discounted generally up until this point, it is when HHK had the chance to go mainstream that more serious obfuscation begins.

The academic and journalistic accounts of early HHK rarely note that Sylvia Robinson, Joey Jr.’s mom, who was a 43 year-old rhythm and blues artist, had already cut the music to *Rappers Delight* in 1979. She had sampled the baseline from a popular disco song called “Good Times” by the band “Chic.” Sylvia and her son organized Henry “big Bank Hank” Jackson, Michael Write (Wonder Mike) and Guy O’Brien who went by the moniker Master Gee to form a band on a historic Friday in

1979. By the following Monday they had formed “Sugarhill” Records (named after the famous Harlem Neighborhood) and had cut their first track, costing Sylvia a mere \$750. Robinson was not a stranger to the music scene, having not only been a singer, but also a songwriter and producer before helping to put Rap music on vinyl. This popular and foundational Hip Hop classic was first distributed to St. Louis (WESL-AM) and New York (WBLS-FM) where it became an instant hit, and spread across the country (Watkins 2005).

In 1982 Hip Hop made its international debut with a tour of Europe called the New York City Rap Tour. This cultural sharing experience took MCs, DJs, break dancers, graffiti artists, and a jump rope crew called the Double-Dutch girls to Europe. All performers except for the jump rope crew were males, and the elements of HHK that they represented remain affiliated with the culture. Jumping Rope however is not associated with HHK in the mainstream at all or in the underground, for the most part (Gaunt 2006). Rose tells us that Double Dutch (a jumping rope style) is reflective of the formational aesthetic principles attributed to other Hip Hop expressions. Intrinsic Hip Hop principles of layering, flow, and rupture, are all present in jumping rope, yet the connection between this activity and HHK remains largely hidden from view (Rose 1994; Gaunt 2006).

In 1983 Herbie Hancock collaborated with Hip Hop musicians to produce one of the first music videos ever. It became popular quickly and helped to mark the beginning of commercialization of HHK, which went into full swing in 1984 when Russell Simons and Def Jam Records started working together very intimately (Chang 2005). By 1985 women Rappers like Queen Latifah had broken onto the scene, putting women on the commercial map of HHK (Hill Collins 2006). Several short years later, Gangsta Rap out of the west coast gained momentum when NWA’s (“Niggaz With Attitude”) 1988 release of *Straight Outta Compton*, went gold (Gaunt

2006). The misogyny and patriarchal elements that were present in this release as well as others, but not overly represented in Rap music as a genre, were to be commodified and popularized by these new iterations.

It is clear that while a certain percentage of those involved with the production and consumption of artistic manifestations of HHK are concerned with empowering people, a much more powerful and more visible group is concerned with empowering individual pocketbooks. The adaptability of HHK has been co-opted by the mainstream media in a concerted effort to make money at the expense of the communities that created Hip Hop. Nelson George (1998:140) explains how the corporatization of the west coast side of this equation led to the pop culture form of gangsta Rap that had been made famous by NWA and Eazy-E. Like the 1983 union of the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) and Russell Simmon's Def Jam Records of the previous decade, the 1991 synthesis of Death Row and Interscope provided business talent with deep pockets. George (1998:142) continues describing the shady events surrounding the 1996 murder of Death Row mouthpiece Tupac Shakur and the criminal mark that the interaction between artist and artist, as well as artist and business, had left on Hip Hop culture. In the early nineties Miami based "booty" Rap was becoming extremely popular, which, in conjunction with the misogynistic slant of gangsta Rap, created an image of women that was over sexualized, underpowered, and completely objectified (Cole & Guy-Sheftall 2003). Soon after this, and combined with the effects of hyper-consumerism due to globalized consumption strategies, mainstream HHK began to embody consumerism, violence, and sexism/gender bias more and more. While Hip Hop has generally ignored or erased women's contribution to the culture, it has also ignored their perseverance and dedication through production, consumption and pushing of boundaries and skills associated with MC-ing and DJ-ing

(Pough 2006:9-10). The patriarchal and misogynistic overtures that stem from dominant American ideology have been catalyzed and promoted through many of the visual and audio manifestations of mainstream HHK.

It is, again, important to recognize that while these messages are sweeping the mainstream, there is still a social consciousness movement that seeks to facilitate the creation of a more equitable world. This movement is primarily made up of artists that exist within the underground community of HHK who are not signed by large labels with vast distribution power. These artists remain unsigned due to a variety of circumstances that include ethical opposition to collaborating with companies that do not stand for a more holistic interpretation of what equity can look like.

### **Identity Construction**

Identity construction is increasingly understood as a complex series of interactions that are informed by a number of influences, such as historical positioning, social trends, ethnic and gender positions, as well as class location. The construction of identity within the African American community is no different. The aforementioned collective identity informed by ideologies of the Civil Rights Generation, and subsequent Black Nationalism is deeply embedded in HHK. This background laid the foundation of what was to be profoundly influenced by the dominant ideology of American patriarchy that frames the previous as well. However these ideals were tempered by the interlinking cultural, social, political and economic changes that were taking place just after the Civil Rights Movement (CRM) and created some conflicting, yet coexisting ideologies within the African American community. The groups of people that are influenced by the combination of CRM and Black Nationalist ideologies are collectively described as the Hip Hop Generation. Not

discounting the throngs of youth influenced by HHK after this generation, Kitwana defines this group as African Americans born between 1965 and 1984 (Cole & Guy-Sheftall 2003:185). He employs this term to signify differences in ideology between the heads born in this time and their parents who lived through the Civil Rights Movement. That movement was about rights, and Black Power. The conception of Blackness was constructed through family, spirituality and Black pride, with each being integral to their notion of being American.

They like their parents before them looked to their elders for values and identity. The core set of values shared by a large segment of the hip-hop generation...stands in contrast to our parents [civil rights movement] worldview. For the most part we have turned to ourselves, our peers, global images and products, and the new realities we face for guidance... Central to our identity is a severe sense of alienation between the sexes. [Kitwana 2002:7]

This sense of alienation is manifest in both the way gender and sexuality are expressed lyrically as well as visually in HHK and speaks of the conundrum of trading consciousness for profit. Economic focusing over other factors like social and political reactions is apparent in HHK but is also rampant in the rest of the entertainment industry. Commodified Black bodies, and the way they are scripted and “othered,” creates distancing and complicity with the negative portrayal of African Americans found in the media (Jackson 2006:125). Again, HHK is informed by the ideology of larger society reflecting the consumerist trend that is sweeping the nation. It is this trend that has turned the mainstream conception of Blackness into an over-essentialized and potentially morally tenuous product for consumption.

**Blackness and Nationalism**

The concept of Blackness is an important notion that influences much of how the African American community negotiates ideas of sexuality and gender construction. Black cultural nationalism is a product of several factors. The ideology of several social movements, the Civil Rights, Black Nationalist, and Black Islamic Movements has the most influence on Blackness. While some of these ideologies are in conflict they are not mutually exclusive as they manifest on the ground. The social justice and agency aspects come from the civil rights movement of the late 60s and Black Power movement of the early seventies. This Black Power movement combined with conceptions of power and gender from the Black Islamic movement to help create the Black Nationalist movement.

This set of ideologies was then tempered by the dominant American ideology, which increasingly defined what it means to be American through ideas of heterosexuality, Christianity, masculinity, wealth, and whiteness. As a result this American normalization of anything that is not a straight WASP (White, Anglo-Saxon Protestant) man has been partially internalized by the African American community at large. Specifically the elements of wealth, heterosexuality, Judeo-Christian ideals, and patriarchy are ingrained in dominant American ideology, which informs other segments of the population such as the African American community (Hill Collins 2004:151). This set of moral principles espoused by Black Nationalism, is often times in direct opposition to the goals of Black Feminism. HHK is both an attack on the dominant system which has historically served to disenfranchise African Americans, but is also directly influenced by that same system. The spirit of resistance and performative acts of resistance are weakened by hegemonic structure, and co-opted directly through the promotion of particular artists whose work supports dominant ideology. The

performance of Blackness in HHK is often conflicting and dichotomous, at once supporting individuals who are invested in the process and disempowering the community as a whole, while creating essentialized images of success and failure.

As these essentialized portrayals of African Americans are valorized or villainized in HHK; within the rest of the mainstream media a feedback loop occurs in mainstream media's envisioning of Black people. Ideas of laziness, excesses, animalistic urges, and impulsivity are used to justify the economic and social situations that many Black people face in America. "For African Americans, jobs have disappeared; funding for urban public housing, education, transportation, and health care has eroded; and the American public increasingly blames African Americans for their own fate" (Hill Collins 2006:8). Rather than look at the structural maladies that affect Black Americans, the dominant culture in the US uses the hyper-contextualization of their own value system that is increasingly apparent in the lyrics and imagery of mainstream HHK to rationalize the state of affairs of the African American community.

### **Gender and Sexuality Construction**

The categories of gender and sexual orientation are set up as binaries in HHK, as in dominant American culture. The genders are men and women with no room for anyone else. The construction of both of these involves essentialization and a narrow focus on negative stereotypes that take agency away from both men and women. Men are construed as animals, subject to uncontrollable impulses, and women are considered sex objects and workers. Both African American men and women are portrayed as lacking the moral drive or the cognitive ability to "rise up." Additionally, heteronormativity is pushed as dominant, and anything other than this is demonized and attacked. Essentially the dominant norms that

are pushed here are patriarchal control, misogyny, heterosexism, and homophobia. Cole and Guy-Sheftall (2003:202) elaborate on how some of these idealizations and the values associated with them affect women specifically:

Devaluation and violence are twin enemies of Black women. The belief that they are unworthy of respect is a recurrent American refrain. And while it is true that gangsta Rap did not invent the denigration of Black women, it has, with a vengeance, picked up on the chorus line, transformed it into an enticing mantra of Black women as “bitches” and “hos,” and released it for mass consumption of an audience already receptive because of Rap’s other seductive social messages and their realistic scenarios about life in the ‘hood. Young Black and white men and women consume these problematic gender messages without much question and without understanding that progressive messages of racial liberation can also contain heavy doses of misogyny that, in the end, reaffirm patriarchal power at the expense of women.

Gaunt (2006:108) takes this even further, stating that

At best hip-hop as a male-dominant practice figuratively and rhetorically excludes women (“Bitches ain’t shit but hos and tricks,” Snoop Dogg on Dr. Dre’s *The Chronic*,” 1992). At its worst, hip-hop excludes women from participation in the community-building role that music tends to play in the lives of Black youth and in Black popular culture.

### **Masculinity and Manhood**

According to Jackson (2006), Black masculinity is a social construction that is achieved and earned within the Black community. It is a process that is affected by five factors: struggle, community, achievement, independence and recognition. All of these aspects are in some way manifest in

HHK. Through their performances Rappers can address these community needs, sometimes working for the good of the community and sometimes not.

African American males have always had a negative connotation in relation to the dominant ideology. During the era of chattel slavery, Black American males were described as deviant and nefarious. The two early male conceptualizations of Stagolee, the ultimate outlaw, and Shine, the trickster who employed wit and skill to outsmart the white man and gain access to sex, exemplify this. Even here at this early stage, the criminal/ raging sex fiend dichotomy (which is now common) has already been set up (Bynoe 2002:90).

In both dominant culture and HHK Black men are constructed as innately incapacitated, violent/criminal, and constantly seeking external validation, this is apparent in Hip Hop culture as well (Jackson 2006). Hypermasculinity is of value manifesting through representations of consumption and conquest. Jackson (2006:105) tells us that there are artists and producers in the industry that understand how “ghettoized” Blackness has been packaged for consumption and have facilitated it for money, power and material gain. Again the individual is placed as a priority over the community, which is still in line with mainstream ideology.

bell Hooks (1995) reminds us that even in the academic literature Black men are denied agency. Studies of masculinity construction in Black America do little in the interrogation of dominant patriarchal masculinity construction or at what levels African American men have internalized this. Additionally this body of research does nothing in the way of acknowledging that some of these men have creative lives, whose agency has allowed them to undermine these norms and formulate new conceptualizations of masculinity that challenge patriarchy. Jackson (2006:151) adds to this stating that for progress to be made in healthy construction of this gender role, there needs to be a “clear admission and embrace of multiple Black

masculinities rather than an essentialist unifocal Black masculinity.”

### **Femininity and Womanhood**

Julia S. Jordan-Zachary (2005) describes the Euro American conception of African American women as entrenched in hierarchical racial and class based structures. A history of slavery in the US describes the Black woman as the antithesis of what is a good woman, thereby “othering” Black women. Some themes connecting images of Black womanhood are a perceived lack of mothering skills and lack of morality, as well as female Black sexuality. These combined with gender neutral stereotypes of African Americans have lead to labels such as “Matriarch, Sapphire, Jezebel, Crack Mother, and Welfare Queen...” to name a few (Jordan Zachary 2006:269).

The Crack Mother is often portrayed as a poor, Black woman who is lazy, corrupt, and inherently incurable who resides in the inner city. When compared to hegemonic constructions of womanhood, these women are further portrayed as perpetuating poverty and crime within the Black community because they are raising children in a “dysfunctional” environment. The racial and class background of the Crack Mother was used to epitomize her as not just a societal problem, but as the enemy of the state. [Jordan-Zachary 2006: 270]

Michael Eric Dyson (2003) contextualizes this within HHK positing that the conceptualization and portrayal of women is reflective of the intentions of the entire culture: the reduction of Black female sexuality to the most stereotypical common denominator conceivable. He continues adding that one of the few benefits of this is that it theoretically illuminates what the larger culture seeks to obfuscate. It is the “bitch-ho” nexus that is a visible extension of the complex and disturbing ideas concerning gender today Gwendolyn Pough (2006:94) fleshes

this nexus out suggesting that the Hip Hop gendered feminine has no real agency:

She is something that men Rappers love, something they do. She does not act; she is acted upon. She does not do, she is done. This is evident in the video [Common's "I used to love H.E.R." video] when we see how helpless the female embodiment of Hip-Hop is in the face of forces that would seek to destroy her, such as capitalist exploitation, commodification, and gangsta culture. No matter how positive a light this feminine definition is cast in, it is always weaker than the strong men that possess and use her for their own ends.

This objectified and disempowered conception of women has made it very difficult for women Rappers to function let alone flourish in the industry. Cole and Guy-Sheftall (2003) emphasize the importance of these women in the Black community's struggle to reshape agendas within the Hip Hop industry. Women Rappers are a heterogeneous group with a complex variety of responses to HHK and gangsta culture in general, with a myriad of interpretations of gender politics that may be at odds with each other.

Complicating the variety of interpretations that women Rappers already have are the spaces that they have to negotiate in the performance and entertainment industry. The struggle to claim a space in the masculine sphere of Hip-Hop leaves women fighting not only the historical stereotypes that plague Black women but also the negative images and misconceptions attributed to Black women in Hip-Hop culture. Pough (2006:97) suggests that because of this, women involved in HHK must continually "wreck," or dismantle and reassemble culture and ideology.

It should be clear by now that the misogynistic portrayal of women in HHK is rooted in dominant American ideology. This set of norms is at once contested and supported by the actions of both men and women within the Hip Hop

community, and in some ways is exemplary of the Black Nationalist/Black Feminist dichotomy that will be discussed later. Stemming from the same dominant American culture are ideas of heterosexism and homophobia which are overtly supported not only in the lyrical content of Rap songs but also in the choices that record labels and producers make in terms of which artists will be backed.

### **Heterosexism and Homophobia**

Heterosexism and homophobia are two sides of the same coin in HHK as in dominant American culture. This manifests in an exclusion of gay and lesbian performers in the industry, as well as a complete disconnect from gay and lesbian issues in lyrics and performances. Patricia Hill Collins (2006) suggests that this is tied not only to the dominant ideology but also to trends within Black cultural nationalism where in the maintenance of a conservative gender ideology is critical for Black families and communities, and their integrity.

Within the Hip Hop community, the manifestation is a bit more gratuitous, but the end goal is the same, and while HHK has been marginalized and alienated, members of this community themselves do the same to women and homosexuals. This hostility is apparent in the lyrics and attitudes of Rappers who express bias against anyone who isn't "...Black, straight, male, and dripping with testosterone." (Pough 2006:19). Even among the work of female Rap artists, there is a focus on heterosexism and an exclusion of anything else. In an effort to gain ground in a phalocentric industry, many women Rappers resort to alienating gay men and lesbian women as a way to assert strength and power.

The only female Rapper who espoused homoerotic rhetoric to receive any mainstream acclaim is lesbian emcee Queen Pen (Keyes 2004; Chang 2005). Even though she discusses urban lesbian lifestyles, Queen Pen uses the same

descriptors and language to describe her experience as her heterosexual male and female counterparts. She Raps about how good her sex is, how women leave their men for her and how many bitches she has had. Her lyrics are immodest and disparaging of women, objectifying them in the standard commercialized fashion, and while they do much to discredit women, they also recognize that there are forms of courtship beyond heteronormative ones in this society (Pough 2006:167). Queen Pen is virtually the only homosexual Hip Hop artist to be nationally recognized; yet the structural social and cultural issues at hand still remain hidden.

Omosupe (1991:105) seeks illumination stating, "Black Lesbians are at times forced to live and struggle against white male patriarchal culture on one side, and white lesbian culture, racism and general homophobia on the other." The dichotomous and conflicting nature of identity formation and negotiation that tempers this whole discussion is again made apparent here. Lyrics, ideology, and practices all display conflicting messages that at once work to empower and disempower those being described. This is not an even interaction however, as more damage to the gender and sexual preference equity movements is done than good. Additionally disconcerting is the total lack of recognition given to homosexual male artists within the Hip Hop community, or much of the extant literature for that matter.

### **Protecting Dominant Ideologies**

Straight women as well as lesbians who are involved in HHK find themselves supporting the dominant gender ideology as well. In this complicated space the pros and cons often exist side by side, and are virtually inextricable from one another. Several factors can play into this equation, with the most important being the conflicting goals of Black cultural

nationalism and Black feminism. Morgan (1999:55) tells us that

Centuries of being rendered helpless while racism, crime, drugs, poverty, depression, and violence robbed us of our men has left us misguidedly overprotective, hopelessly male-identified, and all too often self sacrificing. Feminist criticism, like many other forms of social analysis, is widely considered part of a hostile white culture. For a Black feminist to chastise misogyny in Rap publicly would be viewed as divisive and counterproductive. There is a widespread perception in the Black community that public criticism of Black men constitutes collaborating with a racist society.

To further explore this, an accounting of feminism, several of its manifestations and its interaction with Black Nationalist agendas is useful.

### **Feminism**

Feminism has experienced a number of barriers within the African American community. It is heavily stigmatized and with educational access to the material limited, feminism has been slow at gaining ground in HHK, and lacks exposure in both dominant American culture as well as in the African American community. Most African American women are first exposed to feminism in the classroom, which represents a problem, as most Black women cannot afford access to the university let alone women's studies classes. Like so many other social movements in the United States, the structural elements that hinder access to education are obfuscated by a focus on individual and personal problems as the cause for this lack of access. This is very much in line with another dominant US ideology that basically states Black people are poor because they are lazy, and incapable (Hill Collins 2006:185).

It has also been pointed out by other minority groups that if feminism is to have any real relevance to the majority of Black women, it has to be moved from the realm of theory to practice, to come down from the ivory tower of academia. While Hip Hop is dominated by young Black men, it is still a space that young Black women negotiate for survival. An effective model for change must recognize the significance of Hip Hop's provision of public space to express the pain and suffering that the Black community experiences, and use this as a space of redemption and of healing (Morgan 1999:76).

### **Black Feminism**

There has been a substantial amount of resistance to feminist ideology within the Hip Hop community thus far. Morgan contends that the reason Black feminism has not taken hold in the Hip Hop generation is due to the fact that there is a disconnect between the issues that Black women face and the perception among most Black women about what Black feminism actually is (Neal 2002:153). Jamila (2002:391) adds to this stating:

Because of all the drama surrounding the word "feminism," there are mad heads who identify with feminist principles but feel conflicted about embracing the term... ..At root, Black Feminism is a struggle against the pervasive oppression that defines Western culture. Whether taking aim at gender equity, homophobia, or images of women, it functions to resist disempowering ideologies and devaluing institutions. It merges theory and action to reaffirm Black women's legitimacy as producers of intellectual work and reject assertions that attack our ability to contribute to these traditions.

There is a wide variety of feminist interpretations currently. Black Feminism seems to take on the ideology of feminist

perspectives sometimes originating in the Global South, as the African American community's experience with oppression and differential access to resources is much like that of the developing world. Black Feminists see dominant feminist trends here in America as being western and classist.

Black feminists believe that this western style of feminism is laced with uncritical assumptions of individualism, materialism, and personal choice without accountability, all of which are hallmarks of American society. Additionally due to the ethnic segregation in America, much of their political ideology is refracted through Black nationalism. At this same time, due to the fact that African American women are, in many ways, submerged in American culture, they must at the same time accept many notions that are derived from a common understanding of American national identity (Hill Collins 2006:24). This is not to discount, however, the active and powerful role that Black feminists and Hip Hop feminists are having in addressing misogynistic, homophobic, and patriarchal ideology within HHK.

In *Gangsta Culture- Sexism and Misogyny: Who will take the Rap?* bell Hooks (1994) describes the inconsistencies in recognizing misogyny in the media and how they fall along racial fault lines. Furthermore she states that "gangsta culture is as American as apple pie and baseball, and young Black men Rappers are not social deviants but true purveyors of the society's culture." By sowing seeds of misogyny, Rappers have become the grunt laborers of patriarchy. She continues to note that there would be no serious public outcry if this were not destabilizing middle class sensibilities, as the largest consumers of Rap music are young white middle class men (Pough 2006:71). bell Hooks believes that both the Rappers and the system that produced them should be critique. Wallace (1990) and hooks (1994;1995) who are considered second wave feminists, are wary of the divide that Black Feminism

may create in Black communities, again recognizing the nationalist/feminist split.

Third Wave Feminists Eisa Davis, Shani Jamila, dream Hampton, Eisa Nefertari Ulen, Tara Roberts and Joan Morgan explore the relationship between Black women, Hip-hop, and feminism. Members of those groups seek a true and open dialogue "...across the sexes that would lead to the recognition that negative internalized representations are false, get rid of self hate, and lead to a more productive battle against sexism" (Pough 2006:72).

Black and third wave feminists are discussing Rap music and HHK. There is a wide variety of perspectives in this area of study ranging from addressing sexism directly, to analyzing the social structure that contributes to the sexism, production and consumption of Rap. Most of the work being done by Black feminists focuses on the misogyny of Black male Rappers, ignoring the work of Black female Rappers and their own production of womanhood. Some notable exceptions to this exclusionary trend are Murray Forman, Kyra Gaunt, Nancy Guevara, Cheryl Keyes, Robin Roberts, and Tricia Rose, who recognize that "an expanded Black feminist theory is needed to contribute to the work of the Black public intellectual, especially the public intellectual dealing with Black popular cultures" (Pough 2006:73).

### **Hip Hop Feminism**

Many of the authors listed in the previous section may also be described as Hip Hop feminists. Hip Hop feminism employs the genres of HHK to confront misogynistic ideas and behaviors that are apparent in Black male community norms. These genres include Rap, autobiogRaphy, film, and magazines. Patricia Hill Collins (2006:150) writes that artists like

Alice Walker, Toni Morrison, and Ntozake Shange use Black women's fiction to raise issues of misogyny in and patriarchy African American communities. Queen Latifah, Salt-n-Pepa, Missy "Misdemeanor" Elliot... all employ Rapping to bring awareness on these similar issues. This has divergent effects as it brings to light serious issues, but also, their decision to become visible in a genre that has been influenced by Black Nationalist Ideology, signals a feminist challenge to Black nationalist frameworks that say men should always be in charge.

Again Hip Hop feminism seems to revolve around freedom of personal choice and agency, while Black nationalism fosters loyalty to the Black community. This loyalty places ethnic equity issues over those of gender and sexuality. It is a widely held belief in HHK and beyond that class and race issues must be dealt with before those concerning gender disparity may be addressed. This manifests in HHK as allowing men Rappers to denigrate women and to ignore the commodification of women's bodies as sexual instruments to facilitate men's pleasure. It is a general complacency with the various manifestations of an unequally gendered power dichotomy which prioritize men's issues over women's. The individual agency of women, as women that feminism champions, is either placed as a secondary priority in the struggle for equity (nationalism), is ignored (apathy, dominant ideology), or challenged directly (patriarchy, dominant ideology). Swedenburg (2004:586) adds to this summarizing that "women Rappers are contesting men's hegemony as Rap performers, and putting forward strong images of women." Many Rappers are uncomfortable with the label "feminist" as it is interpreted as anti-male thereby alienating them from African American men. Still their messages are pro women, and while not wanting to challenge the nationalist ethos, they are willing to challenge male behavior.

## **Women Rappers and Emcees**

Female Rappers use performance as a space to challenge and redefine their own identities. By reclaiming Black women's history and perceived destiny, they have gained distinction. Black women Rappers are in a dialogue with each other, Black men and Black women, as well as dominant American culture. Women Rappers use HHK as a platform to discuss identity, socio-history, sexuality, and empowerment, as well as challenging dominant ideology (Keyes 2004:274). Patricia Rose expounds upon this stating that "Black women Rappers are integral and resistant voices in Hip Hop and in popular music generally. They sustain an ongoing dialogue with their audiences and male Rappers about sexual promiscuity, emotional commitment, infidelity, the drug trade, racial politics and Black cultural history" (Rose 2004:294).

It is important to recognize that female Rap artists and emcees are varied and diverse. Some are thug and gangsta, while others are hypersexual. Others still blend these stereotypes, and a select few divas transcend these categories and shine as the individuals they are. Women Rappers work to both support and deconstruct dominant ideas of misogyny and patriarchy that manifest in HHK and limit the agency and choices of Black women. This is a deeply contested space, with conflicting messages and interests that are conditioned by their socio-historical positions.

## **Future Possibilities**

Not all Rap music is inherently loaded with conflicting messages about gender and sexuality construction. There is a significant body of underground work that reflects an ideology of respect and equity. Shani Jamila states that "...the most important thing we can do as a generation is to see our new positions as power and weapons to be used strategically in the

struggle rather than as spoils of war” (Hill-Collins 2006: 196). Furthermore she adds “[a]s women of the Hip Hop generation we need a feminist consciousness that allows us to examine how representations and images can be simultaneously empowering and problematic” (Jamila 2002:392).

A good example of this understanding and application are the actions that emcee Toni Blackman has taken in what may be described as Hip Hop activism. Blackman has been instrumental in fostering understanding and respect within the community by founding such organizations as the Freestyle Union (FSU). This organization is a collective of Hip Hop artists who are dedicated to the creation of music that is respectful of dignity and variety of individuals. She has also just started the Artist Development Institute in Harlem, and is a US State Department American Cultural Specialist and Hip Hop Ambassador who travels internationally currently (Gaunt 2006:119).

Another exemplar is Minister Server, from the Temple of Hip Hop. This Hip Hop activist works tirelessly at bringing a more equitable understanding of what HHK may be to the table. Working with KRS-1 and others, Minister Server has taken the Hip Hop declaration of peace, which has been recognized by the United Nations since 1989, and championed a platform of understanding, agency, and equity that can be applied beyond the bounds of HHK (interview 02.16.07).

In summation it is important to employ feminist analysis and a holistic interpretation of equity across, race class and gender, a view that Patricia Hill-Collins (2006) describes as “womanist,” in producing and critiquing manifestations of HHK. Finding ways to negotiate the conflicting ideologies and norms in the music and art, as well as being open to dialog are essential in this regard.

## **Conclusions**

The purpose of this analysis was to demonstrate the complexity and interconnectedness of gender and sexuality formation within the context of HHK, specifically as it applies to African American communities. By covering the historical roots of Hip Hop, we have found that the role of women has been dramatically discounted, while at the same time the inherent value and autonomy of women within the culture has been seriously compromised. Analyzing the complexity of identity formation and its inherent engenderment within HHK illuminates causal links to dominant western ideology that is stewed in individualistic consumerism as well as misogynistic patriarchal structures. Cole (2003) and Pough (2006) remind us that as long as women Rap artists continue to break down barriers and control their own representations within the sphere of HHK there is hope for progressive change. Lusane (2004: 361) summarily qualifies this stating that

Hip Hop is neither the cultural beast that will destroy Black America nor the political panacea that will save it, but is part of the ongoing African-American struggle constantly reaching for higher and higher modes of liberation.

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# Mormon Women: Negotiating Identities in the Face of Conflicting Demands

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**Abstract-** *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) can be characterized by its adherence to doctrinal definitions of gender roles. While these roles have not always been static, they are undergoing a period of entrenchment. This propagation of traditional gender roles has come into conflict with the increasingly liberal roles advocated by much of secular society—particularly for women. Mormon women must negotiate between both religious and secular role expectations, in addition to contradictory Church counsel. In doing so, these women tread an uncertain line between acceptance, hegemony, and resistance.*

I have friends who ask, “how can you go to a church that doesn’t allow you to hold the priesthood?” For me, that just has nothing to do with it. I think people who think that misunderstand what the priesthood actually is. Someone saying that I should be upset about not holding the priesthood is the same for me to go up to a man and say he should be upset because he can’t give birth. I feel that women wanting the priesthood...is degrading their own power. I feel like giving birth...look at the Earth, that’s the ultimate power, to bring life into the world—that happens inside you! [D.D., informant 2007]

Gender is theologically important to Mormons. According to Mormons, “one is gendered not only in one’s earthly life, but in the afterlife as well. Gender prescribes roles and responsibilities, acting as a map to salvation, but also as a basis

for distinction and hierarchy” (Beaman 2001:69). Female members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (also referred to as LDS, Saints, or Mormons) occupy a paradoxical space within American society: they are offered life resources and yet have limited life possibilities. For instance, while more Mormon women tend to have secondary education than average American women, they are simultaneously more likely to be employed part-time or to keep house (Heaton et al. 2004:32,42). This paper examines the complex construction of Mormon women’s identity.

Mormon cultural schemas can neither be separated from their doctrinal foundations, nor from the influences of wider social norms. Thusly, the scripts of gender that LDS members embody and perform are carefully negotiated from ethereal commandments and secular milieus. As one may expect, there is substantial heterogeneity of both individually and temporally performed roles. Accordingly, the motivations of such negotiations are equally complex—hegemony, resistance, and unconscious embedded resistance make up superficial categories of such agency.

This paper argues that Mormon women deftly maneuver between multiple religious and secular gender scripts. The plethora of available roles creates ruptures for Mormon women to exercise agency in the creation and performance of their own identities. As such, individual motivations attempt to reconcile and justify their embodied roles.

This paper first provides a brief background of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saint and its members. Second, a brief overview of the theoretical locus of analysis considers how individuals “do gender.” Third, a discussion of contemporary LDS gender roles situates them within an abridged historical context. Finally, primary research with Colorado State University (CSU) Mormon students demonstrates how LDS women maneuver between overlapping

and competing gendered scripts, and their motivations for doing so.

### **Background of the LDS Church and its Members**

Joseph Smith, Jr. founded the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in 1830. However, the true beginnings of the Church began a decade earlier. The process by which Smith founded the Church provides a divine and authoritative charter of Mormon gospel and beliefs; in effect, Smith's narrative represents one of the cornerstones of the Mormon faith (Hinckley 1989:8).

According to Church doctrine, in 1820, after unsatisfactory study of several Christian religions by the age of fourteen, Joseph Smith, Jr. recalled the biblical verse James 1:5, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." Smith then retreated to a wooded grove near his home in upstate New York to pray upon the validity of these competing churches. As Joseph began to pray, a dark force (Satan) came upon him and bound his tongue. Smith (2006 1:16-17), in *Joseph Smith-History* describes the following events:

But, exerting all my powers to call upon God to deliver me out of the power of this enemy which had seized upon me, and at the very moment when I was ready to sink into despair and abandon myself to destruction—not to an imaginary ruin, but to the power of some actual being from the unseen world, who had such marvelous power as I had never before felt in any being—just at this moment of great alarm, I saw a pillar of light exactly over my head, above the brightness of the sun, which descended gradually until it fell upon me.

It no sooner appeared than I found myself delivered from the enemy which held me bound. When the light rested upon me I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the

air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name and said, pointing to the other—This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!

Jesus Christ and the Heavenly Father (God) instructed Smith that an apostasy had befallen the Earth, and that none of the existing churches were true. Over the next several years, Smith received visions from an angel named Moroni that revealed the existence of the Golden Plates—Christ's lost testament—and Smith's role as a restorative prophet.

In 1827, at the age of twenty-one, Smith recovered the Golden Plates from the Hill Cumorah in upstate New York. The translated plates became known as the Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ. The Book of Mormon supplies an account of Christ's gospel in the ancient (600BCE to 400CE) Americas. Mormons view this doctrine, The Book of Mormon, as equal to the Bible. Two other sets of scriptures: The Doctrine and Covenants (a record of the revelations received by Joseph Smith) and The Pearl of Great Price (an amelioration of sacred texts and Smith's life history) make up the canon of LDS doctrine.

### **Church Structure and the Priesthood**

The Church has experienced numerous transformations over the past century and a half. Change however is regarded as natural, for Church members view living prophets capable of receiving new divine doctrine and revelations. Accordingly, the patriarchal Church is hierarchically organized: the First Presidency, the Quorum of Twelve Apostles, and the Quorum of the 70s relay official Church doctrine, authoritative positions, and general accounting to 12.5 million members worldwide (176th General Conference 2006). However, local LDS Churches consist of a lay clergy so that all individuals of a certain age and gender may hold various positions. These

positions last from a few months to a few years, and represent ‘divinely inspired’ voluntary Church appointments. However, only faithful LDS men may hold the priesthood—the authority and divine power to act in the name of God. Because only men are eligible for authoritative positions, and the powers and benefits of holding the priesthood, there is a gender dichotomy of spiritual and social power within the Church. While men’s primary roles are of the spiritual leader and household provider, the primary roles of women are as wife and mother. The archetype of the female script is “to bear and raise children, and marriage enables this” (Mihelich and Storrs 2003:411). As can be expected, this gendered habitus of the Mormon community results in differential access to resources and life possibilities (Dengah II 2007). Mormon gender roles will be formally discussed within a historical, doctrinal, and social context below.

### **Theory—“Doing Gender”**

In all societies, it is common for time and space to be “naturally” ordered as a reciprocal reflection of the gendered social body (Bourdieu 2006:89). As such, the centrifugal (male orientation) and the centripetal (female orientation) orderings provide the naturalized habitus of gendered spheres and scripts—relaying appropriate “thoughts, perceptions, expressions, actions—whose limits are set by the historically and socially situated conditions of its production” (Bourdieu 2006:95). This is particularly evident in Mormon communities: rituals are segregated by gender, and only the patriarch has access to ritual administration. Additionally, gendered behaviors are embodied onto individual subjects through shared archetypal schemas of the ideal feminine and masculine roles—roles that are often defined inversely to one another. Individuals balance these epitomes as they seek to justify their

placement among the often conflicting religious and social models.

Communal discourses shape individual identities and how these identities are embodied and displayed. The creation of identity comes from above and below: mechanisms of control and surveillance dominate from above while people embody authorized discourses and speak truth about themselves from below (Shakespeare 1996:94). As such, identity is a performative extension of power in which meanings ascribe bodies as subjects (Foucault 1982:777, 781). That is, as orthodoxic (or doxic) discourses shape our identities and bodies, the signified result carries messages of self/other, value, and power. These identity ascriptions and related messages exist as habitus so that individuals create themselves as subjective to discursive influence. As such, these subjects internalize the signified and signifier as naturalized Truths about themselves.

For example, in LDS theology, gender and its associated characteristics are essential and eternal parts of one's existence. Indeed, in a prophetic revelation, LDS president, prophet, and leader, Gordon B. Hinckley (1995:102) states that "gender is an essential characteristic of individual premortal, mortal, and eternal identity and purpose." Accordingly, this "naturalizes" authorized, doctrinal roles: "fathers are to preside over their families...and are responsible to provide the necessities of life and protection to their families. Mothers are primarily responsible for the nurture of their children" (Hinckley 1995:102). Mormon subjects internalize these archetypal scripts and "speak truth to themselves" by identifying with and measuring themselves against these models; they outwardly display their adherence to such models through identity performance to the community. The final part of this theoretical foundation explores how individuals display and "do gender" as identity performance.

The performance of identity (which one could argue is the only essence of identity [as a verb]) signifies, among other things, membership within a group. Outward displays, in accordance with and against social norms, positions one's self in the geography of self and other. The "doing of gender" is the most basic and essential display of identity in every culture (West and Zimmerman 1987:126,129). And as such, "the 'doing' of gender is undertaken by women and men whose competence as members of society is hostage to its production" (West and Zimmerman 1987:126). Deviance from this most "naturalized" and fundamental division of society is usually met with strict social sanctions. This is because no matter how arbitrary or constructed a category or ordering, it carries moral significance (West and Zimmerman 1987:133). That is, the naturalized, normal state or role is considered the ideal, and "good," while deviance is morally reprimanded. Thus, there is a cost/benefit struggle in negotiating and performing identities; balancing the Truth from above and the Truth one speaks to self. In the Mormon sense, this cost/benefit struggle is associated with the demands and sanctions of both the social norm and the religious norms.

Gender as identity performance is omnipresent. While one may selectively perform as a scholar, mother, or soldier, one's gender is always on display for others. As such, "a person engaged in virtually any activity may be held accountable for performance of that activity as a woman or a man...[Further,] virtually any activity can be assessed as to its womanly or manly nature" (West and Zimmerman 1987:136).

Within the LDS community, appropriate displays of gender adhere to divine commandments, and are rewarded with group membership, access to communal resources (club goods), and ultimately salvation. High Church involvement demands (with most Mormons of "good-standing" spending over seven hours per week at various religious functions) allow for communal monitoring of its members. Most aptly described

as a “fishbowl effect,” the Saints constantly watch one another. Both the social pressures to adhere to doctrinal gender norms and learned modeling provide real costs and benefits to adhere to religious gender roles. As the rest of this paper demonstrates, Mormon women must contend with multiple ways of “doing gender.” Ambiguities and contradictions of both religious and secular scripts provide ruptures where gender identity, behaviors, and performance can be negotiated and multiplex.

### **Mormon Women: Changing Roles through Time**

Since the 1830s, the LDS Church has increased its membership, expanded its demographic, and established relationships with the wider socio-cultural fabric. Like many other emerging sects and religions, Mormons needed to find a balance between tension and assimilation – tension with the larger societal norms to invoke a unique identity, assimilation to be culturally accepted and to “avoid persecution and repression” (Mauss 1994:4). The history of the Saints chronicles these negotiations through their exodus West to avoid oppression and their abolition of polygamy to appease national pressures. Perhaps no other facet of Mormon history represents the movements of tensions and assimilations than the female subject. Indeed, “sociologists have long postulated that gender ideals evolve within a religious movement as a consequence of the evolution of the relationship between the movement and its sociocultural context” (Vance 2002:92). Through each period of change, Mormon women have had to re-invent and re-interpret their identities subject to patriarchal (divine) dictates. The following offers a brief glimpse into the multiplicities of orthodox Mormon women. While the Church hierarchy does not endorse all past roles, contemporary LDS women have a buffet of historical precedents to draw upon for their identities.

As Armand Mauss (1994:203) notes, “there is a strong feminist strand in earlier Mormon history.” Indeed, the sanctioned scripts for women were incredibly liberal for the latter 19th century. In the fledgling years of the LDS Church, there was substantial tension between the Saints and American society. The Saints sought to break away and identify themselves as separate from existing Protestantism and from existing American norms. One of their defining characteristics was the autonomy and power given to early Mormon women. The concept of women’s rights was incredibly liberal for the 1800s and remains so today in patriarchal Christianity.

Historical documents clearly show that under the leadership of Joseph Smith and Brigham Young, the early Church offered women substantial life possibilities. As Laura Vance (2002:91) points out in her gendered narrative analysis of Mormon periodicals,

In Mormonism’s early decades women participated in expression of gifts of the spirit, most importantly healing and conferral of blessings by the laying on of hands—practices now reserved exclusively for male priesthood holders—and participated in an autonomous Relief Society (the Church’s women’s organization) in which women elected leaders and controlled an independent budget.

Despite the well-known practice of polygyny during this time, the Mormon community advocated intellectual and spiritual development and empowerment of women. As indicated above, Joseph Smith endorsed the spiritual healing power of women:

[Feeling that] there could be no devil in it, if God gave His sanction by healing; [and] that there could be no more sin in any female laying hands on the sick than in wetting the face with water. [The Relief Society is formed] respecting the propriety of females administering to the

sick by the prayed of faith, the laying on of hands, or the anointing of oil. [Bush 1993:85]

Additionally, under the direction of Brigham Young, a number of women were sent from Utah to the East coast for medical training. As a direct result, the then autonomous Relief Society opened and ran the first “Mormon” hospital in 1882 (Bush 1993:95-96).

The Mormon’s liberal and empowered roles of women were relatively short lived. As the Church grew in size and matured organizationally, it increasingly assimilated its religious norms to fit with American social values. In the early part of the 20th century, under the prophetic direction of Joseph Fielding Smith, male priesthood holders consolidated power and responsibility thereby reducing the institutional roles of women and the Relief Society (Cornwall 2001:253). Consequently, women lost the authority to act as healers and the Relief Society was reorganized and relegated to priesthood oversight. As Marie Cornwall (2001:258) states:

The presidencies of the women’s auxiliaries (Relief Society, Young Women, and Primary) became less visible. Women of the church no longer heard from their women leaders through auxiliary conferences, newsletters, or conference visits. The tradition of women leading women became lost in an emphasis on priesthood line and priesthood authority. Functioning within the priesthood line of authority required ordination to a priesthood office as well as authorization from those in authority. Since women were not ordained, their only institutional role was to “support the priesthood.”

The discourse of women’s roles fell almost exclusively to their reproductive responsibilities and to their divine role as mother and nurturer. They lost both their collective and individual autonomy and power. LDS women became reliant upon and subordinate to the male patriarchs of the Church and family for

access to resources and access to the divine. This posture of assimilation brought the Mormon religious views in line with the conservative Protestant norms of male divinity and leadership, and the secular values of gendered labor, most notably, the male bread-winner and the stay-at-home-mother.

The period of LDS assimilation lasted for the first half of the 20th century. As the socio-political climate of America in the 1960s and 1970s sought to expand and liberalize the roles and rights of women and minorities, the Church underwent a period of entrenchment. Focusing on doctrine, and conservative roles, the Church once again sought to redefine itself through the separation of values from mainstream American society. In their narrative analyses, Laurence Iannaccone and Carrie Miles (2001:276), and Laura Vance (2002:106) find that the feminist movements in the 1960s and 1970s triggered a conservative backlash from the Mormon Church. Indeed, “as American women moved rapidly into nontraditional roles, the Church talked up the women’s issue, heavily criticizing nontraditional roles” (Iannaccone and Miles 2001:277). Official Church periodicals, *The Ensign* and *The New Era*, spoke of divinely ordained roles, the necessary male-provider/female-nurturer dichotomy, and the female’s obligation to motherhood and child rearing. Indeed, many of these articles warned that unless women recommit themselves to these divine gender behaviors, “social chaos will follow. The ‘break up of the family,’ precipitated by women’s participation in wage labor, the *Ensign* contends, ‘is the beginning of the fall of the empire’” (Kimball 1975:9 in Vance 2002:106). The Church’s opposition to the Equal Rights Amendment demonstrates its perception of the Feminist movement as a primary threat to its social morality. James Clayton, a professor of political science at the University of Utah states “the Equal Rights Amendment was threatening because it changed the role of women...from a nurturing housewife staying at home, taking

care of the children, to someone who could now make decisions for herself” (The Mormons 2007).

In the last two decades of the 20th century, the Church had to partially concede to social realities. Official discourse paradoxically encouraged female education and training for professional careers, while simultaneously retaining the position of a home-making mother. The advocacy of these inconsistent ideals was justified insofar as “the ideal was not obtainable by all,” and that certain life situations required women to leave home (Vance 2002:108). Moreover, women need to be prepared to sustain the households on their own (in case of husband unemployment or death).

This brings us to the early 21st century. Mauss (2001), Vance (2002), and Iannaccone and Miles (2001) view the Church in a continued phase of entrenchment, where “gender ideation serves once again as a locus for distinction from the world” (Vance 2002:110). The Church continues to propound varying messages concerning the ideal LDS women as educated and self-sustaining, while at the same time a wife, mother, and dependent upon the male priesthood. The multiplicities of available scripts, temporally and concurrently, provide ruptures of discourse that allow individual agency and maneuverings. In the following section, participant-observation and informant interviews shed light on how Mormon young adults justify and negotiate these multiple heterogeneous female gender schemas.

### **Modern Gender Roles: Negotiations and Embodiment**

A Molly Mormon is a per-fect lit-tle girl [slight half joking contempt in voice]. She does everything right. And an over achiever as far as Mormons go—which is honestly not that bad... [D.D., informant 2007]

Molly Mormon is the apotheosis of the modern LDS woman. She is “the ideal who provokes other women to intimate the

idealization of the perfect wife and mother and who easily manages the demands of family, church, and society” (Brinkman 2000:110). While Molly is an illusionary ideal of the hyper-feminine, she is nevertheless the nexus from which Mormon women construct and measure their own and others’ identities. This archetype of the feminine ideal represents an unobtainable goal of successfully managing the norms and demands of both religion and society. As the Church continues its course of entrenchment (along with conflicting guidelines), this becomes increasingly difficult. As one Mormon woman points out, this model “fits no woman because ‘there’s always some kind of place where she feels a disjuncture, a place where she knows her feelings aren’t working with what she’s told she ought to be or ought to do’” (Beaman 2001:69).

In my research with the young adult Mormon community (18-30 years old) of Fort Collins, Colorado, this disconnect is quite common. There is a curious mixture of patriarchal affirmation and divinely ordained gender roles, along with a negotiation of individuality and unreasonable orthodoxic demands. This section gives a voice to those women subject to various Mormon discourses, and the negotiations they undergo to create their embodied and performed identities.

Mormon doctrine identifies males as the sole holders of the priesthood and as leaders of the Church and of the home (Hinckley 1995:102; McConkie 1979). This is unsurprising since Mormonism is a Christian religion and “the structure of Christian religion is undeniably male centered” (Brinkman 2000:3). In Mormonism, just as in most Christian churches, the focus of worship lies upon the male godhead and clerical positions of power are entirely held by males. As Mary Daly (1973:18) remarks, “if God is male, the male is God.” Where then, do LDS women see themselves in this male normative scheme?

Mormon women utilize two different justification mechanisms to explain their position in relation to male authority and leadership. These discourses, “different but equal” and “feminine spiritual superiority,” provide explanatory means for hegemonic involvement in the dichotomous gendered organization of the LDS Church.

The “different but equal” discourse states that while each gender has specific characteristics, traits, and skills endowed by a Creator, these roles complement one another, and are imperative for earthly and ethereal fulfillment. Neither gender is more important than the other because ultimate salvation requires the union of males and females in Celestial marriage (Hinkley 1991:98). As such, both “Mormon women and men promote a partnership of equals with separate roles” (Brinkman 2000:28). The following remarks by informants demonstrate the cross gender discourses of “different/separate-but-equal.” In the first quote, Saul explains the naturalized, divine roles of men and women.

Men and women are definitely equal...but their roles are different. My personal opinion of what those things are: the man is the patriarch of the family, the one who is supposed to provide for the family. And women are more nurturing by nature...they are more to rear the family and to be the loving part of it. And are there instances in those roles where the woman needs to work? Of course, but I feel like those [gender roles] are there from the beginning on. That those things are not by coincidence that way. And I believe I'm with the Church when I say that. Because of those things, because of those God given attributes, roles that have developed over millions of years—those roles are important in a family.

Below, Tammy echoes the remarks of Saul and others when she reaffirms that there are physical and spiritual differences in women and men, differences that engender them to certain positions over others.

The Church says in the Proclamation of the Family [sic], that women should be mothers and nurturers, and that men should provide. And I think that is because traditionally, but not only traditionally, but physically, men are built different than women—they are more suitable for that kind of role [of provider]. But it also says in there that exceptions can be made [in times of hardship]. In my relationship and marriage, it definitely should be an equal partnership, but that doesn't mean we have to do the exact same things.

Both Tammy and Saul espouse a discourse of equality, while separating spheres of masculinity and femininity. Like the informants of John Mihelich and Debbie Storrs's (2003:411) study, Tammy and Saul were quick to defend the etic view of the Church as misogynistic, and repeated similar narratives "about equality...[that] they have been taught, and believe, exists within the Church, both structurally and in practice." Also of note, both Tammy and Saul make allowances for gender role exceptions—for the female—and only if necessary. A reiteration of the proclamation by Gordon B. Hinkley (1995) situates these views in authoritative discourse.

By divine design, fathers are to preside over their families in love and righteousness and are responsible to provide the necessities of life and protection for their families. Mothers are primarily responsible for the nurture of their children. In these sacred responsibilities, fathers and mothers are obligated to help one another as equal partners. Disability, death, or other circumstances may necessitate individual adaptation.

These Church members readily internalize the orthodox messages from above in the creation of their individual meta-narratives. They view the sexes as inherently different, and suited for divergent tasks, though operating in unison as a familial unit.

The second discourse of “feminine spiritual superiority” has no firm doctrinal foundation, and is instead propagated by common LDS interpretation. This negotiation of interpretation seeks to understand and justify why men hold the priesthood and women do not. Basically, the discourse holds that motherhood and priesthood are equal to one another (Beaman 2001:78; Brinkman 2000:91). While this discourse can overlap with the prior—in that they are separate but equal gendered roles—there is also a subtle undercurrent of female supremacy. In other words, the female body, with its capacity to bear children, is naturally closer to the divine than the male. As such, the priesthood functions as a “spiritual crutch,” as one informant put it, bringing the spiritually weaker men on par with women. An informant in Lori Beaman’s (2001:78) study of Mormon female diversity expresses this view:

The men hold the priesthood, but see I have my little, have my feelings on the priesthood...um...see women, I think women are more, I don’t know, more spiritual sometimes, just inborn in us. We’re more sensitive, do you know what I mean? We’re...we’re just different, than men. And with the priesthood, men, that helps men, I think, to become more sensitive, because they have to be, you know, like they have to learn to be meek, um, submissive like a child.

One of my informants repeats this discourse in a more assertive tone:

I think women were endowed with powers to be good mothers, men were endowed with powers to be patriarchs. So one has got to do it...so why not establish it?...I think people who think that [the Church is sexist] misunderstand what the priesthood actually is. Someone saying that I should be upset about not holding the priesthood is the same for me to go up to a man and say he should be upset because he can’t give birth. I feel that women wanting the priesthood...is degrading their own

power. I feel like giving birth...look at the Earth, that's the ultimate power, to bring life into the world—that happens inside you!

Both Beaman's and my informant expressed views that represent negotiations of interpretation. With varying degrees of confidence, both informants redefine the male centered priesthood in ways that seemingly empower women. The Mormon women who embody this discourse of agency "tend to use interpretations that minimize the priesthood role" and elevate their own (Beaman 2001:79-80). As such, they are able to reconcile diverging gendered scripts and life possibilities.

The final negotiations of roles modern Mormon women must maneuver are the dual authoritative messages of education and motherhood. Young Mormon women are encouraged to achieve a secondary education and to start and raise a family. These incongruous expectations allow room to exercise agency within limits. As such, the women represented here openly express their academic and professional goals, though always with the caveat of eventual (fulltime) motherhood.

Karen, a graduate student in her late 20s, is an oddity in the Mormon community. In a religious culture where most women are already married and pregnant by her age, Karen describes herself as a "crone." She explains her decision to return to school as insurance of self-dependency.

The reason why I went back to grad school was that I came to the realization that I needed to make money. I guess I hope for marriage, and I plan for marriage, but I also have to plan for life by myself. So if I got married and started a family I would give it up. Because that is my number one goal in life—to get married and have a family and raise good children. My reasoning to go back to grad school—to have a major career—was in case I stayed single or couldn't have a family.

For Karen, her academic and professional aspirations are second to motherhood—a view in-line with the Church’s decree that the primary roles of woman are that of wife and mother. Like Karen, Tammy shares the view that motherhood is a fulltime job without outside influences.

Until I have kids, I’ll push the career, and when they come I’ll stay home with them, they come first....For me personally, I really want to be home with the kids.

Doris, who will graduate with three undergraduate degrees, provides a final example of the negotiation of higher education and eventual motherhood:

I love school, so I’m a pretty ambitious person, but I think it’s easy sometimes to forget the importance of mothers. Because if I could impact someone’s life, so richly like a mother does, I hope I could do that—more than a job. I think motherhood is degraded by society, personally. I think that being an independent woman “boom shakalaka,” I think that’s sad, I don’t buy into that at all. I think that’s not empowered, I think that’s giving into “The Man.”

With great energy, Doris explains the empowerment of motherhood, and the false stature of society’s feminine norm. She finds motherhood more influential and rewarding than working at an unsatisfying job for money. Indeed, she sees freedom in choosing not to work. Further, both she and Tammy blame society and Feminists for degrading the roles of mothers. As they explain, “it took the womanhood out of woman,” and made them feel like they had to work to be valued.

Parents and Church officials actively encourage Mormon women to achieve secondary education. They are also encouraged to conform to LDS norms by marrying and starting families early. Though seemingly contradictory, Mormon women justify their roles through a variety of means. Some

women believe that a degree provides a safety-net of sorts for those who must work for sustainability. Others see education as bettering one's self—an investment that will reap rewards, not just professionally, but in relationships, and as a parent.

What you do learn is so much more than the subjects you learn. It provides you context, and when you are raising kids, it's important to have this context, this cultural context—of anything. Also the discipline to know I can. I can do this [raise kids], I'm capable, I have some sort of knowledge...that's important. For sure—the hard work thing...you know, just getting the most out of life, and I would hope your kids would want to learn the same things too. [Sara, informant 2007]

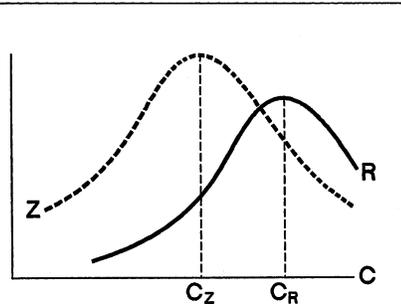
From the perspectives of these informants, Mormon women are not subservient to their male counterparts. These women actively internalize and employ the “different but equal” and “feminine spiritual superiority” concepts. The uses of these narrative tactics allow for a logical reconciliation of their roles and positions in relation to Mormon men. In other words, they provide discourse justification for the Mormon gender habitus. In the following section, we unite these observations with the larger theories of identity and gender to see if and how these tactics provide maneuverings between multiple religious and secular norms, and if these maneuverings constitute agency, resistance, or hegemony.

**Discussion: Negotiating Agency, Resistance, and Hegemony**

As the Mormon Church continues its period of entrenchment, the divergence between religious norms and secular norms increase. That being said, all differences are not equal. As the normative gender in both secular and religious spheres,

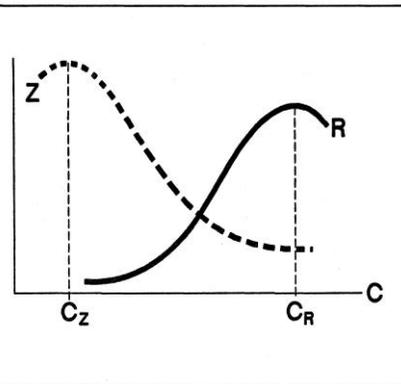
Mormon men have arguably less to compromise between expectations (figure 1).\* Mormon women however continue to represent an other in both societal and Church arenas. As the historical analysis of female LDS roles demonstrates, when Church entrenchment increases, female roles become more conservative and in contention with wider social expectations. As such, Mormon women have a greater need for role negotiation than Mormon men. This is however difficult because as the secular and religious expectations of women diverge, they become progressively difficult to balance. Adherence to

FIGURE 1: Society and Church, Similar Norms\*



\* C<sub>s</sub> denotes the societal norm; C<sub>c</sub> denotes the Church norm;  
R denotes Church (religious) rewards as a function of conduct;  
Z denotes secular rewards.

FIGURE 2: Society and Church, Divergent Norms



Church norms becomes increasingly costly in view of society, and vice-verse. However, as figure 2\* shows, “compromise positions halfway between the church and secular norms are no longer practical. People who choose conduct midway between CR and CZ find themselves in the worst of all possible worlds:

sanctioned by the church and unrewarded by society...They can accept church or secular norms, but not both” (Iannaccone and Miles 2001:269). As such, women who follow Mormon norms (e.g. early marriage and motherhood, homemaker, etc.) must justify their position and role in relation to the larger society. Indeed Tammy and many other informants, aware of the divergent norms of the Church and society, felt the need to defend those views.

There was a talk from the Church presidency where they said to the women “get an education, and if that’s not working for you, get more of an education.” We are not all barefoot in the kitchen making meals...We are for equal pay for equal work and for not hiring on the basis of gender, but people hear that women should stay home and take care of the children and they’re like “WHAT?! NO!” But it’s different really. We’re not that backwards.

Here Tammy defends her embodied role, a role that is largely in line with official Church expectations. Further, the discourses of “different but equal” and “feminine spiritual superiority” allow Mormon women to justify their position in societal terms: equality and empowerment.

The performance of these gender roles is an ongoing process. It is a master script that is tied to every behavior and action (West and Zimmerman 1987:128-129,139). Because the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints demands substantial time and labor from its members, the construction and approval of appropriate roles are subject to continuous communal oversight. Indeed, in a recent survey of Colorado State University LDS college students (N=23), 78% identified spending over five hours a week at official Church activities and duties. Of those, 61% claimed to spend over seven hours a week attending and performing these same functions (Dengah II 2007:257). That being said, observations from members, both within Church settings and wider community settings,

“make disobeying church [sic] rules subject to community sanctions” (Phillips 1998:127).

There is a wide spectrum of sanctions for those who maneuver their embodied gender role too far away from the religious ideal. Among the lesser costs, deviation from Church and communal expectations translate into a loss of Mormon life possibilities. As Susan complains, being an older woman in the Church and one that is academically and professionally focused, has cost her personally.

My friends all talk about getting older [and still being single] and we're worried we'll never be able to have kids—I mean it is a HUGE concern—that we'll never get married because now we don't even have opportunities to associate with people—guys my age [because they are all already married]...It's a huge concern that's talked about all the time. And just wanting children, wanting to have families. Some of them [my friends] are turning 33...in the LDS community, that's old, and you do worry.

For others who alternatively question the male monopoly on divinity, there are larger costs. For example, in 1993 six prominent Mormon feminist intellectuals (women and men) were excommunicated from the Church. These ‘September Six’ questioned the diminished role and power of women and the marginalized theological belief of a Mother in Heaven or Goddess (Sunstone 1993). This silencing of discourse and possible roles is a powerful force for the creation of Mormon habitus. Silence functions as a productive power that renders the spoken as normal and the unmentionable as reified deviance (Foucault 1980:151).

Do Mormon women's creation and embodiment of gender scripts constitute acceptance, resistance, or hegemony to the patriarchal organization? The answer is “yes” to all three. Women, at different times or concurrently, may utilize such motivations. The informants included here are not a representative sample and generically fit into a category called

“moderates” (Beaman 2001). These women are very active in the Church, participating about five hours a week in various activities. However, their presence at a secular institution such as CSU, rather than a Mormon university (i.e. Brigham Young University) separates them into a unique subculture, apart from the Utah based Mormons. As such, they are much more likely to negotiate and to reconcile divergent religious and social norms than their Utah counterparts. On the other hand, Mormon women in Utah arguably have a lesser need for maneuvering because the societal norms in Utah tend to agree with religious norms.

Broadly speaking, Mormon moderates’ attempts to reconcile religious patriarchal norms in terms of equality and empowerment through discursive interpretations can be construed as hegemonic participation. The interpretive discourse serves to justify their subordinate position within the larger social framework. However, at other times, they openly question doctrinal suggestions and admit to contradictory expectations. Doris serendipitously declares this in a conversation about education and motherhood.

I think so many things in the Church, despite the Spirit and the Light of Christ—that we are supposed to have naturally—I think a lot of things are counter intuitive...But I think it’s awesome actually that they [the Church] says that...[thinks, laughs] but it’s totally counter intuitive!

These women do not blindly follow the teachings of the Church; rather, they question and weigh LDS norms against larger societal expectations. However, members perceive official Church guidelines as divinely ordained, and as such, above reproach. The questions and resulting negotiations that these women employ are not so much about determining the validity of religious norms, but instead are attempts to decrease the social costs of doing so.

## **Conclusions**

For over 170 years, Mormon women have consistently negotiated their identities with societal and religious values. In the late 19th century, their roles opposed those of larger society. And now, over a hundred years later, their roles once again clash with those of contemporary society. As Mormon women today [often] unconsciously negotiate between the expectations of their beliefs and the influences of society, they choose between acceptance, resistance, and hegemony. These individuals are as varied as any other population, and as such, a great number of them exhibit these motivations separately, or congruently.

The Mormon women in my research are generically labeled as moderates—they are readily active in the Church, but chose not to immerse themselves completely within Mormon society. They utilize a complex system of motivations that are at times accepting and at other times gently resisting under an umbrella of possible hegemony. While they employ mechanisms of negotiations—discursive justifications to lessen the social costs of their religious gender roles—they perpetuate their system that doctrinally separates them from the divine, and from equal life possibilities.

The Mormon community demands much from its members. Each member receives a calling, or a position in the Church to serve others. The gendered organization of the Church mandates that priesthood-holding males lead while women function in supportive roles in the Relief Society and as child raisers. Thusly, communal monitoring discourages open dissent, and allows for only slight deviations of acceptable roles and behaviors. As Iannaccone and Miles' (2001:268-269) figures reveal, Mormon women can only negotiate their identities so far before they become subject to hierarchal and communal discipline. There are however many more spheres in which Mormon women may exercise tactics of true

empowerment absent of hegemonic justifications. Future research needs to look at how Mormon women negotiate in various other life stages. In particular, how do married women with families negotiate the familial roles with their husbands? Are there private arenas in which dissent is possible or even acceptable? Further, there is a dearth of research regarding Mormon sexualities. How do women and men negotiate their identities when their sexuality puts them at odds with both their religious norms and societal norms? This paper offers only a brief glimpse at some of the maneuverings Colorado State Mormon women perform in the construction and placement of their identities. Future research promises to provide a more holistic, and complicated picture of these women. It is only fair that I allow my informants the last word. In reaction to the ideal that the husband is the patriarch of the family, an older Mormon woman with a family remarks: “My husband may be the head of the household, but I’m the neck that turns the head!”

### **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank my informants for their continuing participation in my research. I would also like to thank Anna for her meticulous editing, and consistent questioning of my assumptions. Finally, I would like to thank all of the faculty in the anthropology department at CSU. Over the years they have facilitated my growth in more ways than I can name.

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# Vertical Analysis of Four Units of Debitage from the Kinney Spring Site (5LR144c): A Multiple Occupation Site in Northeastern Colorado

Heather Horobik

**Abstract-** *The analysis ofdebitage found within a site can provide valuable information on a variety of factors relating to site composition and function as well as the behavior and activities of past people. Debitage density, size, raw material, and cortical amounts are all characteristics that are considered when attempting to understand the factors listed above. Through vertical analysis ofdebitage from four units excavated near a Woodland house structure, this article explores the past occupations at Kinney Spring and the temporal trends. The results of this analysis demonstrate the consistency of site use and past behaviors.*

## **Introduction**

The study of the lithic contribution to archaeological assemblages is integral to our understanding of the past. Lithic technology has long been associated with hominids and greatly outdates modern humans. Debitage, a waste product of this reductive technology, composes a large portion of lithic assemblages. Unlike stone tools,debitage rarely has a function within the society. As a waste product,debitage was often left where it fell, swept out of the way, or transported to the trash

piles. What information, then, can the study ofdebitage provide us? The study ofdebitage can enhance our knowledge of past resources, regional interaction, mobility, site function, activity areas, subsistence, and temporal shifts and patterns.

This article touches on many of these topics with a large emphasis on temporal shifts and patterns. The purpose of this article is to identify temporal trends within the archaeological assemblage from the excavation of the Kinney Spring site (5LR144c). Particular importance is placed on identifying any shifts in the use of different types of raw materials, variation in the size and amount of cortex ondebitage, and density ofdebitage. Any vertical variation in these attributes could indicate different groups of people inhabiting the sites at different times, shifts in trade or mobility patterns, variation in the length of occupation, or changes in the activities performed at Kinney Spring.

The Kinney Spring site is located in the Hogbacks of Larimer County, north of Fort Collins, Colorado. 43 two meter by two meter units were excavated in 1983. The site was found to contain an Early Ceramic Period (Woodland) house structure with stone walls. While the house structure and its corresponding layers, Layers 6-8, have been radiocarbon dated to roughly 950 and 1120 B.P. (calibrated A.D. 1090±60 and A.D. 898±72), the site itself has multiple dates ranging back to 5410 B.P. (calibrated 4227±98 BC).

Due to the large temporal range of this site, clear variations in the density, cortical amount, material, and size of thedebitage was expected. The reasoning behind this hypothesis is simple. Within a span of 5000 years, many changes can occur. Environmental and climatic patterns can alter; resources can be exhausted; mobility patterns and subsistence strategies can change. The possibility of variations in thedebitage assemblage is therefore quite high. This analysis looks at the smaller, more localized and focused details, such as trends and relationships seen in thedebitage

data from the four units near the Woodland house. The trends identified from this project may later be used to support other hypotheses on broader human concerns.

## **Data**

For this project, many types of data were available from the past excavation of Kinney Spring. Radiocarbon dates, maps, field notes, and, more importantly, the artifacts from the 1983 excavation were accessible. The 2007 lithics class at Colorado State University went through many of the available lithic artifacts and recorded a large variety of attributes. While 43 units have been excavated around this site, this study focuses on 2112 pieces of debitage taken from 12 levels from four of the units surrounding the house structure: F17, F19, F20, and D20. The levels each measured to ten centimeters in thickness.

Data recorded included unit and level, debitage type, portion, size class, raw material, amount of cortex, and signs of burning. Many of these attributes were broken down into more detailed categories. Debitage type was determined based on whether the artifact was a flake, piece of angular debris, or shatter. Portion referred to complete, distal, lateral, and proximal portions of flakes. Debitage was also placed into six size classes shown in Table 1.

<b>Size Class</b>	<b>Measurements</b>	<b>Cortex Class</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1	Under 1 cm	0	none
2	Between 2 and 1cm	1	1-24%
3	Between 3 and 2 cm	2	25-49%
4	Between 4 and 3 cm	3	50-74%
5	Between 5 and 4 cm	4	75-99%
5+	Over 5 cm	5	100%

**Table 1:** Classification of debitage into groups by size and cortical amounts.

Raw materials recorded include chalcedony, chert, quartz, quartzite, sandstone, shale, and other. Amount of cortex included six categories as seen in Table 1. Evidence of burning was registered as present or absent.

## **Methods**

With the datasets listed above, an analysis of the vertical variation in thedebitage assemblage was conducted. Certain attributes were selected based on their significance to this project's goals to identify any temporal shifts in the data and to glean information on the site activities, resources, and occupants. Records of the excavation levels provided temporal information and had to be linked to all other data used in this analysis. Size class and amount of cortex were included as indicators of range and type of lithic production. Raw material was also included as an indicator of the variation of lithic resource use.

The methods used to analyze the Kinney Spring data were influenced by Andrefsky's article "The Application and Misapplication of Mass Analysis in Lithic Debitage Studies." In his article, Andrefsky (2007:392, 400) debates the value of using mass analysis size class methods when analyzingdebitage, as the method is often abused and there are multiple sources of potential error involved. Sortingdebitage primarily by size class is ineffective when looking at multiple reduction episodes (Andrefsky 2007:392). While this warning issued by Andrefsky focused mainly on automated mass analysis, it can be applied to the Kinney Spring assemblage due to the use of size classes in the analysis and the great temporal range of the site. Andrefsky (2007:399) indicates that hand sorting pieces ofdebitage individually by raw material and then by size class can make the results more accurate. The Kinney Springdebitage was individually size classed by hand and recorded by

raw material and amount of cortex as part of the data collection.

While performing data analysis, multiple tables and graphs were created. After reviewing the amount of debitage present in each level, percentages of each type of raw material were considered. This raw material composition of the assemblage was placed into a temporal scheme by excavation levels. Similarly, size class and cortical amount percentages of the assemblage were graphed by layer. The question was then posed: does one type of raw material frequently produce a certain size of flake? Three graphs, each illustrating the data of four levels, were produced by sorting the data simultaneously by material and size class and then turning the resulting figures into percentages. In the same way, graphs representing the relationship between size class and cortex were produced.

## **Results and Discussion**

The graphs indicated various trends within the data. Some of these trends were stronger than others and were affected by various limitations inherent in the data. The trends and relationships from each graph will be discussed below. The results will then be compared to similar sites in the region in order to see how the Kinney Spring data compare and contrast to other similar sites in the region.

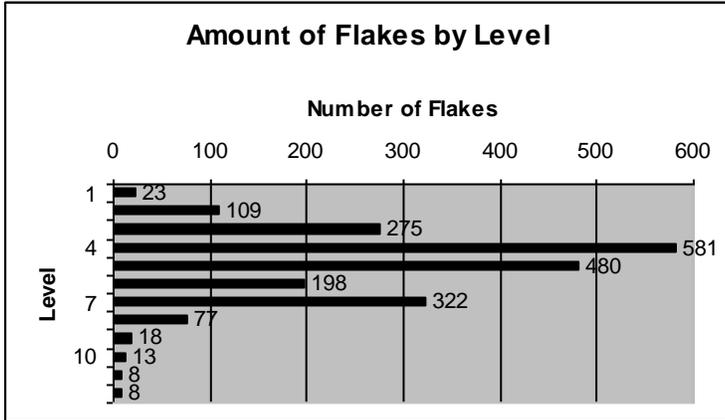
The first data analyzed were the number of flakes excavated by level. Figure 1 shows the amount of debitage for each level in stratigraphic order, meaning the top layer of soil which was removed first appears at the top of the graph. From this graph we can see a small number of flakes, 28, were located in the top ten centimeters of soil. The next layer, Level 2, contained 109 pieces and debitage. The following layers, Levels 3 through 7, display the largest amounts of debitage, numbering roughly 200 pieces or more per level. The peak in debitage density is seen in Level 4, roughly 30-40 cm below

the ground surface, with 581 pieces. Level 8 indicates a severe drop in the volume ofdebitage within the four units analyzed. Levels 8 through 12 each yielded fewer than 100 pieces ofdebitage with the amount ofdebitage becoming progressively lower in each subsequent level. The two lowest levels, 11 and 12, each produced eight items.

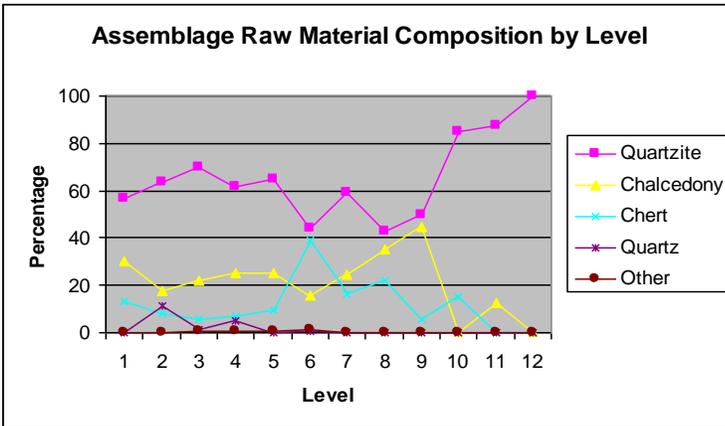
As seen in Figure 1, Levels 3 through 7 are most likely to signify periods of higher occupation of the site or at least greater use of that particular area of the site during that particular time period. Levels 6 through 8 correspond with the Woodland house from which the calibrated radiocarbon dates of AD 1090±60 and AD 898±72 were derived. Thedebitage data from those periods indicate a relatively high level of use with the exception of Level 8. Interestingly, it is the two levels directly above the Woodland occupation that hold the mostdebitage. This could indicate that another later group resided at the site or that subsurface artifacts have shifted. The abrupt decrease indebitage in the top two layers and bottom four layers of the units could also indicate post-depositional movement of artifacts through the soil, less intense use of the site in general, or less intense use of that particular area of the site. Given the depth and position in the soil, the presence ofdebitage in Level 1 could very likely be due to post depositional processes. The lower levels are less likely to have been affected by surface processes like erosion, but other post depositional processes have yet to be discounted.

The most apparent trend in the raw material composition of thedebitage for each level, as seen in Figure 2, is the predominance of quartzite in the entire assemblage despite the temporal range. Other high frequency raw materials were chert and chalcedony which were each present in the majority of the levels. The high frequencies of theses three materials reveal that possible sources may exist in the region. The quartzite in particular may be a local material that was preferable for knapping or easily accessible. Quartz, on the

other hand, occurs in two particular levels, 2 and 4. Because of the low frequency and specific temporal pattern, the quartz may have been brought to the site from a non-local source as a result of trade or population mobility. As indicated by the “other” category, very few other sources were present or used at Kinney Spring.



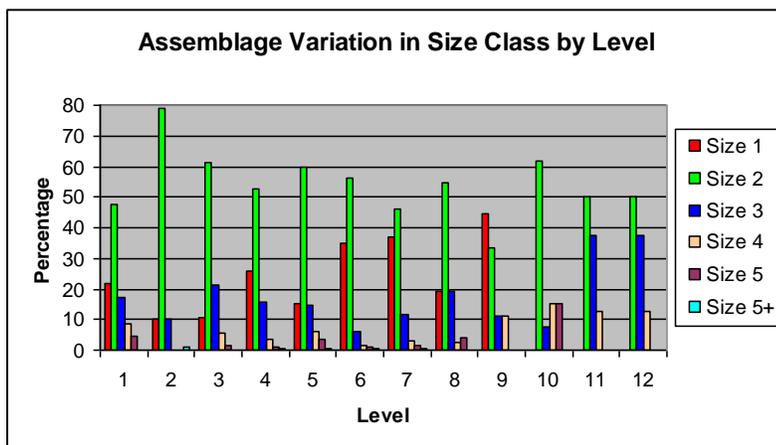
**Figure 1:** The total number of flakes from each 10 cm level excavated in stratigraphic order is shown, revealing relatively high amounts of debitage associated with the Woodland House dating to the Early Ceramic Period (Levels 6-8).



**Figure 2:** The percentage of each raw material reveals that quartzite was the predominate material used and was likely a local material. The relatively high and stable percentages of chert and chalcedony also indicate that local sources were present but possibly of poorer quality or were less accessible than the quartzite.

The assemblage variation in size class (Figure 3) also indicated some trends within the debitage data. All of the levels excavated produced very high levels of Size Class 2 debitage or debitage measuring between one and two centimeters. Significant amounts, if more variable, of Size Class 3 debitage occur in each unit as well. Relatively high amounts of Size Class 1 debitage are also present in each of the top nine levels. The lack of Size Class 1 debitage in the bottom three levels may be due to the minimal amount of debitage recovered from those levels. In comparison, Size Classes 4 and 5 are much more variable and random in appearance. Size Class 5+ barely registers on the graph due to its infrequency.

The trends in the size class data strongly indicate that the Kinney Spring site was used mainly for later stage tool production and tool maintenance. The smallest pieces of debitage are usually indicative of tool retouch, or resharpening.

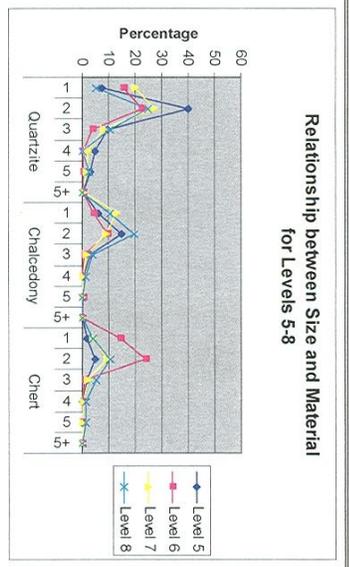
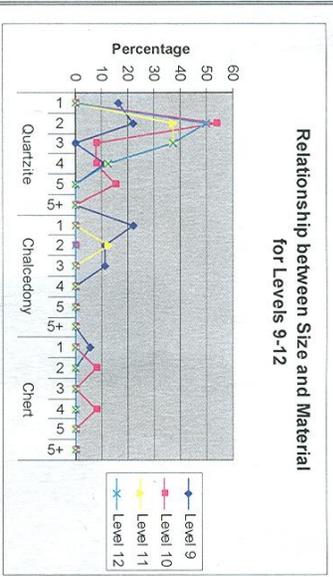
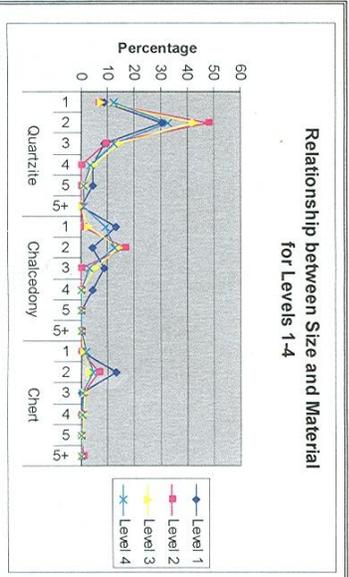


**Figure 3:** Based on the size composition of each level, Size Class 2 is predominant in all levels of the assemblage. Sizes Classes 3 and 1 also reveal higher percentages and constant present in the majority of layers. Sizes 4-5+ are less common. These trends indicate later stage tool production and maintenance.

Other, slightly larger sizes of debitage (indicated in this project by Size Classes 2 and 3) can be seen as indicators of later stage tool production. These stages include both shaping and thinning of flakes. Production of acceptable flakes, or early stage tool production, and reduction of cores can be indicated by larger size classes of debitage. The trends in the data show a large percentage and high frequency in the smaller size classes while the presence and frequency of larger size classes are lower and more random.

Consideration of these trends had to be given in the light of Andrefsky's warnings about the abuse of mass analysis of debitage. Figure 3 was based only on size class data with no consideration for the variability in raw material. Noting Andrefsky's (2007) particular belief that separating for raw material, if not by knapping episodes, would help remove some sources of error, Figures 4a-c were created to explore the relationship between size class and raw material.

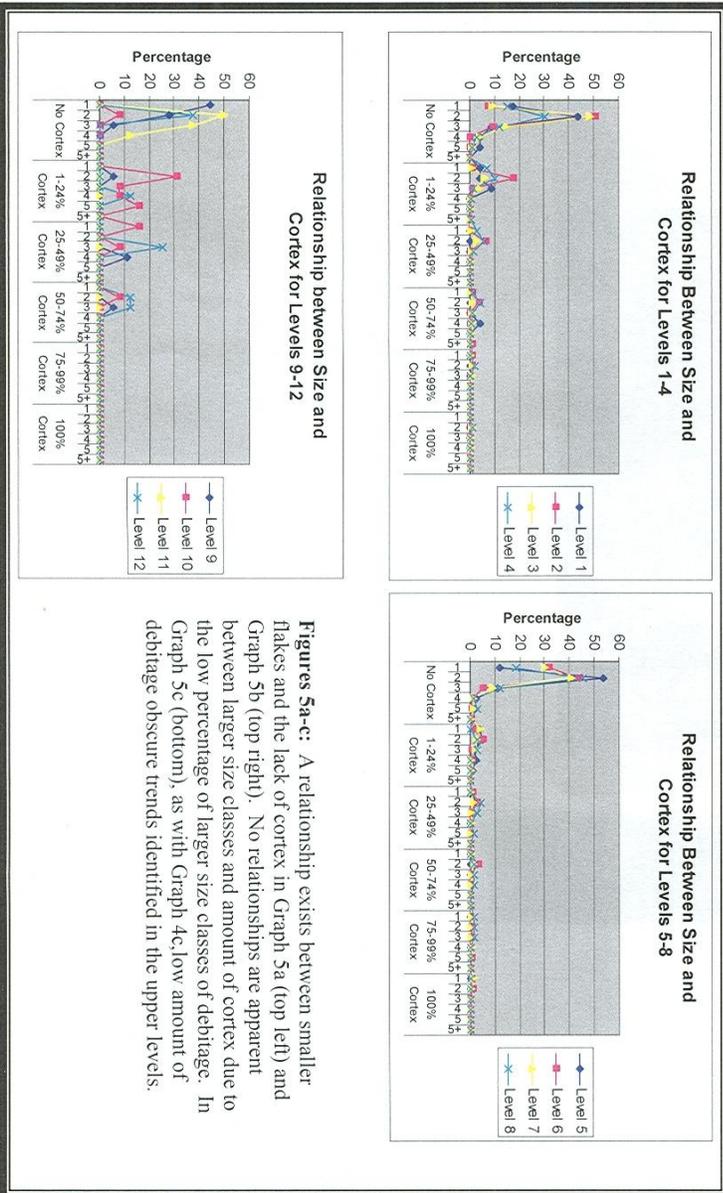
Figure 4a displays size class data in relation to raw material for Levels 1 through 4. Quartzite was the most frequent raw material with all levels peaking at Size Class 2. A similar, if lower, peak occurred in the data for chalcedony and chert. Only Level 1 did not follow the trend in Figure 4a, peaking in frequency at Size Classes 1 and 3 in relation to chalcedony. The same trend of percentage peaks in Size Class 2 continued for levels 5 through 8 (Figure 4b), with exception to Level 7 which peaked at Size Class 1 in relation to chalcedony. Figure 4c deviates from this trend illustrating a more random variation in class size. Still, some peaks do occur at the Size Class 2 line, but because many peaks are present in this data, those prove inconclusive. The most likely factor behind the deviation from the trend, visible in the first 8 levels, is the small absolute amount of debitage associated with the lower levels. Recalling Figure 1, Level 9 has 18 pieces of debitage while Level 10 has 13 and both Level 11 and Level 12 have eight. With such small datasets, the presence of even one piece of debitage can cause a peak in size class.



**Figures 4a-c:** In Graphs 4a (top left) and 4b (top right), a clear trend appears in relation to size class and raw material, crossing the first eight levels of data. Peaks occur for size class frequency at Size 2 with the exception of Level 1 and 7 in relation to chalcedony. The lower levels, shown in Graph 4c (bottom), show a shift from the earlier trend. This change can be explained by the small dataset ranging from eighteen pieces of debitage to eight.

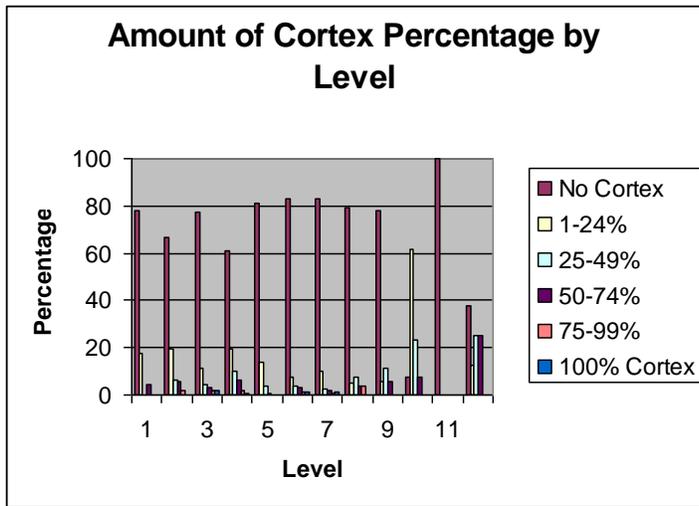
Figures 4a-c were created for the purpose of examining Andrefsky's (2007) statements about the value of information that can be obtained through mass analysis and size class systems. While the majority of his arguments were based on mass analysis, many of his statements can easily be applied to the type of data analysis performed for this project. As stated above, Andrefsky recommended hand sorting by raw material and then the examination of size class. Figures 4a-c reflect this recommended process while Figure 3 represents a more general single-variable approach similar to the methods that Andrefsky views as a misapplication of mass analysis. No significant differences materialize when comparing the trends seen in Figure 3 and Figures 4a-c. The dominant trend of high percentages of Size Class 2 is apparent in both graphs. Figure 3, lacking detailed categorization, showed the continuation of the trend in Level 9 through 12. In this case, Figure 3 succeeded in illustrating the large scale trend that could not be seen in Figure 4c due to the small size of the datasets.

Figures 5a-c are a continuation of the analysis of relationships between debitage attributes and are intended to promote an understanding of the activities performed at the site. These graphs break down the relationship between cortex and size class. A common conception in lithic analysis is that different stages of lithic production can be related to the amount of cortex present on a flake as well as size class. In theory, smaller flakes have less cortex while larger flakes have more cortex. As flakes are removed from the raw material, less cortex is present on the remaining core. Later stages of tools production and retouch are performed on flakes that have already been somewhat if not completely thinned and shaped which, in theory, removes much of the cortex.



**Figures 5a-c:** A relationship exists between smaller flakes and the lack of cortex in Graph 5a (top left) and Graph 5b (top right). No relationships are apparent between larger size classes and amount of cortex due to the low percentage of larger size classes of debitage. In Graph 5c (bottom), as with Graph 4c, low amount of debitage obscure trends identified in the upper levels.

Figure 5a shows the majority of debitage within the first four levels to be predominately without cortex and in Size Class 2. With the exception of Level 1, each level displays the trend in which Size Class 2 is predominate in the cortical categories ranging from one to 74 percent cortex. The datasets from 75 percent cortex and above contain so little information that no trends are discernible. Figure 5b reveals the same trend in the 0 to 74 percent datasets as noted in Figure 5a. The final graph, Figure 5c, is similar to Figure 4c in the random character of the datasets. Again this is likely due to the size of the datasets and the detailed categorization. However, the general trend within Figures 5a and 5b shows that debitage with less cortex tends to fall within the smaller size classes. This trend is far from conclusive given the high percentage of small sizes of debitage. The percentage of large debitage is so low that no fluctuations can be seen within these graphs.



**Figure 6:** Large percentages of debitage have either no cortex or minimal amounts of cortex. No trends exist regarding high amounts of cortex other than the lack of frequency.

Figure 6 illustrates cortex frequency within the debitage. The high percentage of debitage with no cortex, as seen in Figures 5a and 5b, is even more obvious in this graph. All levels have higher percentages of little cortex on debitage and very low percentages, if any, of large amounts of cortex. These data support the earlier view from the size class data that this site was used primarily in late stages of tool production and maintenance throughout the range of occupation.

### ***Comparison of Kinney Spring to Other Early Ceramic Age Sites in Colorado***

The results of this project can be compared to the analysis of debitage at the Late Archaic/Early Ceramic period Magic Mountain site (5JF223) in Jefferson County, Colorado, and to a lesser degree the Terminal Early Ceramic Jarre Creek site (5DA541) in Douglas County, Colorado. The differences and similarities among the sites demonstrate the variety of Early Ceramic sites and raise some interesting questions regarding the Early Ceramic period.

The Magic Mountain site also contained a Woodland house, but with different architecture from Kinney Spring (Kalasz and Shields 1997:42). As part of a larger study, debitage analysis was conducted to understand the range of reduction sequences that had been performed at the site during two separate time periods. Attributes recorded for debitage included material type, presence or absence of cortex, and size classes: Size Class 1 was over one inch (2.5 cm), Size Class 2 was between one inch and one half inch (<2.5-1.3 cm), Size Class 3 was between one half inch and one quarter inch (<1.3-.6 cm), and Size Class 4 was smaller than one quarter inch (<.6 cm) (Kalasz and Shields 1997:65, 68). A large percentage (70-80%) of the debitage from raw material categories fell within the Size Class 3 range; quartz, petrified wood, granitic material, and quartzite displayed higher percentage of Size

Class 2 debitage than chert and chalcedony; and cortex was “modestly represented” (Kalasz and Shields 1997:68). For the Magic Mountain site, it was concluded on the basis of debitage analysis that lithic technology as practiced on site involved mainly late reductive stages and retouch, that a slight trend existed for the use of quartzite, petrified wood, quartz, and granite in early and middle stage reduction, and that the vertical distribution showed no obvious trends (Kalasz and Shields 1997:68, 300).

The time period, subject material, methods, and the conclusions associated with the Magic Mountain analysis appear to be quite similar to those of the Kinney Spring debitage analysis. Although the size class parameters differed, similar trends were identified with smaller debitage heavily predominant in the assemblages. These data, in combination with the relatively low percentages of cortex, indicate the same stages of lithic production were performed on both sites. Logic suggests that mainly late stage lithic production was performed at residential sites, such as Kinney Spring and Magic Mountain, while early stages of lithic reduction must take place elsewhere in the area.

In contrast, the Early Ceramic period Jarre Creek Site has been interpreted as a relatively short, single occupation site with two possible stone circles (Gilmore 2004:1, 19). As such, the composition of archaeological record differed from the Magic Mountain and Kinney Spring sites and a vertical analysis of debitage was unnecessary. The debitage, composed mainly of orthoquartzite, with smaller amounts of petrified wood, chert and chalcedony, consisted of 18 pieces, including two cores, of which half exhibited cortex (Gilmore 2004:7). This small assemblage was composed mostly of large debitage with cortex, indicating that primary reduction was taking place at Jarre Creek and that a raw material source existed nearby (Gilmore 2004:7).

The findings at Jarre Creek are somewhat complementary to the findings at Magic Mountain and Kinney Spring. The comparison between thedebitage assemblages recovered from these three Early Ceramic period sites suggests that early and late stage reduction appear to have been performed at different localities, possibly due to an aversion to carrying unnecessary weight. That Jarre Creek is a short occupation site with evidence of early stage lithic reduction could indicate the presence of Early Ceramic people to obtain raw lithic material from nearby quarry sites. Once the raw lithic materials had been reduced to more refined and lighter pieces, the Early Ceramic period people could more easily transport the lithic materials to their residential sites.

### **Conclusions and Future Work**

The analysis of vertical variation within thedebitage assemblage from Kinney Spring revealed that there was little variation in the use of the site over time, althoughdebitage quantity did vary within each level. The same types of raw materials were predominant throughout the 5000-year span of occupation. A probable explanation for this trend, or lack thereof, is that a good supply of local material, particularly quartzite, was available. A minor trend was seen in the small percentage of quartz used at the site during the occupations of Levels 2 and 4, possibly indicating trade or mobility pattern shifts. Size class and cortical data reveal that smaller flakes with no cortex or small amounts of cortex dominate the assemblage through all levels. This trend indicates that on-site lithic production was limited mainly to late stages of manufacture and retouch.

More research is required on multiple levels of the information provided by this study. First, moredebitage analysis should be conducted. Moredebitage data needs to be recorded and analyzed both vertically and horizontally by

layer. More vertical analysis is necessary because this study is based on nine percent of the excavated area, focusing on debitage excavated from the four units immediately surrounding the Woodland house. The point to make here is that, due to the interest in the Early Ceramic period structure, the sample that this paper is based on is not representative of the whole site, but of the immediate area around the house. Also, horizontal debitage analysis should be conducted to investigate the various activity areas and occupational concentrations for each layer. This will allow for a spatial view of the data and provide complementary material for the vertical analysis. Second, the larger trends suggested by the results of this project and the comparison to other Early Ceramic period sites should be explored. Sources for the raw materials should be investigated to discover how the occupants obtained their materials. Also, further attention should be paid to whether a real trend exists between occupation length and lithic production stages as suggested by the site comparisons.

#### **Acknowledgements**

Many thanks go to the reviewers for their time and expertise; my Lithics Technology class for recording the data presented within this article; Dr. LaBelle for his advice, insight, and encouragement; and AGSS for this opportunity.

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# Incentives of a Commuter Cycling Community

Melanie Graham

**Abstract-** *Bicycling has surpassed recreational niches to become a viable mode of transportation in American cities. In Fort Collins, where population growth and traffic congestion concerns are growing, policy makers are questioning the motivations behind this trend towards commuter cycling. Transportation planners have strongly supported and encouraged alternative transportation in the past fifteen years and many are interested in understanding the attitudes of Fort Collins cyclists in order to increase safety awareness, traffic law adherence, and the number of cyclists on the road. By examining how and why cyclists ride their bicycles, this study sought to discover whether environmental concern acted as a strong incentive to consider alternative transportation. Results suggest that the primary motivations for cycling are the more immediate individual benefits of health and efficiency, yet environmental concern, among other incentives, were identified as important. Several interviews and surveys (n=50) were conducted in order to better understand why Fort Collins cyclists ride their bicycles. It is hoped that the information obtained from this study will help develop outreach and education programs through which transportation planners and cycling advocates can encourage more safe and frequent cycling among young adults.*

## **Introduction**

Visitors to Fort Collins often comment that there are a relatively large number of cyclists on the roads. Fort Collins is

known as a bicycle-friendly city, promoting activities that increase community solidarity and sustainable living. As a 'silver metal' cycling city, a designation awarded by the League of American Bicyclists, the combined efforts of transportation planners and cycling advocacy groups has resulted in more than 395 miles of existing and planned bike lanes and dozens of community activities and outreach programs (GER 2007:67; Bike Plan 2007:5,13). City manager Darin Atteberry testifies to the sense of community fostered by cycling. "Bicycling is more than a mode of transportation or a recreational activity. It's a way of life, a part of who we are and what we value as a community" (Atteberry 2007).

The growing population of Fort Collins has led to concerns about traffic congestion and declining air quality. For many, these concerns present an opportunity to increase alternative transportation infrastructure and encourage bicycling as a method of commuting to work and school. The Bike Plan (2007:4) describes the undeniable benefits of commuter cycling for Fort Collins, "Bicycling produces no air or noise pollution, decreases traffic congestion, helps alleviate vehicular parking demand, saves energy, uses land and road space efficiently, provides mobility, saves individuals money, improves health and fitness, is fast, and most of all – is fun".

This study was designed to identify how and why cyclists ride their bicycles. Originally, I was interested in whether environmental concerns influenced the choice of commuter cyclists to use their bicycles as a mode of alternative transportation. As I conducted interviews, however, my focus shifted to an applied approach. The purpose of this approach is to identify major cycling incentives among current commuter cyclists, in order to emphasize those incentives in education and outreach programs designed to encourage more commuter

cycling. The study also examines how commuter cyclists<sup>1</sup> adhere to traffic laws and their basic attitudes towards policy change and increased cycling infrastructure.

This study employed a variety of qualitative and quantitative methods to understand the attitudes and incentives of the Fort Collins commuter cycling community. I will provide a brief and recent history of cycling in Fort Collins, and then present what I believe are the major incentives and attitudes of this sample of cyclists, using ethnographic data to support my claims. Lastly, I will frame these incentives in the context of potential education and outreach programs focused on the young adult population in Fort Collins.

This research provides information on how and why commuter cyclists ride their bicycles. Ninety-six percent of fifty survey participants can be considered commuter cyclists, defined as those who use their bicycle as a viable mode of transportation at least once per week. This study, therefore, is not representative of the Fort Collins community. Further research with a larger, representative population of all citizens is necessary in order to understand the perceived needs, wishes and ideas of those who do not commute by bicycle.

### **A Recent History of Cycling in Fort Collins**

More than fifteen years ago, the Bicycle Focus Task Force, a group of city staff, community members and consultant assistants, created the Fort Collins Bicycle Program Plan (2007:9), a plan that anticipated traffic increases and sought to place cycling infrastructure as a top priority in city planning. The group's vision was to "help build a city where bicycling for transportation is an easy *choice* to make" (Bike Plan

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this study, a commuter cyclist is a person who reported commuting to work, school or to run errands by bicycle at least once per week.

1995:1). The Bike Plan was successfully accepted by City Council as part of the Fort Collins Master Transportation Plan in 1995. Chapter five outlines plans to increase bike lanes, maintain multi-use park lanes, increase advocacy of health and environmental benefits, and overall create a friendly cycling atmosphere (Transportation Master Plan 2004). The Bike Plan was updated in 2004, and again in 2007, to include “about 395 miles of existing and planned bicycle lanes, off-street paths and signed bicycle routes in Fort Collins” (Bike Plan 2007:5). The goal of this Recommended Bikeway Network is to provide a bikeway within one-fourth to one-half mile of *every* location in Fort Collins.

Cycling infrastructure is only one aspect of a bike-friendly city. The League of American Bicyclists recognizes five basic criteria in their awards program to recognize cities that encourage cycling for transportation and recreation: Engineering, Education, Encouragement, Enforcement, and Evaluation (League of American Bicyclists 2007). All five of these criteria are essential to increasing the number of commuter cyclists in a community. With a silver medal award, Fort Collins excels in Encouragement and Evaluation criteria and is making major strides in the areas of Engineering, Education and Enforcement. The Updated Bike Plan of 2007 focuses bicycle education and enforcement efforts on “developing safe cycling skills in children, teaching adult cyclists their rights and responsibilities, and teaching motorists how to more effectively share the road with bicyclists” (Bike Plan 2007:5).

#### *A Tour of Advocacy Groups and Activities*

Fort Collins offers a wide variety of activities and organizations that an aspiring cyclist can become involved in. Bicycling activities have been offered at least since the late seventies, including ‘Tour de Fort’, which involved a bike rodeo, safety fairs, bike to work events and kids races (Bike

Plan 1995:57). Today, RamWheels and the Bike Library offer opportunities to rent a bike free of charge, the newly reorganized Bike Coop provides assistance and expertise in bike maintenance, and New Belgium's 'Tour de Fat' parade and a multitude of weekly bike rides present opportunities to be involved in community cycling. Safe Routes to School provides information on safety, and hundreds of community meetings, helpful websites and opportunities to speak with city planners are available in Fort Collins<sup>2</sup>. The advocacy group Bike Fort Collins may summarize the goal of many with their mission statement, "To foster a bicycle-friendly culture and transportation system in Fort Collins through education and encouragement" (Bike Fort Collins 2007).

### **Methods and Informants**

This study employed a combination of qualitative and quantitative ethnographic methods. I conducted participant observation while volunteering for a cycling advocacy group at the Sustainable Living Fair, and during three cycling-related meetings which consisted of concerned citizens, advocacy groups and city planners. Four interviews were conducted for different purposes. The first two interviews were explorations into the opinions and motivations of two serious cyclists, while the third interview was an exercise in the cultural model of political agency and intrinsic motivation, and the fourth was to collect a narrative related to cycling.

Cycling advocates in Fort Collins have made their voices heard in policy change. Considering the relative success of these stakeholders in public transportation policy, I became interested in the cultural model of political agency. The use of a cultural model among Fort Collins cycling advocates assumes

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<sup>2</sup> See Appendix A for a list of clubs and community organizations.

that these citizens share an internalized understanding of the world based on their shared experience as cyclists (Quinn 2005:2-3). There are many indicators in local literature that these experiences are shared among a community of cycling advocates (Atteberry 2007; Fried 2007; GER 2007). In cultural schema theory, a cultural model is made up of shared, complex schemas, defined by Matthews (2005:112) as “learned expectations about the way things usually go”. Naomi Quinn (2005:51) believes that identifying and analyzing the metaphors in discourse enables an ethnographer to reconstruct shared schemas. In my interview with Mark<sup>3</sup>, founding member of a cycling advocacy group, I identified metaphors to help me understand the internalized schemas of his cultural model of political agency. In an interview with Nate, a commuter cyclist in his mid-twenties, I analyzed a narrative about a five-day trip across a portion of the state of Wisconsin, in order to identify the intrinsic motivations behind this physically exhausting recreation.

Other methods included a free-list exercise in which I asked fifteen informants, half from Lory Student Center, half in Old Town, and all in their twenties, to list reasons why it is good to ride a bicycle. I placed each response into one of ten categories and then wrote each category onto a separate index card (Table 1). I asked another set of eight informants, all students in the anthropology department with ages ranging from 22 to 32 years of age, to “list these in the order that mostly closely relates to why you think it is good to ride a bicycle, from most important to least important.” It is important to recognize that the responses from the anthropology students present a ‘liberal arts’ orientation that may not be representative of the general public.

Participant observations, interviews and the free-list and ranking exercises all shaped the direction of the survey, in

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<sup>3</sup> Informant names have been changed to protect their anonymity.

which I address opinions relating to environmental concern, cycling behavior and traffic law adherence, and the interests of cycling advocates relating to policy change and cycling infrastructure. I administered fifty surveys to CSU students, members of various cycling organizations, and the general public<sup>4</sup>. 72.7 percent worked and 83.7 percent were in school<sup>5</sup>. Ages ranged from 18 to 63, with an average age of 28.52 and a median of 22 years. I surveyed 21 females and 27 males. Survey results were analyzed using SPSS version 16.0.1. A 95 percent confidence interval was used to test for significance.

Table 1: Reasons to ride

<b>Free-List Categories</b>
Saves gas money
It's good for my health
Good for environment
Faster than walking or parking a car
It's fun
It improves the quality of my life
Avoid traffic stress
Convenience
I feel proud when I ride my bike
No car

This survey sample is not representative of the Fort Collins cycling community. Of the fifty surveyed, 96 percent reported commuting to work, school, or to run errands at least once per week, while 74 percent reported commuting two or more hours per week, and up to forty hours per week. This is compared with 4.4 percent of Fort Collins citizens who report commuting by bicycle (Bike Plan 2007:7). I did not achieve a balanced sample of age, with fifty percent of respondents between the ages of 18 and 22 years. Still, I believe that I can make preliminary statements about the attitudes and incentives of young adult commuter cyclists, which may be useful in organizing education and outreach programs designed to

<sup>4</sup> See Appendix B for a summary of survey participants according to location, age and gender.

<sup>5</sup> The work and school figures are based on 33 of the 50 surveys. 17 surveys did not include a 'Not Applicable' option, negating the ability to use them in the analysis of work and school. See questions 1 and 2 in Appendix C.

persuade other young adults to use their bicycles as a mode of transportation.

### **Cycling Incentives: Response and Analysis**

#### *Cultural Model of Agency in a Cycling Advocate*

In an interview with Mark, I sought to understand the “motivational complexity” of a cycling advocate within his cultural model of agency (Quinn 2005:3). Mark used metaphors to emphasize the battle of changing public policy. Compare his two statements, one discussing the struggle to fund the “necessities of a civil society”, the other emphasizing mobilization and the ability to succeed in advocacy through the strength of his community:

“In a community like ours, you fight each of these battles a little piece at a time....this is a battle that’s been fought in this community for years....and the forces of good have won, over and over again.”

“I’m just a measly small business owner and public activist, and I’m nobody basically, compared to [cycling infrastructure opponents], but I can mobilize a lot of folks.”

Here, Mark’s cultural model of agency can be defined as experiences of success in the domain of policy change that are shared with his fellow advocates. Through the use of metaphors to identify the cultural model of agency in cycling advocates, I concluded that agency occurs because one believes they are doing “good” and overcoming “evil”, but it is important to note that this belief in agency would not happen without personal motivation and a strong belief that these changes will benefit the individual. In Fort Collins, the message of agency is one of mobilization, accomplishment and optimism.

***HOW do you ride a bicycle?***

What are the behaviors of commuter cyclists? On the survey, questions 12 through 16 deal with traffic law adherence<sup>6</sup>. I asked participants how often they ride on the sidewalk and the street, how often they stop at stop signs and run traffic lights, and to what extent they follow general traffic laws. Results show that 72 percent of respondents ‘rarely’ or ‘never’ ride on the sidewalk, while 84 percent ride on the street ‘most of the time’ or ‘every time’. 72 percent reported that they only stop at stop signs ‘when there’s an oncoming car’. When asked how long a respondent waits before running a stop light, the results were spread evenly with 42 percent reporting that they wait ‘until there are no oncoming cars’, while 32 percent checked ‘I don’t run stop lights’.

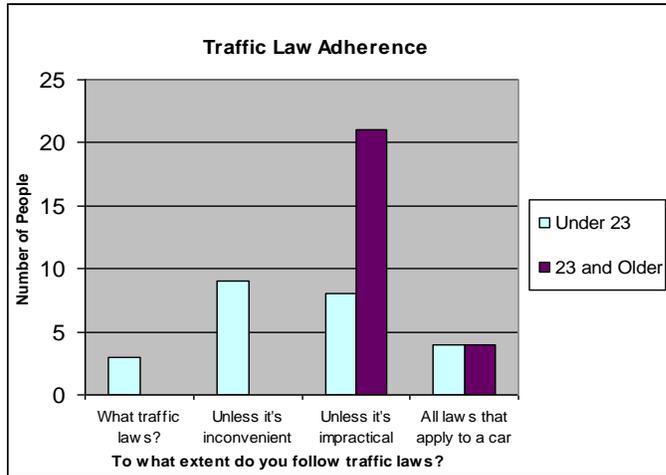
My interest in traffic law adherence in young adults caused me to look specifically at the lower 50 percent of my sample, those under the age of 23. When respondents were asked to what extent they follow traffic laws in general, a major difference in response percentages between age populations was recognized. Results revealed that the 25 participants under the age of 23 spread evenly across the responses, with 36 percent reporting that they only follow traffic laws if it is convenient, and 12 percent actually checking the ‘what traffic laws?’ box (Figure 1). This contrasts remarkably with 100 percent of participants 23 years or older who responded that they ‘follow all laws unless it’s impractical’, or that they ‘follow all laws that apply to a car’. A gamma test, a statistical test of associations between two ordinal variables, revealed a high association with a

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<sup>6</sup> See Appendix C for survey reference.

statistically significant p-value<sup>7</sup> ( $G = .506$ ,  $p = .016$ ). I feel confident reporting that, of my sample, young adults are responsible for traffic violations.

Figure 1: Bicyclist adherence to traffic laws based on age of respondent.



### ***WHY do you ride a bicycle?***

The 2002 National Survey of Pedestrian and Bicyclist Attitudes and Behaviors reported that of the 20.9 million people riding bicycles during a thirty day period, 41 percent did so for exercise or health and 37 percent for recreation. Only 5 percent reported commuting to work as the "primary" use of their bicycle (NHTSA 2002). A study by the University of Surrey found that their respondents identified both individual and environmental health as main incentives to ride a bicycle (Gatersleben and Appleton 2006:309). In the following pages, I

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<sup>7</sup> A gamma value varies between -1 as a perfect negative association, and +1 as a perfect positive association. The p-value is typically significant when  $p < .05$ .

will outline what the literature and my research suggest are the major incentives of commuter cycling.

*Environmental Concern:*

Is environmental concern a major incentive to commute by bicycle? A ranking question in the survey<sup>8</sup> underscored the importance of environmental health for respondents. Question 17 asks respondents to rank, in order of importance, six incentives to ride their bicycle (1 = most important, 6 = least important). Table two displays the averages of each category and the number of individuals who ranked each category as the most important incentive. The closer the average is to one, the more respondents tended to rank that category as more important. There were seven missing values for this question.

Table 2: Why do you ride a bicycle?

	Averages	Number who ranked as #1
Environment	2.98	10 (23.3%)
It's efficient	3.02	11 (25.6%)
Feels good	3.09	11 (25.6%)
Exercise	3.44	5 (11.6%)
Saves money	3.79	4 (9.3%)
Reduce stress	4.67	2 (4.7%)

When each category was averaged from the responses, the environmental category was ranked as more important than any other, with a mean of 2.98. While 23.3 percent of survey participants reported that the environment was their number one reason to ride a bicycle, many respondents placed this category as second (14%) or third (25.6%) in their ranking. These data are supported by responses to the question, ‘To what extent do you view cycling as a solution to our

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<sup>8</sup> See Appendix C, question 17.

environmental problems?’<sup>9</sup> in which 68 percent responded that ‘It is important’, while only 12 percent checked that ‘It’s the main reason I ride a bicycle’. These results suggest that the majority of cyclists do not ride their bicycles primarily due to environmental concern, but that environmental benefits are perceived as very important incentives to commuter cyclists.

*Efficiency:*

While efficiency did not appear to be a central incentive in any of the preliminary research methods, in question 17 of the survey it was ranked by 25.6 percent of respondents as the number one most important reason that they ride a bicycle, the highest response of any incentive, next to the ‘feels good’ incentive (Table 2). Study results by the University of Surrey suggest that “the relative flexibility of the bicycle might be more important than health and environmental benefits” (Gatersleben and Appleton 2006:310). Fort Collins is a relatively small city with 46.5 square miles of flat terrain in a mild climate. Especially for those who live near the center of the city, cycling is often just as quick, and often more convenient, than motorized transport. Efficiency can also be thought of as accomplishing two goals at once, in that an individual can complete their daily exercise while commuting.

*Money:*

In the free-list exercise, when my informants were asked to list any reasons they think it is good to ride a bicycle, saving money on gas, vehicles, etc. appeared in 11 out of 15 responses (73%). While saving money had the highest mention out of every category in the free-list, it hardly appeared in any other method of research. Only 9.3 percent of survey respondents ranked the ‘saves money’ option on question 17 as their number one reason to ride a bicycle, and it averaged as

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<sup>9</sup> See Appendix C, question 20.

the second to least important reason. Saving money as an incentive to ride did not appear in any of the interviews. One explanation for the high frequency on the free-lists may be that when the public is asked to list the incentives of cycling, saving money on typical auto costs often comes to mind, but for individual cyclists, it is not a major incentive to ride.

#### *Health and Well-Being:*

In every method used in this study, health emerged as a crucial incentive. While there are many external, usually delayed, environmental benefits to commuter cycling, health offers the more immediate, personal benefits of physical and mental well-being. Good health has its economic benefits, as well, as America Bikes (2003:2) points out, “[p]eople who exercise regularly save more than \$500 annually in health costs, and add years to their life expectancy”. An estimated 300,000 premature deaths occur each year due to a lack of physical activity, and 120 million people suffer from poor air quality due in part to motor vehicle traffic (America Bikes 2003:2).

Cycling for good health also has psychological benefits. Mark called cycling “an extremely creative solution to clearing my mind and reducing stress”. In the free-list exercise, ten out of fifteen informants listed health and/or exercise as a reason that it is good to ride a bicycle. Two options from the ranking question on the survey related to health and exercise: ‘it makes me feel good’ and ‘for exercise in general’. These options averaged as the third and fourth most important categories, respectively. However, ‘feels good’ was reported by 25.6 percent of respondents as the number one most important reason they ride a bicycle, one of the two most frequently reported incentives (Table 2). Exercise and feeling good are certainly both important aspects of well-being, and obvious incentives for cyclists. It seems very common for serious cyclists to make cycling an integral part of their daily lives,

directly related to their physical and mental health. Perhaps Mark put it best, “If I don’t get a bicycle ride everyday, I’m not as clear in mind. I can’t participate in any business deals or negotiations. I always take a bicycle ride first, always”.

*Exercise and Fun:*

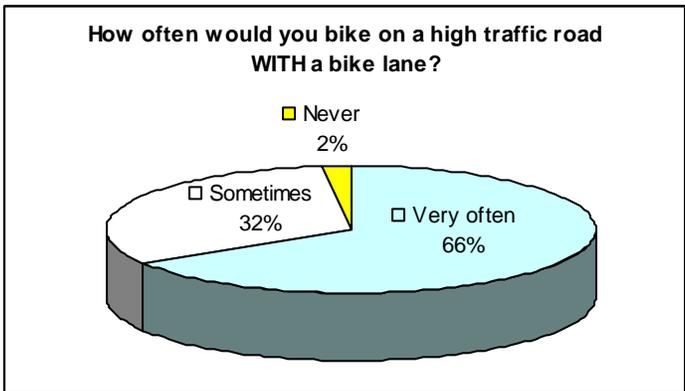
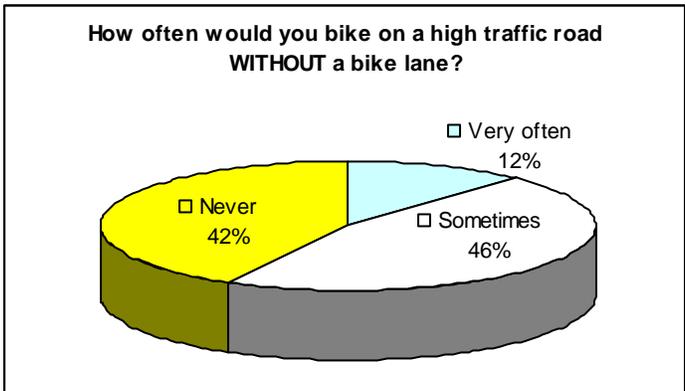
Through these research methods, I have come to understand health, well-being, exercise and fun as simply different perspectives of the very same incentive. Reducing stress, promoting long-term health, exercise for physical fitness, the endorphin-high of physically exhausting activity and fun are all related to a cyclist’s quality of life. In the free-list exercise, I listed ‘quality of life’ as a category to summarize three widely varied responses. For the survey, when I asked informants to rank the six reasons I listed for why they ride a bicycle, I intended that the options ‘it makes me feel good’ and ‘for exercise in general’ would represent quality of life, health and fun, although all the options are arguably related to these incentives.

The qualitative ethnographic data of this research indicates that ‘fun’ is the overarching, intrinsic motivation for cyclists to commute by bicycle. In an interview with Nate, a commuter cyclist in his mid-twenties, I was treated to a story about a five-day bike ride across a portion of Wisconsin. The story involved tales of nausea, heat exhaustion and plenty of pain. Nate summarized the story with the words, “It was torture. It was awesome”. While I personally do not understand this connection, it seems to resonate quite soundly with other serious cyclists. To push oneself beyond the thresholds of pain and discomfort is a pleasurable experience. Mark gives testimony to the intrinsic pleasure of cycling. “Like a runner, I’m addicted to the endorphin high I get from it, there’s no doubt about that”. Endorphin-addicted cyclists ride bicycles because they truly enjoy it, while the physical and mental health benefits become an essential part of their daily lives. For

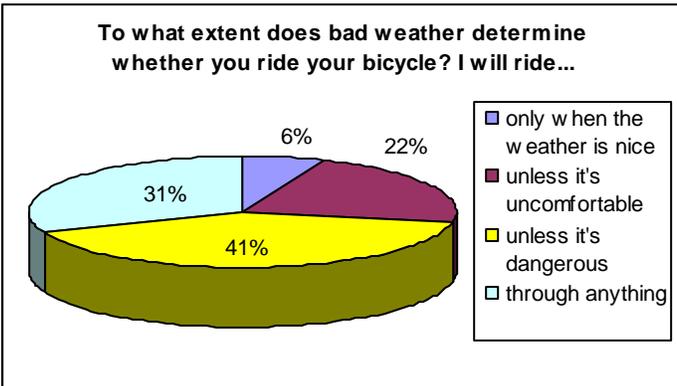
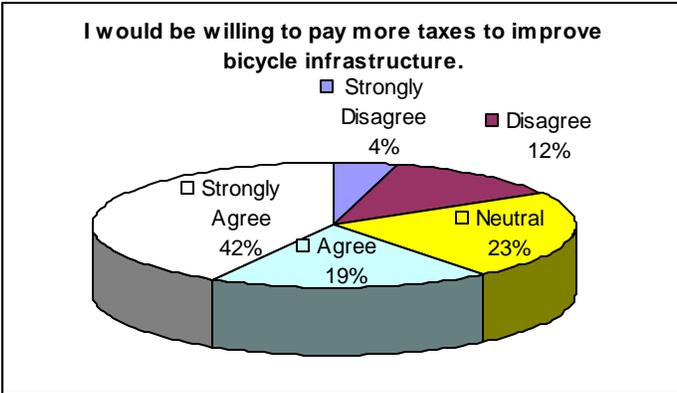
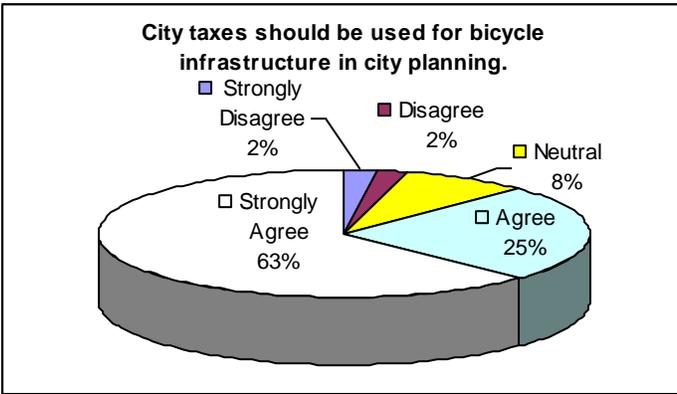
these informants, cycling, whether for recreation or for commute, is *fun*. From this perspective, cycling to commute is directly related to cycling for pure pleasure.

***Attitudes of Commuter Cyclists***

Although I do not have the space to discuss much of the survey responses, the following graphs show a few response percentages that are interesting and reflect commuter cyclist attitudes<sup>10</sup>:



<sup>10</sup> The following data are derived from questions 7, 26, 27, 35 and 36 of the survey, see Appendix C.



**Results: Education and Outreach**

When the survey participants were asked what they thought could be done to encourage more bicycling<sup>11</sup>, the most frequently mentioned advice involved increasing cycling infrastructure, i.e. building more bike lanes (26%). There is no doubt that bike lanes increase feelings of safety and confidence among cyclists. But does it increase the number of commuter cyclists? When these same participants were asked what prevents them from riding more often<sup>12</sup>, only three mentioned that a lack of bike lanes prevents them from riding (6%).

The attempt to increase commuter cycling in Fort Collins must go beyond infrastructural changes. There is a need for societal and individual changes (Gatersleben and Appleton 2006:311). For example, the NHTSA survey reported that 16.9 percent of respondents listed ‘too busy’ as a reason for not biking (NHTSA 2002). Similarly, 19 survey participants (38%) listed distance, lack of time, distrust of motorists and laziness as reasons why they did not bike more often. Fundamental changes include changing concepts of efficient use of time; living closer to work and school; increasing trust and understanding between motorists and cyclists; and inspiring a generation of lethargic young adults to get out of their car and onto a bike.

I have argued that efficiency, health and environmental benefits are the major incentives to commute by bicycle for my informants. Most importantly, however, all of my research indicates that cyclists ride their bicycles because they enjoy it, pure and simple. Promoting these benefits among the general public requires visibility through community activities, education and the mentoring of individuals who aspire to become commuter cyclists. Above all, emphasizing the

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<sup>11</sup> See question 32 in Appendix C.

<sup>12</sup> See question 31 in Appendix C.

intrinsic motivation of cycling for pleasure is essential to keep novice cyclists on their bicycles when weather, laziness, distance and time attenuate these other incentives.

“Cycling is never going to be taken seriously by individual mode users if it is not also perceived to be taken seriously by transport planners” (Gatersleben and Appleton 2006:311). It is an indication of the service and dedication of city planners and advocacy groups that all of the incentives identified through this research have been implemented in previous and current outreach programs, or have been identified as necessary in the 2007 Bike Plan. I feel that the most useful piece of information I can give regards traffic law adherence and safety awareness. Outreach and education needs to be focused on young adults, specifically on CSU campus. More visibility on campus, regarding cyclist rights and responsibilities, is absolutely necessary. Many new students at CSU do not know the laws and become a danger to themselves and others on the roads. The city’s bicycling campaign mantras, ‘Give Respect, Get Respect’ and ‘Be Seen’ must be visible to students in order to reduce bicycling accidents and driver/cyclist distrust (City of Fort Collins 2007).

### ***Cycling as Community Solidarity***

“Streets that are busy with bicyclists and walkers foster a sense of neighborhood and community” (Atteberry 2007). Four-fifths of survey participants agreed that cycling in Fort Collins fosters a sense of community. More research is necessary to understand the attitudes and incentives of a larger group of cyclists, and Fort Collins citizens in general. But a quick look around at the many fairs, parades, meetings and local literature is sufficient to get a sense of community. Fort Collins is a bike-friendly city, and will continue to grow as one through “the power of a common interest, communication tools, and the

realization that we have something really special here, and that we can make it even more special if we work together.”<sup>13</sup>

### **Acknowledgements**

I'd like to thank the city planners, staff and advocacy groups of Fort Collins for their dedication to the establishment of cycling as a mode of transportation in this city. To Jeff Snodgrass for guiding this semester project and to Rick Price for providing advice, social networking and insight into the mind of the commuter cyclist. Lastly, to my interview and survey participants, thank you.

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### **Appendix A: Some Clubs and Organizations in Fort Collins**

- Bicycle Colorado ([bicyclecolo.org](http://bicyclecolo.org))
- Bike Fort Collins ([www.bikefortcollins.org](http://www.bikefortcollins.org))
- Cycling Friends of Fort Collins ([cyclingfriends.org](http://cyclingfriends.org))
- Diamond Peaks Mountain Bike Patrol ([www.dpmbp.org](http://www.dpmbp.org))
- Fort Collins Bicycling ([www.fcgov.com/bicycling](http://www.fcgov.com/bicycling))
- Fort Collins Bike Co-op ([www.fcbikecoop.org](http://www.fcbikecoop.org))
- Fort Collins Bike Library ([www.fcbikelibrary.org](http://www.fcbikelibrary.org))
- Fort Collins Cycling Club ([www.fccycleclub.org](http://www.fccycleclub.org))
- League of American Bicyclists ([www.bikeleague.org](http://www.bikeleague.org))
- North Front Range Bicyclist Coalition ([www.nfrbico.org](http://www.nfrbico.org))
- Women's Mountain Biking Club ([www.coteambob.com](http://www.coteambob.com))

### **Appendix B: Summary of Survey Participants**

#### **Meetings and Locations**

	Bike Town Mtg	Anthro Dept	CSU Students	CSU Cycling Team	Bike Lunch Talk	Public	<b>Total</b>
Total # surveyed	13	7	15	9	5	1	<b>50</b>

**Gender**

Female	4	4	10	2	1	0	21
Male	8	3	5	6	4	1	27
Missing value	1			1			2

**Age**

Under 23	0	1	12	7	4	1	25
23 and over	5	6	3	1	8	0	23
Missing value	1			1			2

**Appendix C: Survey**

Survey: Cycling in Fort Collins

How do you ride a bicycle?

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS BY PLACING A CHECK MARK NEXT TO THE APPROPRIATE ANSWER(S).

Please answer questions 1-6 as how often you ride your bicycle in the WARMER months:

1. How often do you ride your bicycle to **work**?

- Every time
- Most of the time
- Some of the time
- Never
- Not applicable

2. How often do you ride your bicycle to **school**?

- Every time
- Most of the time
- Some of the time
- Never
- Not applicable

3. How often do you ride your bicycle to **run errands**?

- Every time
- Most of the time
- Some of the time
- Never

4. How often, on average, do you ride your bicycle for **fun on roads and trails**?

- Every day
- At least once a week
- At least once a month
- Every few months
- Once a year
- Never

5. How many hours per week do you ride a bicycle **to commute** to work, school or to run errands? \_\_\_\_\_hours/week

6. How many hours per week do you ride a bicycle **for fun**?

\_\_\_\_\_hours/week

7. To what extent does bad weather (cold temperatures, ice, precipitation, wind) determine whether you ride your bicycle? (Check one)

- Not at all, I'll ride through anything
- I'll ride unless I think it's dangerous
- I'll ride unless I think it's uncomfortable
- I only ride when the weather is nice

8. What type of bicycle(s) do you own? (Check all that apply)

- Mountain bike
- Cruiser
- Road
- Hybrid
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

9. Do you wear a helmet when you ride? (Check one)

- Every time
- Most of the time
- Some of the time
- Never
- I don't own one

10. Have you ever felt angry towards a **cyclist while driving**? (Check one)

- Very often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never
- I don't drive

11. Have you ever felt angry towards a **driver while cycling**? (Check one)

- Very often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

12. How often do you ride on the sidewalk? (Check one)

- Every time
- Most of the time
- Some of the time
- Rarely
- Never

13. How often do you ride on the street? (Check one)

- Every time
- Most of the time
- Some of the time
- Rarely
- Never

14. How long do you wait at a stop LIGHT before you run it? (Check one)

- Until there are no oncoming cars
- Until there are no cars in sight
- I don't run stop lights

15. How often do you stop at stop SIGNS? (Check one)

- Every time
- When there's an oncoming car
- Never

16. To what extent do you follow traffic laws? (Check one)

- I follow all traffic laws that apply to a car.
- I follow the traffic laws unless it's impractical.
- I follow the traffic laws unless it's inconvenient.
- What traffic laws?

**Why do you ride a bicycle?**

**PLEASE RANK THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS IN ORDER OF IMPORTANCE FROM 1 TO 6.**

**(1 = MOST IMPORTANT, 6 = LEAST IMPORTANT)**

17. Why do you ride a bicycle?

- to save money
- it's efficient
- it's better for the environment
- it makes me feel good
- to help relieve the stress of driving a car
- for exercise in general

18. To what extent do you feel connected to other cyclists in town that you do not know personally? (Check one)

- Very much
- Somewhat
- Not at all

19. To what extent are you concerned about population growth and increased traffic congestion in Fort Collins? (Check one)

- Very concerned
- Somewhat concerned
- A little concerned
- Not at all concerned

20. To what extent do you view cycling as a solution to our environmental problems? (Check one)

- It's the main reason I ride a bicycle
- It is important
- It might help a little
- Not at all

21. To what extent are you concerned about global warming? (Check one)

- Very concerned
- Somewhat concerned
- A little concerned
- Not at all concerned

22. Do you belong to any racing, touring or advocacy cycling groups or clubs? (Check one)

- Yes
- No

23. IF YES, please write them here:

---

## What would you change about Fort Collins cycling?

24. Are there bike lanes along your route from home to work/school/etc.?  
(Check one)

- Yes, all the way
- More than half of the way
- Less than half of the way
- No

25. If there were more bike lanes along your route from home to work/school/etc., would you ride your bike more often? (Check one)

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable

26. How often would you ride your bicycle on a HIGH traffic road WITHOUT a bike lane? (Check one)

- Very Often
- Sometimes
- Never

27. How often would you ride your bicycle on a HIGH traffic road WITH a bike lane? (Check one)

- Very often
- Sometimes
- Never

28. Does your work/school encourage commuting by bicycle by providing showers, changing rooms, etc? (Check one)

- Yes
- Somewhat
- No

29. IF NO, would you ride your bicycle to work and school more often if these services were provided? (Check one)

- Yes
- Maybe
- No

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR CYCLING HABITS.

30. When I ride my bicycle to work, my colleagues usually...

(Check all that apply)

- Encourage me
- Mention that they want to ride more often
- Take no notice
- Make fun of me

31. Please list one thing that prevents you from riding your bicycle more often.

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32. What do you think can be done to encourage more bicycling?

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33. Would you support a bike coordinator in Fort Collins? (Check one)

(A bike coordinator is a position with the city that works as a liaison to schools, employers and community organizations to develop and implement education and encouragement programs and activities)

- Yes
- Maybe
- No

34. Would you utilize a bicycle rental program like the Bike Library?

(Check one)

- Yes
- Maybe
- No

PLEASE RESPOND TO THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS.

CHECK ONE (STRONGLY AGREE, AGREE, NEUTRAL, DISAGREE, STRONGLY DISAGREE)

35. City taxes should be used for bicycle infrastructure in city planning.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

36. I would be willing to pay more taxes to improve bicycle infrastructure in Fort Collins.

- Strongly Agree

- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

37. Cyclists should register their bicycles with the DMV and pay a road tax.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

38. It is good for the city to have a policy that discourages the number of car trips in the city.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

39. Cycling in Fort Collins fosters a sense of community.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

**How old are you? \_\_\_\_\_ years**

**Gender? (Check one)**

\_\_\_ Female

\_\_\_ Male

**THANK YOU!**