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ANTIOCH UNIVERSITY NEW ENGLAND

Department of Environmental Studies

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*A Qualitative Approach to Spiral of Silence Research: Self-Censorship Narratives
Regarding Environmental and Social Conflict*

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A QUALITATIVE APPROACH TO SPIRAL OF SILENCE RESEARCH: SELF-
CENSORSHIP NARRATIVES REGARDING ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL
CONFLICT

By

Christopher J. Ryan

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of

The requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Environmental Studies

at

Antioch University New England

2011

DEDICATION

Through all the tears and hardship my wife Christina allowed me to complete this difficult journey and realize my dream. Without her encouragement and occasional stark warnings of bloodshed, I would not have been able to make this happen. And to my amazing children, Katy and Michael, who were the chief inspirations for this project because without a healthy environment, they will not have a safe, secure, and bountiful world in which to live. May this project contribute just a little bit to a more just and sustainable planet.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my deep gratitude to the many people who made the success of this project a reality. First I wish to thank the participants in this research including the many people who filled out the questionnaire but particularly the nineteen informants who agreed to be interviewed about their own self-censorship experiences despite the fact that it must have been difficult to discuss with a complete stranger. Many of their stories of overcoming self-censorship and speaking out are amazing and are great examples of courage in the face of adversity. By documenting their experiences, I hope that others may be encouraged to speak out about values and issues that they feel deeply passionate about. I particularly want to mention my appreciation for Jenny who passed away early this year and who put up with my persistent pestering for her story.

I also wish to express my deepest appreciation to the members of my Committee including Chair Dr. Thomas F. Webler and resident member Dr. K. Heidi Watts, both of Antioch University New England, and outside committee member Dr. Robert Krueger of the Worcester Polytechnic Institute. This was not an easy project in which to serve on a committee and the members, particularly the Professor Webler, really went the extra mile to make sure this project was completed in a timely manner. I owe them a deep debt of gratitude.

Next I will give my thanks to a range of people who provided assistance in a variety of ways including the staff in the Environmental Studies Department including Sue Weller and Heather Morrison; the librarians at Antioch, Jean Amaral, Cary Jardine, and others; I am grateful to the administrative professionals, particularly Associate Registrar Sandy Peace-Carey, who kept me abreast with my status and gave me a little

nudge when needed and Director of Admissions Laura Andrews who was there at the beginning and the end.

I want to thank certain students who were always supportive and encouraging such as Amy Cabaniss, Cary Gaunt, Kathy Doherty, Twyla Dell, Luanne Johnson, Marian Knapp and certainly others who escape my narrow focus of the moment. I also want to thank those who provided external academic assistance including Professors Nina Weerakkody and Kurt Neuwirth, and others who responded to e-mail inquiries of the most esoteric nature.

Most of all I want to thank my family, particularly my wife, for having the patience and encouragement without which this epic project would never have been accomplished. I only hope that I can provide a “return on this investment” that will make the project worthwhile.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to seek narratives of self-censorship from in-depth interviews of 19 participants acquired through a purposive (criterion) sampling protocol. The primary research question driving this study is “What types of sanctions contribute to people choosing to self-censor their strongly held beliefs, values, and opinions.” Previous research conducted on the topic of self-censorship (generally under the rubric of the spiral of silence theory) has been predominantly quantitative and consideration of sanctions influencing self-censorship have been limited to fear of social isolation. I suggest that ostensibly important sanction variables have not been utilized within these existing frameworks. I anticipated that this research, by utilizing a qualitative framework, would reveal other sanctions that operate in the self-censorship decision calculus. I also expected that interviews would portray a broader, more complete picture of how self-censorship operates and the variables that contribute to the construct. Research expectations were partially met as new variables in regard to specific fears of sanctioning were identified. These variables should contribute to self-censorship theory and more specifically, the frequently researched “spiral of silence” theory of mass communication and could be tested in quantitative research to verify their validity. Future research in this vein might consider testing additional sanction variables as part of a quantitative study, continue to refine the definition of self-censorship, develop better strategies to locate and secure additional informants, and continue to utilize qualitative methods to probe further into self-censorship questions.

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CHAPTER 1

“The free expression of the hopes and aspirations of a people is the greatest and only safety in a sane society...In truth, it is such free expression and discussion alone that can point the most beneficial path for human progress and development.”

~ Emma Goldman

Introduction

The idea of free speech is embedded in our culture, celebrated during patriotic holidays, pointed to as a justification during times of conflict, assumed in a general way to be “the way things are.” One of the core purposes of this right is to advance the human condition. But the human condition, as well as the condition of all of nature, is under unprecedented assault from the treadmill of production. I will argue that our very culture and the system of economic growth that it has spawned, is an existential threat to the prospects of humanity and nature. If this threat is to be widely recognized, acknowledged, and addressed, than communication of these threats and their origins must be free and unfettered. But the idea of free speech is more theoretical and aspirational than a practical reality. Serious cultural critique can be considered as deviant as any criminal activity such as treason. Just try to criticize America in a VFW hall. Censorship of uncomfortable ideas has always been used by authorities to maintain their primacy. Self-censorship occurs when citizens anticipate the potential penalties for unwelcome speech. Self-censorship can and does prevent the circulation of the very critiques, arguments, and ideas that are necessary to address cultural pathologies such as the treatment of the environment by humanity.

This chapter is divided into six sections aside from this introduction. In the first section I will provide background and context to this research including an experience I

had that sparked the idea of this topic and I will then lay out a foundational summary of how free speech and self-censorship uneasily co-exist as ideas in a democracy. This will include working definitions for self-censorship and sanctions. I will also frame and define what I mean by environmental degradation since it is this concept that truly inspires this scholarship. In the second section I will define the problem including the limitations of research to-date. Next I will expound on the purpose of the research and state the research questions. In the fourth section I will provide a set of assumptions underpinning the study. I explain the significance and rationale of the study in the fifth section. Finally in the sixth section I conclude with an outline of the remainder of the paper.

Background and Context

The inspiration for this study arose during a conversation with a local business owner in Newnan, Georgia in the spring of 1998. A new shopping center had been proposed for the main growth corridor of the city. As Planning & Zoning Director, I was the primary site plan reviewer of the project. A property owner adjacent to the proposed development site asked to speak to me, and the conversation took place one afternoon soon thereafter. Predictably, the property owner was upset about the scale and orientation of the project and expressed his misgivings to me. His concerns were understandable given his situation and my report to the Planning Commission would include some of these points. I suggested that he attend the public hearing scheduled by the Commission the following week. He agreed with my suggestion and left my office.

The following week, the public hearing took place and the business owner I spoke with did not attend. While I made a number of staff recommendations that would have

improved the project, there were no members of the public or any other stakeholders to echo those concerns. Thus, the Commission chose to approve the project essentially as originally submitted by the developer. A few weeks later, I had the opportunity to ask the business owner why he didn't attend the meeting and speak about his concerns. He said that as a member of the business community, he didn't want to create friction or be seen as an impediment to business and growth. As a member of the Chamber of Commerce, he would have to regularly see these developers and other pro-growth, anti-regulatory local merchants and property owners who would not view his sentiments very sympathetically. He said that he didn't want to risk his good name within the business community.

I reflected at length on his words and recalled similar conversations with citizens and business owners in this and other communities I worked for. It was remarkable how so many people were unwilling to question the unspoken rules and guidelines of growth and commerce. It was a taboo that struck fear in ordinary people who had grounding in a local community and didn't want years of hard work and investment in that community to be threatened by a "minor" concern over adjacent development—development that many in that community believed property owners had every right to pursue as they saw fit because "that was what the Constitution guaranteed."—or so they believed anyhow. I wondered that if many and perhaps most ordinary people felt that way and behaved accordingly, how would this facilitate the damaging and destructive practices that harmed the natural environment, the social structure of the community, and any other negative externalities of growth and development. From this point, I decided to pursue these questions academically.

As my understanding of self-censorship, its use patterns, and the situations in which it arises grew from a practical/lay context, I began to identify examples of self-censorship in the stories and narratives that I read. These stories included motivations for self-censorship that were quite diverse but appeared centered in social pressures.

These early thoughts led me to explore psychological and sociological concepts such as vested interests, groupthink, denial, cognitive dissonance theory, and measurement of environmental concern as fundamental socially based reasons for continued environmental degradation. It was nearly two full years into my doctoral program that I discovered the spiral of silence theory (SoS). The SoS served as a theoretical starting point for this dissertation research for two reasons:

1. It was an explanation for self-censorship decisionmaking, and
2. As the name of the theory implies, the result of multiple acts of self-censorship is a decreasing relevance of the issue under consideration.

These elements of the theory seemed to be contributing factors that could explain why issues like environmental protection did not receive more support. I perceived that most people were supportive of basic environmental issues, particularly in a general, non-specific sense. However, when discussion of specific issues that might conflict with their other interests, when the root causes of environmental degradation were discussed, or solutions to degradation were proposed, people often become more defensive and less supportive. I noted that the closer I probed to these root causes and developed rudimentary connections between cultural practices and degradation, the more sensitive the discussion became and the less comfortable people were about talking about such connections.

Society is fundamentally developed, shaped, and reinforced by communicative interaction. Thus, any constraints on free expression could likely be a major barrier to social and cultural change. If dominant social and cultural norms facilitate behaviors that lead to or cause environmental degradation, then individuals refraining from engaging in public dialogue¹ regarding this relationship lessen the likelihood that these norms (and the institutions, and power relations that perpetuate them) can be changed in order to slow, halt, or reverse the degradation (MacKuen, 1990). Some (e.g. St. Clair and Frank, 2007, Shellenberger & Nordhaus, 2004) have argued that environmentalism as a movement will never be effective without this dialogue.

Through the lens of critical theory, Brulle (2000) advises that we may be able to understand the structure and norms of society and use this knowledge to develop a “rational and moral society.” He suggests that Habermas’ Theory of Communicative Action can be a discourse-based model for just decision-making that can adjudicate competing claims of how the natural world should be cared for. Schwandt (1990 in Guba, ed.) describes the purpose of critical inquiry as a tool to reduce “the illusions in human experience” through a critique of the dominant social paradigm or ideology. He notes that the primary characteristic of this destructive paradigm is the creation and maintenance of an “instrumental rationality that systematically distorts the communicative capacity of human beings” (p. 268). Free speech would therefore appear to be a vital means to affect social change as well as maintain and advance democracy. As Brulle (2000, p. 48) states, “Questions about preservation of the natural environment...are fundamental questions about defining what our human community is

¹ I shall adopt MacKuen’s term “public dialogue” when referring to free speech or expression to make clear that I refer to expression as an exchange between those of differing opinions or differing thresholds of opinion strength.

and how it should exist. In a democratic society, this requires the participation of all citizens in the discussion.” Without the free expression of individual views unconstrained by social pressure to conform, civil liberties in a democratic society may be threatened (Hollander, 1975). While freedom of speech is an essential right granted to the citizenry of democratic societies, its practice appears to be restricted by a number of factors.

Freedom of Speech

The right of free speech in modern society emanates from British common law and the 1689 Bill of Rights, which permitted free speech in Parliament. Within a century, both the French and the Americans included a broader definition of free speech in their respective constitutions and linked the idea to a free press (Manchester Guardian, 2006). Scholars have linked the constitutionally guaranteed right to free speech to a functional and healthy democracy (e.g. Barber, 1984; Williams, 2004; Cardozo, 1937). Indeed, John Stuart Mill (1859) states that freedom of opinion and the expression thereof is an essential component of human liberty.

As noted by Van Mill (2008), people are free to speak as they wish. The only mitigating factor is that depending on what one expresses, a sanction may be applied to the speaker. In legislating the right of free speech, governments are essentially restricting the application of sanctions for most forms of expression. The exceptions to free speech in its purest potential form derives from Mill’s harm principle (1859, 1978) which is introduced when he states, “That the only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilised community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others.” In this sense, free expression that causes harm to others is not considered an

element of free speech protections. The most common example would be that evoked by Justice Holmes in *Schenck v. United States* (1919) where he states, “The most stringent protection of free speech would not protect a man falsely shouting fire in a theater and causing a panic...” Yet as the very case from which that quote is derived makes clear, one’s interpretation of harm itself is a matter of subjectivity, rooted in cultural norms. Schenck was distributing fliers opposing the draft for the World War and one could argue that his speech was defensible on moral grounds.

Thus, freedom of speech is rarely optimized due to a variety of social, institutional, and cultural constraints (such as censorship and self-censorship) that are largely rooted in power dynamics and the influence of social, institutional, and cultural authorities. These constraints are based upon conflict with other rights and values believed to supersede the right to free speech and largely embedded within the harm principle. They are justified by arguments that certain speech considered harmful to individuals or to the government or its interests should be prohibited by law. Indeed a number of laws intended to invoke these protections have been introduced. Just in the U.S., laws such as the Alien and Sedition Acts (1798), the Comstock Act (1873), the Espionage Act (1917), the Sedition Act (1918), the Alien Registration Act (1940), and the McCarran Act (1950) provided broad categories of speech that were not permissible such as publicly opposing a law or obstructing military recruiting. Also note the range of laws passed protecting special interests by raising the bar on criticisms that could be harmful to business interests such as the Virginia Act of 1836 or the False Disparagement of Perishable Food Products Act of 1995 (Stone, 2004). The courts have also had no little influence on the interpretation of these laws as they are to be applied. Thus clearly

civil authorities identify exceptions to free speech based on the perception of threats to their interests and the interests of their constituents. They do so purportedly based on a consensus of what constitutes the common good. Similarly, other institutions and individuals use a similar calculus to develop criteria for what constitutes acceptable speech related to their interests. Since human civilization began, human communities have acquired norms and mores that serve as the framework of rules for appropriate behaviors and beliefs that provide a foundational ethic for their society.

Actions, including speech, that deviate from these norms are considered a threat to the community (or the culture at large) and are often sanctioned. Such actions, whether taken by the authorities formally or by fellow citizens informally, were historically and still are considered a proper exercise of power to preserve community standards, values, and institutions. Such actions could include criminal acts such as theft, assault, or murder. They could be moral transgressions such as incest or adultery, improper dress, or non-adherence to religious practices that may or may not be codified in law. They could also include deviant speech such as libel, slander, or seditious speech. Yet each of these acts, defined as counter-normative by the society in which they occur, often also include acts that while often technically deviant and punishable, are intended as a positive act of cognitive deviance, a moral and ethical statement that one or more norms or standards or values of the community needs to be reconsidered or merely discussed and debated openly. This is what free speech is intended to allow. The speech that exposes the flaws, the misdeeds, the waste, or the evils of a society is often the speech that is grouped into the broader category of deviance and is constrained and

sanctioned in much the same way since it often threatens established power and authority and their interests or actions.

Restrictions on Speech: The Moral Dimensions of Self-Censorship

While free speech was originally conceived as a moral liberty allowing the individual to exercise his or her rights as part of a democratic form of government, restrictions on this right have always been considered in parallel with it as noted above. Two important tools used by a culture to ensure that deviant acts, in this case deviant speech, are limited are censorship and self-censorship. The term censorship derives from the Latin term *censere*, which means “to give one’s opinion, to assess.” At its most simple, censorship refers to the control of information and ideas that circulate throughout a society. But such a simple definition is not sufficient because it does not refer to *who* controls *what* information at *what time* and to *whom*. A more robust definition of censorship is provided by the Academic American Encyclopedia (1987):

“In its broadest sense it refers to suppression of information, ideas, or artistic expression by anyone, whether government officials, church authorities, private pressure groups, or speakers, writers, and artists themselves. It may take place at any point in time, whether before an utterance occurs, prior to its widespread circulation, or by punishment of communicators after dissemination of their messages, so as to deter others from like expression...”

Similarly, self-censorship is also a restriction on the dissemination of information, ideas, or artistic expression but in this case it is self-imposed, often due to the deterrent effect of observing sanctions imposed on others for their speech.

Self-censorship is a behavioral choice to refrain from speaking out about an issue or topic that is sensitive or may elicit some negative reaction. The subject of self-censorship is primarily researched within the disciplines of mass communication, public

opinion, (Hayes et al, 2005a) and journalism (Levinson, 2003) but there are threads within the fields of psychology and social psychology such as communication apprehension (McCroskey, 1977) and groupthink (Janis, 1982), philosophy (Foucault, 1975; Loury, 1994) business ethics such as whistleblowing, business management such as organizational communication, scientific and academic policy, library administration, the arts and entertainment, and so on. Most of these specific research paths rarely if ever intersect or cross-cite and thus often do not even consider the findings of one another. Still, much has been written about self-censorship, largely without an accompanying definition, as if the term were assumed to be universally understood much like other behavior-related terms such as eating or bathing. For example, a 2000 study by the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press polled 287 journalists, senior editors, and executives about self-censorship (Kohut, 2000). This study sought to determine how much self-censorship occurs in journalism and what influences the behavior. Relevant to this study is the report's finding that journalists self-censor due to a fear of embarrassment (a social sanction) or potential career damage (an economic or professional sanction). However, the study did not define self-censorship.

The National Coalition Against Censorship (NCAC) developed a self-censorship project (<http://www.ncac.org/Self-Censorship>) where it invited people to post anonymous comments about their own self-censorship. However, the web site does not provide any guiding definition for respondents. This is apparent given the wide range of responses that are clearly not examples of self-censorship. Other organizations such as Project Censored often write articles about self-censorship but are more focused on external censorship.

Finally, self-censorship and silencing has been written about academically by a variety of researchers including Jack (1991), Gamson (1992), Zerubavel (2006) as well as the broad scholarship on the spiral of silence that did not refer to or introduce a definition until Hayes et al. (2005a) develops one and subsumes it under the more general category of opinion expression inhibition. Hayes et al. (2005a) defined self-censorship as the withholding of one's true opinion from an audience perceived to disagree with that opinion. Their definition is predicated on three assumptions:

1. It focuses on perceptions (real or imagined) of the audience and the congruence between the beliefs of that audience (real or imagined) and the person's own beliefs;
2. To be considered self-censorship, the person must have had the opportunity to express his or her opinion but has made the conscious choice not to do so; and
3. The definition does not consider motivations for the self-censorship.

However, these limitations may be too narrowing. The following definitions were dictionary derived and each provides a slightly different set of criteria: Cambridge Dictionaries Online defines self-censorship as “control of what you say or do in order to avoid annoying or offending others, but without being told officially that such control is necessary” and “the act of censoring or classifying one's own work (blog, book(s), film(s)), or other means of expression, out of fear or deference to the sensibilities of others without overt pressure from any specific party or institution of authority.” Each of these focus on the social control aspect of self-censoring, using phrases such as “control what you say and do” or “classifying one's work” in order to avoid “annoying or offending others” or “fear or deference to the sensibilities of others.”

MacMillan Dictionary defines it as “a decision not to say or write something because it might cause problems or offend someone” which also focuses on a choice to not communicate, either in writing or speech “because it might...offend someone” or the more nebulous “cause problems.” Every one of these definitions suggests that self-censorship is a check on communicating expression, largely spoken or written, but also artistic works, in order to avoid offending others or causing problems. While the social control focus of each corresponds to what I believe self-censorship encompasses and each includes a concern element on the part of the potential communicator and a desire on their part to avoid offending another party, I suggest that self-censorship encompasses far more nuance to be limited by such definitions.

Neither the Hayes et al. (2005a) definition nor the dictionary definitions sufficiently capture the act or decision of self-censorship nor do they provide a comprehensive and inclusive definitional framework. Each of the dictionary definitions does include some useful phrasing such as conceiving of self-censorship as “an act”, “control” or “exercising of control”, or “a decision. No definition considers self-censorship as a behavior or action. They instead position it as a choice or decision, which is a pre-behavioral step. Such a definition must be inclusive of a number of situations that present barriers to expression. For example, the definition by Hayes et al. (2005a) includes the assumption that people have clear opportunities to express their opinion. Having an opportunity is problematic because people may choose to avoid situations where they may be forced to speak their opinion. I suggest that the avoidance of placing oneself in this “opportunity setting or situation’ could be construed as a form of self-censorship. Hayes et al. (2005a) excludes situational factors from their definition of self-

self-censorship. However, much of the existing spiral of silence literature concludes that situational factors are critical to the phenomenon (e.g. Neuwirth et al., 2007; p. 452). Unless situational factors are considered, then self-censorship is simply defined as a trait-based individual difference phenomenon unaffected by whether the speaker is in the presence of his boss, attends a pro-life rally, or observes malfeasance at work. I also argue that self-censorship can also be a state of mind beyond individual acts where previous experiences and observations lead to an individual developing a general reticence to express their concerns and beliefs. This characteristic likely involves a varying mix of trait, issue, and situational factors. Thus, the working definition that I have developed is as follows:

Self-Censorship is the personal choice or decision to withhold, modify, or misrepresent one's genuine unmitigated opinions, knowledge, preferences, beliefs, values, attitudes, or identity from any audience, including an individual, in an actual or potential, anticipated or unanticipated, communicative setting. This decision may be motivated by perceived danger or threat of sanction to themselves or to others that might result from speaking out. Self-censorship also includes the avoidance of settings or situations where one may be encouraged or pressured to express or reveal one's opinion, belief, value, attitude, perspective, or identity.

This definition is inclusive of opinions, beliefs, values, attitudes, preferences, knowledge and personal identity of which each are different but could lead to a sanction if revealed. It considers a number of potential circumstances where one could either choose to reveal their opinion or choose not to, including not placing oneself in a situation where one's opinion could be forced or coerced or where the failure to respond would be an unlikely option.² It also is inclusive of both situational and individual difference factors³ that could

² This includes the choice of non-participation. See Hayes et al. (2006) for an analysis and discussion of non-participation in political activities as a form of self-censorship.

each interplay to facilitate a decision to self-censor. It is based on a perception or innate sense that a penalty, cost, or consequence will ensue if speech is engaged. Finally, it includes acts of expression that modify, mask, or misrepresent a true opinion such as not revealing the depth or extent of belief, balancing one's opinion with a converse position, and using some form of opinion expression avoidance strategy.

Self-censorship has historically been researched within the discipline of mass communication primarily using quantitative methods (the lone exception is Weerakkody, 2002) and chiefly through a predominant theory of public opinion called the spiral of silence (Noelle-Neumann, 1974, 1993). The spiral of silence theory describes a process of individual self-censorship that stems from the perception that one's opinion regarding an issue is in the minority and that if one were to voice that opinion, the sanction of social isolation would result. This phenomenon leads to individuals' silence, the results of which is often an increasing public irrelevance or marginalization of the issue. Alternatively, if the individual speaks out, the sanction is often imposed. Through subsequent spiral of silence research, investigators have sought to enhance the original theory by testing assumptions about specific aspects of the theory but generally restricted themselves to specific quantitative methods.

Sanctions Definition

Sanctions can have positive or a negative meaning. Although positive sanctions (Gibbs, 1966; Lockwood, 1964; Parsons, 1951; Radcliffe-Brown, 1934 and others) could also have a compelling influence on behavior and thus one could conceivably self-sensor

³ The communication apprehension literature including Neuwirth et al. (2007) categorize types of communication apprehension as trait, state, and issue where trait CA refers to communication apprehension as an individual difference measure, state or situational CA as communication apprehension influenced by the setting, and issue CA as communication apprehension influenced by the issue central to the communication opportunity.

to protect or maintain positive reinforcement, the idea of positive sanctions will not be a primary concern of this research and thus the negative definition of sanction as punishment shall be adopted. This is in line with Noelle-Neumann's definition of public opinion as a means or mechanism of social control. Despite the central role of sanctions in social control, Gibbs (1966) observes that the concept remains vague whereby many researchers consider sanction a "primitive" term suggesting that its definition or meaning is generally understood. This prompted Gibbs to construct an elaborate definitional framework for sanctions that includes 32 specific types of sanctions distributed between positive and negative sanctions (p. 153). Gibbs formed three conclusions based on a survey of definitions of the term sanction. First, sanctions are reactions to behavior but are not inclusive of all social phenomena that induce conformity to norms. Second, sanctions possess a number of attributes that distinguish them from other types of reaction to behavior. Finally, no one attribute should be typified as distinguishing a sanction to the exclusion of others (p. 152). Gibbs taxonomy ultimately describes a sanction as a reaction to deviant behavior. The reactor to deviance perceives their reaction as either a punishment (negative) or a reward (positive). These perceptions are further subdivided into intent such that intent is either to prevent norm violations or for some other reason. Intent is then again subdivided into whether the object of reaction (the alter) perceives the reaction as punishment or not. The final distinctions in the taxonomic system refer to whether the reaction to the norm violation is socially approved or not and whether the reactor themselves are socially approved or not (see Table 1-1 below). This system results in 32 specific sanction types of which 20 are common enough to elicit a taxonomic name.

Table 1-1: Gibbs Taxonomy of Sanctions as Reactions to Deviant Behavior

| | | Reactor Perceives the Reaction as an Infliction of Punishment | | | | Reactor Perceives the Reaction as a Granting of a Reward | | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Intent of the Reaction is to Prevent Norm Violation | | Intent of the Reaction is Other Than Preventing Norm Violations | | Intent of the Reaction is to Encourage Conformity or Overconformity | | Intent of the Reaction is Other Than Encouraging Conformity or Overconformity | |
| | | Object of Reaction Perceives Reaction as Punishment | Object of Reaction Does Not Perceive Reaction as Punishment | Object of Reaction Perceives Reaction as Punishment | Object of Reaction Does Not Perceive Reaction as Punishment | Object of Reaction Perceives Reaction as a Reward | Object of Reaction Does Not Perceive Reaction as a Reward | Object of Reaction Perceives Reaction as a Reward | Object of Reaction Does Not Perceive Reaction as a Reward |
| Reaction is Socially Approved | Reactor is Socially Approved | Type A1 Negative, Instrumental | Type B1 Possible Empirical Null Class | Type C1 Negative Redistributive | Type D1 Possible Empirical Null Class | Type E1 Positive Instrumental | Type F1 Possible Empirical Null Class | Type G1 Positive Affective | Type H1 Possible Empirical Null Class |
| | Reactor is Not Socially Approved | Type A2 Negative Analogous | Type B2 Possible Empirical Null Class | Type C2 Negative Personalized | Type D2 Possible Empirical Null Class | Type E2 Positive Analogous | Type F2 Possible Empirical Null Class | Type G2 Positive Personalized | Type H2 Possible Empirical Null Class |
| Reaction is Not Socially Approved | Reactor is Socially Approved | Type A3 Negative Inordinate | Type B3 Possible Empirical Null Class | Type C3 Negative Persecutory | Type D3 Possible Empirical Null Class | Type E3 Positive Inordinate | Type F3 Possible Empirical Null Class | Type G3 Positive Effusive | Type H3 Possible Empirical Null Class |
| | Reactor is Not Socially Approved | Type A4 Negative Zealous | Type B4 Negative Surreptitious | Type C4 Negative Deviant | Type D4 Negative Esoteric | Type E4 Positive Zealous | Type F4 Positive Surreptitious | Type G4 Positive Deviant | Type H4 Positive Esoteric |

More recently, *A Dictionary of Sociology* defined sanction more generally but in line with Gibbs system as “Any means by which conformity to socially approved standards is enforced. Sanctions can be positive (rewarding behaviour that conforms to wider expectations) or negative (punishing the various forms of deviance); and formal (as in legal restraints) or informal (such as verbal abuse).”

Based on Gibbs taxonomic system, my working definition of a sanction for this research is exclusively limited to the negative side of the equation. It is a form or technique of social control that metes out a penalty or punishment to insure compliance or conformity with the standards, laws, rules, and norms of behavior of a group or society or to inflict punishment or some other retributory act linked to such violations. A

sanction *does not have to be* a conscious or overt act by one entity to another nor does it have to be socially approved. For example, a social sanction might be the gradual distancing by colleagues from a person who has said something deemed inappropriate. A sanction manipulates behavior in two ways: 1) by punishing a transgressor, it encourages that individual to act differently the next time, and 2) the punishment serves as an example to other potential transgressors that the sanction will indeed be employed for a violation.

The interplay between self-censorship and sanctions should be an obvious one to those whose scholarship or media consumption extends beyond the United States. Examples of people, activists and everyday citizens alike, who have been compelled to self-censor are numerous particularly given the sanctions often threatened in these circumstances:

1. Argentinean Guerra Sucia (Dirty War) – This period of military rule in Argentina (1976-1983) required many people, particularly intellectuals with their ideas perceived to be dangerous, to self-censor or risk disappearance (Buttaro, 2009).
2. Mexican Drug War – Mexican journalists regularly self-censor their work and often run stories penned by the drug cartels—largely to avoid being murdered (Corcoran, 2010).
3. Nigerian Press Attacks – The Committee to Protect Journalists reports that 2009 was a dangerous year for journalists in Nigeria with reporters murdered and threatened and photographers beaten. The result has been a widespread self-censorship (CPJ, 2009).
4. Shell Oil Nigeria – In Nigeria, Shell Oil was implicated in the arming and financing of the former military dictatorship that executed environmental activist Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight of his colleagues in response to their activism (Helvarg, 2004; p. 312)

Clearly, free expression is an important ingredient to a democracy, but it can and often is blocked by censorship and self-censorship. As the spiral of silence theory claims,

self-censorship can lead to the increasing irrelevance of the social, political, and other issues that it applies to. I suggest that at times, the issue of environmental degradation in general is just such an issue and that at all times certain specific facets of environmental degradation such as the root causes are as such.

According to Stern (1993), the causes of environmental degradation fall into two categories: social origins and driving forces. The driving forces of environmental degradation include consumption, population growth, and waste generation. They are easily grasped and empirically researchable. However, the social origins of environmental damage are complex and difficult to research. Beck (1995) suggests that probing social norms, power structures, and bureaucracies is an effort that can be met with individual and cultural resistance and is often viewed negatively by supporters of the dominant culture. Searching for participants willing to openly discuss barriers to free expression—whether they are social, cultural, or political—is challenging.

Statement of Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this dissertation is to conduct an exploratory study of the concept of self-censorship by mining the actual lived experiences of individuals who self-identify as having self-censored themselves. The expectation is that through the narratives of actual self-censors that the concept of self-censorship can be more clearly and comprehensively established and its complexity defined further. I also expected that presumptions regarding additional sanctions as relevant variables to consider in self-censorship research would be confirmed. The confirmation of these presumptions would then be used for further targeted inquiry into self-censorship and also to facilitate practical applications of the knowledge. These practical applications can include

revelation and illumination of the concept of self-censorship and its use, its antecedents, and its effects such as facilitating a spiral of silence related to a vital issue such as environmental destruction. Therefore, the research questions underpinning this study are:

RQ₁: How do people understand their decision to self-censor their strongly held beliefs, values, and opinions?

RQ₂: What types of sanctions are they concerned about?

RQ₃: What strategies do people use to overcome self-censorship and speak out?

I presumed that answering these questions would generate a set of variables closely connected to existing research into self-censorship and the spiral of silence theory.

Assumptions

My presumptions entering this research project were threefold. First, I presumed that the complexity of the concept of self-censorship was greater than what the literature on self-censorship has discovered to-date. Second, I presumed that the primary assumption central to the spiral of silence theory, fear of isolation (FOI) was too limiting and that other fears and concerns (e.g. fear of economic sanction) would also be relevant in any self-censorship construct. The third presumption was that since quantitative empirical testing and quasi-experimental situations were the methods exclusively employed by researchers into the spiral of silence and self-censorship (one exception was Weerakkody, 2002), that the use of a qualitative method as an exploratory project might be able to broaden and enrich the current theoretical landscape.

I base the first two presumptions on the disparity between the variables tested by researchers in the discipline of mass communication and other fields that have undertaken study of the concept, primarily using the spiral of silence theoretical framework, and

personal observations, social interaction, and non-scholarly literature searches. I also base them on explicit references to other sanctions listed by researchers such as Hayes (2007) who refers to fear of professional sanction (p. 299) and Hayes et al. (2010) who note the potential negative consequences of speaking an opinion such as professional demotion and termination and physical violence (p. 3). If the spiral of silence theory and self-censorship more generally is constructed using public opinion as a form of social control (Noelle-Neumann, 1993), then every sanction used for social control purposes (LaPiere, 1954) should be relevant, not just social sanctions like the threat of isolation. The third presumption also has support from references in the literature such as Hayes (2007) who suggests that there is likely little more to be discovered using “standard approaches” or those methods that have been employed so far.

Significance and Rationale

The fact that freedom of speech is so central to our notions of what a properly functioning democracy is speaks to the dangers of extensive censorship and self-censorship. While the consequences could be deep and broad across many policy domains, my experience as a planner has oriented me primarily to the environmental consequences. And although the data I use in later chapters does speak to much more than environmental contexts, the work cannot escape my preponderance of concern for environmental harm.

Human damage to the natural environment is perhaps the most significant issue of our time and the urgency to face and address this issue is clear. Many factors contribute to the issue not receiving enough attention. It is not being perceived as serious enough or not an actual problem, root causes not being faced directly, and certainly not enough is

being done to slow or reverse the damage so that a sustainable future is possible for human and other natural communities. Thus, there is no more significant subject than environmental destruction and any factor that serves as a barrier to solving this problem should be seen as a key problem to be addressed.

While we live in a society that purportedly values free expression, one of the key factors serving as a barrier to addressing environmental damage is the lack of effective communication of pro-environmental attitudes and values. If environmental values are so commonplace as a number of surveys indicate (Gallop, 1992; Gallop, 2007; Kempton, Boster, & Hartley, 1996; Louis Harris, 1993; Pew Research Center, 1998; Roper, 1997; Yankelovich, Clancy, and Shulman, 1992 and others) then the expression of those values should be predominant, but they are not. I propose that one reason they are not is that such attitudes and values, commonplace though they may be, are in conflict with the deeper cultural values and norms that our society is based on. These values and norms that promote economic growth and expansion are arguably the root cause of this destruction of the environment. Yet since they are culturally embedded, identifying them as the primary force that causes environmental damage is a counter-normative and risky act that could result in sanctions for holding such attitudes and even more so for expressing such views in a public setting. Because of this, I suggest that people self-censor their counter-normative opinions, perceiving them to be in the minority, since they do not hear others expressing similar views. They do so because they do not wish to be sanctioned by any number of means that society metes out to social deviants.

As a result of the collective result of individual self-censorship decisions regarding an issue as important as the cause of environmental decline, the issue becomes

ever more irrelevant as part of the public domain because nobody hears these views expressed. Therefore, the cultural acts that result in environmental destruction continue and escalate. In a democratic society that theoretically operates on the free exchange of ideas and respect for different values, such a barrier to the type of discourses that can address and seek solutions to a range of problems such as energy scarcity, economic and social justice, and the environment is a critical flaw.

If techniques such as self-censorship, censorship, and other mechanisms were benevolently but mistakenly employed to protect an innocent culture from external threats in the form of alien ideas and values, then the solution might only require education and enlightenment. But if these mechanisms are rooted in protecting vested interests, corruption, and the exercise of power, then the solution becomes much more challenging—I suggest that they are. Because of this, I am employing a critical social theory frame for this research that seeks to connect the act of self-censorship to a framework of mechanisms employed by the culture to protect its interests and thwart change. In addition to the illumination of this power structure, I shall offer recommendations for theory and practice that seek to overcome barriers to free speech such as self-censorship and to develop tools for more effective and fair discourse regarding issues of common concern.

By employing new methods to seek to broaden and enrich the understanding of self-censorship, the phenomenon can be more comprehensively understood. With greater clarity, ways can be found to counter self-censorship and remove a barrier to social change.

Dissertation Outline

The remainder of the dissertation consists of eight chapters. Chapter 2 is the literature review that will discuss literature in each of the contributing disciplines, most notably mass communication. The methods used in this dissertation are described in Chapter 3 including how the informants were found. Chapter 4 is the findings chapter which includes a brief biographical sketch of the informants, a summary of the data from the questionnaires used to locate informants, and the narrative data itself. Chapter 5 is a findings discussion chapter where the key findings from Chapter 4 are discussed along with their implications for this line of inquiry. Finally, Chapter 6 provides a conclusion summarizing the relevance of this research and describing what comes next.

CHAPTER 2 - LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The original influence on this research is a theory conceptualized by Noelle-Neumann (1974, 1993) called the spiral of silence theory. Central to the theory are three elements that connect to my research questions. First, a key aspect of the theory is that people self-censor themselves. Second, people self-censor themselves out of a fear of social isolation. Third, the cumulative effect of people self-censoring themselves on the same issue is the increasing marginalization of the issue.

The spiral of silence theory, as a theory of public opinion, is grounded in the discipline of mass communication and the first section of this chapter describes and critiques the spiral of silence theory and other mass communication concepts such as communication apprehension that are relevant to the spiral of silence and this research. A multi-disciplinary theory, the spiral of silence draws from psychology and social psychology including the seminal conformity experiments by Asch (1956) and others, which are discussed in the second section. The second section also discusses the connection of spiral of silence and self-censorship research to sociology. This includes a summary of the concept of culture and norms and their influence on conformity and social control since Noelle-Neumann formulated public opinion as a social control mechanism as originally conceived by Bentham (1838, 1843). It also includes a summary of LaPiere's (1954) conceptualization of three sanction types, psychological, economic, and physical, as social control tools. It wraps up with a discussion of deviance as a form of behavior that strays from cultural norms and requires the application of social control mechanisms, sanctions, in order to correct.

Section three provides a brief summary of critical theory and Habermas' theory of communicative action (1984a), a broad theory of social evolution, and its application to this research. The fourth section describes the management and public policy disciplinary thread that has studied self-censorship processes including administrative rationalism, whistleblower literature, and organizational science. The final section summarizes contributions from a text analysis of three books that describe key facilitators of self-censorship: the role of private corporations, the role of government and the media, and the role of other social movements. What ties all of these literatures together in the linkage between culture, norms, and social control practices, through the act of self-censorship, to the inability to address cultural pathologies linked to the culture itself.

Mass Communication

The Spiral of Silence Theory

The spiral of silence (SoS) is a mass communication theory developed by Noelle-Neumann (1974, 1993) regarding public opinion, self-censorship decision making, and the cumulative effects of these decisions in the public sphere. It has been variously defined as an “integrated model of opinion formation and change (Glynn & McLeod, 1985; Salmon & Kline, 1984), a theory of public opinion (Neuwirth, 2000; and a comprehensive theory of social control (Shanahan, Glynn, & Hayes, 2004) among other descriptions.

The theory incorporates psychological, social-psychological, and sociological variables into a long chain of causal relations (Noelle-Neumann, 1993) moving from micro-processes with the social-psychological variable of “fear of isolation” and the tendency to speak out or remain silent to macro-processes with integration into society

(Donsbach & Stevenson, 1986). This relationship suggests that an individual's fear of isolation is a significant influence in public opinion dynamics since self-censoring one's opinion fails to contribute to the public sphere (Glynn & Park, 1997).

As Noelle-Neumann (1993; p. 200) proposes, there are six types of information that are required to test the spiral of silence theory:

1. The distribution of public opinion on a given issue
2. An assessment of the climate of opinion
3. The expectations on how the will issue trend
4. A willingness to speak out or tendency to remain silent
5. Whether there is a strong emotional or moral component to the issue
6. What the media's position is on the issue

In addition, Noelle-Neumann notes five assumptions on which testing the theory is based:

1. Society threatens deviant individuals with isolation
2. Individuals experience fear of isolation continuously
3. Because of the fear of isolation, individuals are constantly trying to assess the climate of opinion
4. Individuals base their public behavior on their opinion climate assessment, especially the expression or concealment of opinions
5. All four prior assumptions are connected which explains the formation, maintenance, and alteration of public opinion.

In short, the theory suggests that people remain silent if they perceive that their sensitive opinion is in the minority or trending down in the public sphere in order to avoid being socially isolated.

Public opinion, as operationalized by the SoS theory, is modeled as a form of social control and is defined by Noelle-Neumann (1993) as “opinions that can be expressed without risking sanctions or social isolation,” or “opinions that have to be expressed in order to avoid isolation.” This differs from the rational model of public opinion, which stems from Habermas’s (1962, 1989) political *raisonnement* in the public sphere (p. 13). The rational model of public opinion assumes a rational, enlightened and knowledgeable public willing and able to participate in the public process (Childs, 1965; Wilson, 1933). Scheufele & Moy (2000) consider the rational model a necessary condition for generating social change (p. 5). The model of public opinion as social control considers the public to be all members of society (Scheufele & Moy, 2000). It is based upon the need for social systems to derive consensus (Csikszentmihalyi, 1991) and achieves this consensus through the threat of social isolation (Noelle-Neumann, 1995). Noelle-Neumann’s research examined election and exit poll effects in West Germany that were later supplemented with extensive field survey research leading to an initial development of the theory.

The terminology that Noelle-Neumann uses to describe the act of avoiding expressing one’s opinion includes choosing to “be silent” or “remain silent”; “deciding to not speak,” “fall silent,” “keep quiet,” “became mute,” “an inclination toward silence,” “refrain from publicly stating their position” with “remain silent” or “fall silent” being the most frequently used terms (1974, 1993). Later scholars used terms such as “reticent” (Katz & Baldassare, 1992), “become silent” (Shamir, 1997), “self-silencing” (Allen, 1991), “avoid expressing their opinion” (Hayes, 2007), “eschew revealing their opinions” and “opinion suppression,” (Neuwirth, Frederick, & Mayo, 2007); “remain silent” (Glynn

& McLeod, 1984; Glynn & Park, 1997; Salmon & Neuwirth, 1990; Taylor, 1982 and others), and many other terms. Later scholars would employ the terms “self-censorship” (Loury, 1994; Hayes, Scheufele, & Huges, 2006; “Hayes, Glynn, Shanahan, & Uldall, 2003; Hayes, Glynn, & Shanahan, 2005a and others)” and “opinion expression avoidance”; (Hayes, Glynn, Shanahan, & Uldall, 2003; Hayes, Glynn, & Shanahan, 2005a and others). While I will return to discuss the ramifications of the fine distinctions of meaning among these terms in the conclusion chapter, for the sake of simplicity here, I will simply employ the verb “self-censor” to describe the action of interest here.

Noelle-Newman further explains that merely judging one’s opinion as lying outside the majority is not enough to drive self-censorship. People also are sensitive to how public opinion is trending, either in favor or away from one’s own opinion. They judge public opinion through use of the media and from observation of their environment (Noelle-Neumann, 1993; p. 155). They also perceive a threat of social isolation for expressing a deviant opinion. In fact, Noelle-Neumann (1974) claims that a “spiral of silence” originates from an individual’s deep fear of social isolation. Thus, two conditions precede self-censorship in this model: 1) perception of opinion as a minority opinion and/or trending away from one’s own opinion and 2) perceived threat of social-isolation.

The spiral refers to a dynamic where perceived minority opinions and ideas will not widely circulate in the public domain, giving the impression that such ideas have less support than they actually do. Such an impression could influence others, who may wish to express the same or similar idea, to hesitate or self-censor for the same reason. These

individual self-censorship decisions collectively facilitate the spiraling down of the frequency and legitimacy of the idea within the public domain to irrelevancy (Noelle-Neumann, 1993).

The SoS theory has inspired a significant amount of research (Hayes, Glynn, & Shanahan, 2005a) and is widely considered one of the most influential theories in the field of mass communication (Hayes et al., 2005a) and that it “will likely continue to be one of the more influential and research inspiring theories of self-censorship in the field of public opinion (Hayes et al., 2005a). Results of accumulated research indicate that SoS is an authentic phenomenon (Glynn, Hayes, & Shanahan, 1997). However, the research has also produced contradictory results and inconsistent findings, suggesting that there remain conceptual problems, problems in the measurement of key variables, and inconsistent focus on testing important macroscopic variables (Scheufele & Moy, 2000). Scheufele & Moy conducted a conceptual review of SoS research over the prior 25 years and formed three primary conclusions:

1. Studies drew upon differing conceptualizations;
2. Studies employed inconsistent operationalizations; and
3. Research largely ignored important macroscopic variables.

In regard to issues of conceptualization, Scheufele & Moy note that analysis of the SoS as a macro theory has generated three primary criticisms, including one that concerns this research, which is whether “fear of isolation” (FOI) is an adequate explanation for one’s “willingness to speak out” (Glynn & McLeod, 1985). They note that other researchers have suggested factors other than FOI that potentially influence one’s “willingness to speak out” (Lasorsa, 1991; Salmon & Neuwirth, 1990). These objections all point to an

insufficient development of the variables that have been identified as relevant to SoS phenomena.

SoS Variables

The SoS theory and subsequent SoS research conceptualize ‘willingness to express an opinion’ as the dependent variable (Scheufele, Shanahan, & Lee, 2001) and an outcome measure (Hayes, Glynn, Shanahan, 2005a). When disaggregated between hypothetical and realistic conditions, “willingness to express an opinion,” responds to and fits much better to the realistic measure (Scheufele et al., 2001). “Willingness...” has been operationalized in numerous ways but primarily as a dichotomous ‘willing-unwilling’ construct that does not often reflect the reality of actual social situations. To overcome this limitation, Hayes (2005) defined a set of opinion expression avoidance strategies (e.g. change the subject, walk away, say nothing, express feigned indifference, etc.) that relate to Bullard and Burgoon’s (1996) interpersonal deception theory. Neuwirth, Frederick, & Mayo (2007) also tested differing verbal strategies such as lying and using neutral comments. According to the findings of their study, when individuals have an opportunity to express their opinion, they employ a decision-making process similar to a cost/benefit analysis. This process considers likely outcomes that are based on their past history of social interactions, fear generated by the controversial nature of the topic, and situational factors such as what setting they are in. They claim that consideration of situational factors is “particularly important in the spiral of silence framework because of the many ways researchers have operationalized opinion expression.” Through this research, I hope to explore additional fear-based variables that might considerably broaden the spiral of silence theory.

Independent variables that were part of the original theory include the ‘current climate of opinion’, the ‘perception of future opinion climate’, the ‘moral salience’ or emotional loading of the issue, and the ‘media tenor’ or position on the issue (Noelle-Neumann, 1993). Researchers have also tested additional independent variables such as demographic criteria including age, gender, and income (Lasorsa, 1991; Noelle-Neumann, 1974, 1993; Salmon & Neuwirth, 1990); a person’s level of education or knowledge about the topic (Salmon & Neuwirth, 1990; Shamir, 1997); Interest in politics (e.g. Baldassare & Katz, 1996; Lasorsa, 1991; Willnat, Lee, & Detenber, 2002); The importance of the topic to the person (Oshagan, 1996; Willnat et al, 2002; confidence in the correctness of one’s opinion (Lasorsa, 1991); the extremity of one’s opinion (Oshagan, 1996), communication apprehension (Neuwirth, Frederick, & Mayo, 2007, Willnat et al., 2002 and others); shyness (Hayes, et al, 2005a); and the extent to which one’s opinion is based on moral principle (Hornsey, Majkut, Terry, & McKimmie, 2003). One assumption of the SoS theory, and considered an independent variable, is that people have a quasi-statistical sense to assess the opinion climate for appropriate topics of discussion (Scheufele & Moy, 2000) The key independent variable from the original theory is the undefined (Neuwirth, Frederick, & Mayo, 2007) and untested (Shoemaker, Breen, & Stamper, 2000) assumption that people generally fear social isolation based on a perceived threat of isolation which society uses to keep people in line with societal consensus (Schufele & Moy, 2000). Noelle-Neumann (1974) claims that a “spiral of silence” originates from an individual’s deep fear of social isolation.

Another line of criticism of the theory is that it is not the opinions of a large and nebulous public that matter but rather an individual’s peer or reference groups that are

more likely to matter (Salmon & Kline, 1984; Kennamer, 1990 and others). Hayes (2005) asserts that interpersonal discussion, often in the context of peer groups, plays a significant role in how we sense public opinion. He notes that it is the people in our immediate social environment that are likely to be in a position to sanction us rather than a faceless public (p. 787).

Fear of Isolation

Neuwirth, Frederick, & Mayo (2007) believe that fear of isolation (FOI) is Noelle-Neumann's primary explanatory independent variable⁴ for why rates of opinion expression differ. Glynn & McLeod (1985) recommend treating fear of isolation as an individual difference variable rather than a social constant. Shoemaker, Breen, & Stamper (2000) developed an individual level measure for social anxiety based on Watson & Friend's (1969) Fear of Negative Evaluation (FNE) scale from which they operationalized "fear of isolation." Recently, Hayes et al. (2003, 2005a, 2005b, 2010) developed a reliable willingness to self-censor (WSC) scale that includes many of the same assumptions about personality advanced by Watson & Friend. Hayes (2005) believes that the WSC scale may provide a broad measure of concern for (i.e. fear of) sanctions in general on the part of potential communicators.

The concept of opinion threshold was developed by Krassa (1988) based on threshold models of collective behavior (Granovetter, 1978). The opinion threshold is that point at which a person will or will not express an opinion. Such a threshold is determined by opinion intensity modified by fear of isolation and could be enhanced by the inclusion of other 'fear-based' variables.

⁴ Noelle-Neumann does *not* explicitly state that it is.

Glynn & Park (1997) note that Noelle-Neumann used the terms ‘fear of isolation’ and ‘threat of isolation’ interchangeably even though they argue that the former term is an individual difference variable and the latter a situational variable. This distinction between two sets of factors that influence self-censorship, the social context or situational factors (e.g. setting, situation, individuals and their relationships, and the climate of opinion) and personality or individual difference factors (e.g. dispositional shyness, argumentativeness, intensity of opinion, level of political interest, perception of opinion climate, and knowledge of subject) is arguably an important one that is picked up by subsequent researchers (Hayes, Glynn, & Shanahan, 2005a; Neuwirth, Frederick, & Mayo, 2007). Neuwirth et al. (2007) assert that fear of isolation, as Noelle-Neumann’s primary explanatory construct explaining differential rates of opinion expression, is a psychological variable that represents a specific negative emotional *state* rather than a fixed individual difference or character *trait* related to the prospect of speaking out on a specific topic. This temporary psychological state then leads to certain communication modifying or avoidance decisions or behaviors such as self-censorship or other opinion expression avoidance strategies. Further, they deem it important to know whether a particular self-censorship decision was motivated by a history of negative interactions, had stemmed from the perception of majority opinion, or was based on situational factors (p. 452). Neuwirth et al. also suggest that spiral of silence research should reconnect to current trends in communication research where concepts such as Communication Apprehension (McCroskey, 1977) make distinctions between situational and personality factors that influence expression (Neuwirth et al., 2007). They note the importance of taking situational factors into account which would appear divergent from Hayes (2005)

conceptualization of willingness to self-censor as an individual difference variable (2005a, p. 319), a stable attribute of a person that manifests across situations (2005b, p. 9), rather than a pre-behavioral condition that is influenced by the situation.

I assert that a social fear such as the ‘fear of isolation’ often bears some relationship to the actual threat that inspires the fear. As such, there may be a connection or crossover point between individual differences and situational variables in the SoS theory and it is logical to infer that both types of variables may be relevant to a self-censorship behavior model. This connection could relate to what Hayes, Glynn, & Shanahan (2005a) refer to as *motivations for self-censorship* which include avoidance of argument, concerns over offending others, and potential retribution such as losing one’s job, risk of physical harm, or concern over the appearance of being deviant. They acknowledge that self-censorship motivations can stem from different psychological processes, which are not the same as character traits, but could be influenced by both traits and states.

Noelle-Neumann Clarification

Noelle-Neumann and Petersen (2004) authored a clarification paper designed to correct the misunderstandings that they suggest are derived from Noelle-Neumann’s original 1974 paper which was significantly abridged by the publication it appeared in. Noelle-Neumann and Petersen distinguish thirteen “salient points” that delimit the application of the theory, which are described below.

1. People experience fear of isolation (FOI)
2. Due to FOI, people constantly monitor the behavior of others in their surroundings

3. People also issue their own threats of isolation
4. Because most people have FOI, they tend to refrain from publicly stating their position when they perceive that this would attract enraged objections, laughter, scorn, or similar threats of isolation.
5. Conversely, those who sense their opinion meets with approval tend to voice their opinions fearlessly.
6. Speaking out loudly and gladly enhances the threat of isolation directed at the supporters of the opposing position.
7. The process does not occur at all times and in all situations, but only in connection with issues that have a strong moral component.
8. Only controversial issues can trigger a spiral of silence (“Hence, a spiral of silence cannot arise in connection with the question whether people are in favor of protecting the environment. Everyone is for that.”)
9. The actual strength of the different camps of opinion does not necessarily determine which view will predominate in public.
10. The mass media can significantly influence the spiral of silence process.
11. As a rule, people are not consciously aware of either the fear or the threat of isolation.
12. Public opinion is limited by time and place. As a rule, a spiral of silence only holds sway over a society for a limited period of time...Generally, however, the process of public opinion and thus the spiral of silence tend to be limited to national borders or the borders of a particular cultural group.
13. Public opinion serves as an instrument of social control and indirectly ensures social cohesion.

Noelle-Neumann and Petersen admit that because the theory is dependent on a number of conditions “... [it] is not designed to be a universal theory that can explain every social situation.” (p. 350). They note that it is merely a sub-element of a broader theory of “public opinion” rather than a theory of self-censorship. It includes self-censorship as an operational facet of the theory, but as the authors note, it is not intended

to be a theory of self-censorship. Citing the meta-analysis conducted by Glynn, Hayes, & Shanahan (1997), Noelle-Neumann and Petersen (2004) point to the fact that this study considered research that posed hypothetical queries to respondents. They explain that hypothetical scenarios do not offer an appropriate test of the spiral of silence and that interview situations where a genuine perceptible pressure from the climate of opinion is the appropriate setting to test the theory successfully. Such a test must involve a suitable social situation that includes a strong moral dimension and that is in the public spotlight. Pressure from the climate of opinion must be so intense that the threat of isolation is clearly perceived as real. Finally, opinion majority respondents must be compared to opinion minority respondents (p. 351).

Current Status and Limitations of Research

The most recent scholarship into the spiral of silence theory and self-censorship derives from the research conducted by Hayes, Glynn, & Shanahan (2005a, b) in regard to the willingness to self-censor scale, which has been defined as a individual difference variable that correlates with other individual difference variables such as shyness. Alternatively, Neuwirth, Frederick, & Mayo, 2007) do find consistency between their finding that trait-based communication apprehension and opinion expression and Hayes et al. (2005a) use of trait-based approaches. But they also note the usefulness to include situational and issue factors in the analysis of the spiral of silence. Neuwirth et al. (2007) also note that, while the SoS theory predicts not speaking out, past research has regularly employed the measurement, speaking out, which they note is not a direct converse of not speaking out. This is because not speaking out is multidimensional in the sense that people can engage in a variety of deception strategies such as lying or giving someone

else's opinion as noted by Hayes (2005). Finally, Hayes, Matthes, Hively, & Eveland, Jr., (2008) tested whether fear of social isolation serves as a motivator for people to seek out information about the opinion climate. Noelle-Neumann (1993) makes clear that people spend a good portion of their valuable attention in determining where their own opinion resides in comparison to the opinions of others. In this study, they conceptualize fear of isolation as an individual difference variable. They note that there are numerous fear of isolation measures reported in spiral of silence literature, but that they were each constructed ad hoc for the particular study and often only applicable to spiral of silence processes. This results, they note, in inconsistencies in measurement and in findings (p. 7). They develop a multidimensional measure of fear of isolation that correlates with people's attendance to the climate of opinion. They conclude that FOI is best conceptualized antecedent to public opinion perception—that is as an enduring trait. They suggest that it acts as a moderator of perception of self-other opinion. This research embraces findings that FOI is a valid construct and that it does likely influence people's willingness to speak out and scan the public sphere for where their opinion stands and how it is trending. However, while this traitlike characteristic is both intuitively a reasonable assumption and has empirically been found to correlate with opinion expression, I propose that it is only one of several types of fears that motivate self-censorship behavior.

SoS scholarship has primarily been carried out as survey-based quantitative analysis using hypothetical scenario or quasi-experimental research methods. Such methods have strengths and weaknesses. The primary weakness is it misses contextual detail since it does not allow for in-depth understandings and it can only speak to the

variables that were included in the study. The strengths include efficiency and the ability to derive causal relationships between variables but not processes. The quantitative methods employed in this research domain are well suited when an exhaustive set of variables have been devised. Yet I suggest that the variables tested in regard to self-censorship were conceived from the original research (Noelle-Neumann, 1974) and new variables were conceived of presumptively or derived from other quantitative research threads. While such paths may bear fruit, I suggest that the most productive method to conduct an exploratory variable search is the use of qualitative methods, in this case in-depth interviews.

In general, SoS scholarship has relied on a small number of independent variables (e.g. fear of isolation) that are hypothesized to relate to the dependent variable of expression inhibition or “remaining silent,” which may be too restrictive regarding the bases of fear that individuals may experience when considering self-censoring behavior.

While some researchers in mass communication have peripherally hinted at the relevance of other variables that could lead to self-censorship behavior, such variables remain absent from the body of research conducted to date. Generally, they fall loosely into the category of ‘fear of negative perception by others’ or more succinctly, ‘fear-based variables.’ As one example, Hayes discusses several reasons why people silence their opinion expression (emphasis mine), “Although we may disagree with a colleague or boss, we may not feel it appropriate to question his or her judgment out of *fear of professional sanction*.” And, “There are many reasons why a person may choose to avoid an argument, concerns about offending someone or hurting their feelings, potential

retribution such as *losing one's job* or *physical assault*, or concerns about appearing to be deviant” (Hayes, 2005).

Noelle-Neumann (1993) provides a detailed historical analysis of the writings of philosophers, political economists, and others who refer to the power of public opinion and the sanctions for an individual who acts incongruently with public opinion. She also references LaPiere (1954) who generated three specific categories of social sanctions for normative deviance of which one—psychological sanctions—contains the threat and/or fear of isolation central to the SoS theory. So far, SoS research has not attempted to include the other two categories nor sought additional sanction categories (e.g. political or legal sanctions) that could be incorporated in the model. These additional variables are important motivating factors that people use when deciding whether to speak or stay silent. Anecdotal evidence supports the notion that people stay silent to avoid sanctions in a wide realm of situations such as witness silencing, union busting, organizational malfeasance, and “support the troops” politicizing.

A number of researchers (Glynn, Hayes, & Shanahan, 1997; Hayes, Glynn, & Shanahan, 2005b; Noelle-Neumann & Petersen, 2004) have noted the use of hypothetical situations might be a contributing factor to weak corroboration of the theory. Only a few studies have placed people in real communication situations (e.g. McDevitt, Kiouisis, & Wahl-Jorgensen, 2003) and none have taken a qualitative approach and sought actual lived experiences of self-censorship.

Other Related Mass Communication Theory

Communication Apprehension (CA)

Spiral of silence (SoS) research has developed separately from other areas of communication research, particularly communication apprehension or CA (Neuwirth, Frederick, & Mayo, 2007; p. 452). Originally conceptualized by McCroskey (1970), CA was initially defined as "...a broadly based anxiety related to oral communication" (p. 269). As this early definition indicated the initial focus of the concept was on oral communication with the implication that it was a trait of an individual. As CA has been modified over time, this singular focus on oral communication has been modified as writing and signing actions were subsequently added to the research agenda (McCroskey & Beatty, 1998; p. 216). The early restriction of CA to trait-based factors was also widened to include situational factors (p. 217). McCroskey's more contemporary conceptualization of CA (1984) defined the following four types of CA:

1. Traitlike CA – a "relatively enduring, personality-type orientation toward a given mode of communication across a wide variety of contexts." While a genuine trait would be an invariant characteristic like "hair color", a traitlike characteristic like shyness is possible to change although very difficult (p. 16). Most CA research considers this type of CA.
2. Generalized-Context CA – This type of CA includes personal "...orientations toward communication within generalizable contexts." McCroskey uses fear of public speaking as an example of generalized-context CA (p. 16). McCroskey & Richmond (1980) note four (4) varieties of this type of CA based on specific settings. They are public speaking CA, speaking in meetings and classes CA, small group discussion CA, and dyadic interaction CA.
3. Person-Group CA – This refers to CA that is the reaction of a person to communication with another person or a group across time where someone might be more apprehensive speaking to a certain person or group but not with others (p. 17). Person-Group CA is considered a "relatively enduring orientation toward communication with a given person or group of people." McCroskey suggests that

it is not personality-based but is a response to situational factors presented by the other person or group.

4. Situational CA – Refers to the reaction of a person to “...communicating with a given individual or group of individuals at a given time.” And McCroskey views Situational CA as “...the most statelike of the types of CA.” Here, people can experience CA with a person or group of people at one point in time but not necessarily at another time. An example might be speaking to your boss about an assignment versus speaking to him about politics when you know you significantly disagree ideologically. McCroskey states that situational CA is “...viewed as a transitory orientation toward communication with a given person or group of people.” And thus an external situational type of apprehension rather than a personality based one (p. 18).

The three components of the CA types are context, receiver (the person or group who is the focus of the potential communication), and time, where time refers to the literal element of time itself plus variability related to criteria such as topic, mood, health, etc. that time impacts. McCroskey suggests that CA sources are measured on a continuum between trait and state where four points on the continuum represent each type of CA noted above. He notes that most people experience one form or another of CA to a greater or lesser degree (p. 19). McCroskey views high measures of CA as acting as a potential inhibitor to communicative competence and skill while low measures are seen as a facilitator of communicative competence and skill (McCroskey, 1984; p. 37).

Neuwirth, Frederick, & Mayo (2007) provided an additional CA type not observed in the CA literature, CA-Issue corresponding to a specific issue. This allows for CA to apply to individual traits, states or situations an individual may be in, and issues under discussion. Traitlike CA corresponds to the thread of research that suggests that self-censorship is influenced by fear of isolation, which has been largely determined to be an individual difference or traitlike variable. But the consideration by Neuwirth et al. of situational and issue-based CA suggests that additional influences could be contributing

to self-censorship that emanate external to the individual such as physical, economic, or legal threats.

Contributions From Psychology, Social Psychology, and Sociology

Psychology, social psychology, and sociology each offer relevant research threads that contribute to the discussion of self-censorship and sanctions. Since speech is a behavior and self-censorship is a choice or decision not to engage in a behavior about an attitude object, further research into attitudes and behavior, particularly speech or expression as behavior, could be fruitful. The scholarship into attitudes and behavior is a rich one and it would be difficult to easily summarize all relevant research here. However, themes such as culture and norms, social influence and group pressure, social control, deviance, and vested interests will be explored.

Culture and Norms

The concept of culture connects directly to the inspiration, research questions, and ultimate purpose of this project. First, I presume that behaviors, institutions, and power relationships based in culture and foundational norms are key contributors to social and natural systems degradation. Second, culture possesses mechanisms to ensure its spread but also its self-preservation. Cultures protect themselves by preventing legitimate criticisms and threats by dissidents, detractors, and others who disagree with pathological cultural norms and practices. Cultural defense is often difficult to recognize as a negative force since it is in the same way that culture guards its *positive* norms and values. Finally, I note that cultural criticism and culture change is a central purpose of critical social theory. Held (1980) observes that the founders of the Frankfurt School were concerned both with the interpretation and transformation of society's inequities. This will be elaborated on in the

discussion on critical theory below.

Culture is made up of the values, norms, beliefs, behaviors, symbols, and material objects that collectively form a people's way of life (Macionis, 2005). Culture includes mechanisms for its distribution and dissemination ((Hannerz, 1992) and the ability to form worldviews and ideologies (Jasper, 1997) which occurs primarily through the process of socialization (Stern and Dietz, 1994). Culture facilitates self-identity, which is tied to one's worldview (Jasper, 1997). Via immersion in a culture and social mimicry, culture acts as a template to pass along norms and practices. Culture instills constraints in individuals to believe, feel, and behave according to the template (Jasper, 1997; Skinner, 1971). Culture is disseminated as a flow in space and time (Hannerz, 1992) and is constantly in motion (Urban, 2001). Embodying traditions, culture moves forward due to prior existence using language and cultural learning.

A set of norms, beliefs, values, and habits that construct the worldview most commonly held within a culture and transmitted intergenerationally by various social institutions is called a dominant social paradigm (Pirages & Ehrlich, 1974). A dominant social paradigm is a powerful ideology and the socially relevant part of a culture. It is important to society because it helps make sense of a complex world and facilitates organized activity. It is an essential part of the cultural information passed from generation to generation, guiding the behavior and expectations of those born into it" (p. 43). DSP's are solidly anchored in the worldviews shared by most. Social paradigms offer an elaborate supporting ethical theory for the inconsistencies and inequities that beset society (Pirages & Ehrlich, 1974). The growth-centered DSP embraces perpetual economic growth and expansion, a physical impossibility. Schnaiberg (1994) speaks of a "treadmill of production"

that defines a social class structure that is replicated by a “shared commitment of virtually all actors in advanced industrial society to some form of economic expansion, in order to meet their material needs.”

Seeking to modify DSP-based values and institutions risks the wrath of those who benefit from the present system, those with vested interests, and equally important, those who expect or hope to benefit from it. Most people in society have some level of vested interest in the Industrial DSP (Pirages & Ehrlich, 1974). Attempts by citizens to criticize, alter, or replace the norms, values, and behaviors that are crucial to the logic and structure of the culture can be perceived as inappropriate, immoral, or deviant. Platt’s (1973) concept of *social traps* characterizes existing institutional arrangements that actually work against individuals cooperating to solve common problems.⁵ Individuals also bear a measure of culpability as barriers to cultural and social change since they conform their behaviors to accepted norms and, in turn, expect conformity from others.

People are uncomfortable to hold or express beliefs or opinions that differ from those held by friends, relatives, or colleagues. They seek to reduce differences of opinion between themselves and significant others. They also seek out others with compatible belief systems and may sanction those who express widely divergent views. Thus, the potential for contact and interaction with those who hold divergent views and who might voice alternative perspectives is reduced.

Although political and social trends oscillate in society, they do so only within a narrow range of acceptable debate. Only within a rare set of circumstances (e.g. the Great Depression) do we witness the emergence of competing worldviews. In all other times,

⁵ The concept of social traps is similar to Garrett Hardin’s (1968) concept of the Tragedy of the Commons.

because the systemic framework is sacrosanct, debate is relegated to a limited harmless range. I hypothesize that a common ideological worldview exists within our culture that shares a set of broad values, beliefs, norms, and mores that shape, induce, celebrate, and frankly require certain behaviors, many of which are harmful to the natural environment. This culture also prevents, constrains, and disfavors other behaviors inconsistent with these values including critical debate.

Social forces operating through social control are one of the most powerful methods to maintain a cultural status quo. Either meted out through a toolbox of influential sanctions or affecting the behavior of individuals by the mere presence of others, social control can influence all but the most independent-minded and courageous individuals, those who are either willing to pay the price to engage in dissent or who have nothing to lose (Myers, 2004). Noelle-Neumann refers to such individuals as the hard core or avant garde (Noelle-Neumann, 1974, 1993).

Every culture establishes parameters for appropriate behavior via social expectations or societal norms. Norms can be both positive and negative, in that they help to facilitate the functioning of the social domain, binding people to maintain and propagate existing cultural traditions (Myers, 2004), and are a key factor in explaining how social order is maintained (Durkheim, 1915, 1980; Parsons, 1937). Cultural (social) norms are the rules and expectations that guide the behavior of its citizens (Macionis, 2005) and facilitate the functioning of the social domain, binding people to maintain and propagate existing cultural traditions (Myers, 2004). *Proscriptive norms* are negative acts that people should avoid doing (e.g. challenge authority, sleep late, or letting the lawn grow too long). *Prescriptive norms* are positive actions that people *should* do (e.g. be self-sufficient,

support God and country, and be good hard working citizens and consumers). Norms that are widely observed and have great moral significance and called *mores* while taboos are the conceptual converse, that is, they are immoral and widely avoided (Sumner, 1959). Mores are thought to be beneficial to society since they maintain cohesiveness as they coerce individuals to conform, but informally rather than by any formal authority (p. iii).

Thus if norms and mores are expectations of the group and rules for behavior in society, then deviance is a violation of a norm or more. The violation of norms by individuals often results in sanctions meted out by other individuals, a reference group, or a legal authority. These sanctions can be informal such as a disapproving frown all the way to physical punishment. They can also be formal such as a lawsuit, arrest, or incarceration.

Noelle-Neumann argues that the dominant culture is shaped and maintained by social interaction and mass media (1994). But the mass media is fully integrated into the free market (Herman & Chomsky, 2002), itself a part of the larger culture, and thus their ability to affect culture change is limited. This essentially limits opportunities for culture change to the citizens themselves. I will argue in the conclusion that one possibility for citizens to accomplish this lies in the art of conversation and effective public discourse.

Russell (1998) states that “we bring forth our particular reality...we bring into operation its objects and properties by the process of making distinctions in our conversation.” The act of conversation and discourse, occurring within the social milieu, confirms and furthers the realities and worldviews held by individuals. It originates from society and culture, creating a cyclical system of knowledge creation and dissemination. The lack of conversation on particular topics necessarily prevents their contributions to

potentially modifying particular worldviews.

The unfettered dissemination of information, ideas, and innovative concepts has the potential to change culture. There is no guarantee that an idea will have an impact on culture. However, unless and until these ideas are disseminated, they have no chance to impact culture at all. Free expression may impact culture on many levels. On an interpersonal level, expressing one's opinion to a friend or neighbor has an immediate impact. Wyatt, Kim, and Katz (2000) describe how informal conversations may lead to opinion formation, and perhaps be followed by specific action, including publication and presentation in the media. Media use then provides the material for the next interaction, and the cycle continues. This corroborates Noelle-Neumann's (1993) claim noted above that the media and social interaction are the two primary means through which people receive information. As these cycles of information escalate, the opportunity for either cultural confirmation or cultural change is enhanced.

Wyatt et. al. (2000) make the distinction between three types of political talk: *formal deliberation* (Schudson, 1997; Elster, 1998), *purposeful argumentation* which is based on the spiral of silence theory (Noelle-Neumann, 1993), and *ordinary political conversation*. It is this latter type of speech that they suggest may prove instrumental in influencing cultural change. Habermas (1984) also deems conversation, a prime example of communicative action in the public sphere, to be intimate and reciprocal. Understanding the barriers that exist toward this type of speech is the first step in determining how to compensate for them in pro-environmental advocacy.

According to Mardsen (2002), there are specialized agents who are charged with attempting to influence culture. These agents include advertising and public relations

professionals who generally represent the cultural status quo. Another important source of cultural change are the voices of sages, prophets, and dissenters. Throughout recorded history, special individuals have bravely faced the wrath of their peers or society by dissenting from normative standards or by expressing new thinking or spiritual reflection. Individuals such as Gandhi, King, Emerson, Anthony, Sanger, Sinclair, and Thoreau (among many others) have been guided by their conscience. Williams (2004) calls dissent “the oxygen of democracy.” Hofstadter (1963) writes that intellectuals were always suspect “because they often dissented from accepted political opinion.” Bronski (2004) suggests that the role of the public intellectual is to question the basic shared assumptions of the dominant culture and reframe the discussion in such a way that problems can be seen from a new perspective. He places abolitionists, suffragettes, and muckrakers in this category; intellectuals who refused to accept the common framing of public discourse in their era (p. 2).

A prophet is an individual gifted with an extraordinary sense of spiritual or moral insight. Because of the special nature of their insight, prophets were often scorned and ridiculed. People generally do not possess the sensitivity to give adequate attention and comprehension to the prophetic voices speaking today. The voice of the prophet is also one we often do not want to hear. Prophets were often seen as doomsayers or problematic people. Heschel (1969) suggests a revival of the prophetic tradition, through which major advancements of social movements originate.

Finally, Ray and Anderson (2000), in their analysis of “cultural creatives” describe how a combination of trends can change society and culture. The key to effective social change may be found in determining the cultural change mechanisms and the change agents that will create a new cultural framework more reasonably constituted to address these issues.

Again note that Noelle-Neumann's avant garde or hard core appear to coincide with these types of cultural change agents.

Social Influence and Group Pressure

The literature within psychology and social psychology on social influence and group pressures is an important constituent element in the study of self-censorship. In her development of the spiral of silence theory, Noelle-Neumann (1993) conducted a detailed literature search into the dynamics of social pressure and cited the work of Festinger (1954) regarding the concept of selective perception and cognitive dissonance avoidance (p. 147), Asch (1956) and Milgram (1963, pp. 37-40) regarding social pressures, and Fromm (1980, p. 41) regarding contradictions in people's conscious and unconscious impulses. Her conceptualization of the spiral of silence theory is predicated on defining public opinion according to a social control framework (Tönnies, 1922 in Noelle-Neumann, 1993) rather than a rational framework (Habermas, 1964).

Early research into social pressure and conformity was conducted by Festinger (1954) who recognized that hierarchically structured groups created a barrier to the free communication of criticisms up the hierarchical chain. In one of the classical experiments in social psychology, Asch (1956) conducted his famous line length judgment experiment, which provided insight into social pressures to conform. Asch conducted these tests by requiring public responses so that social pressures to conform were heightened (Baron & Byrne, 2000). Milgram (1963) conducted a series of notable experiments into obedience, a strong type of conformity behavior. These experiments determined whether participants would obey commands from a stranger to inflict pain on another stranger. They are illustrative of how susceptible to obedience people can be.

Janis (1982) conceptualized the concept of “groupthink” which explained why people in groups choose to go along with the majority and not raise objections to decisions that to them are clearly faulty. Examples used by Janis include the Bay of Pigs crisis, the Vietnam War escalation, and lack of preparedness for the Pearl Harbor attack.

The concept of social control has been studied for centuries as a subdiscipline of sociology and is the “operating system” where norms and sanctions work to maintain culture. Social control is defined as “attempts by society to regulate people’s thoughts and behavior” (Macionis, 2005). In addition to the role played by police, the courts, and the penal system who serve as the formal social control entity, social control is often applied informally by everyday members of society. People perceive deviance from social norms and may act to try to bring the deviant back to a normative behavior pattern with an array of escalating sanctions such as a disapproving glance or frown, a reprimand plus severe sanctions like shunning, dismissal or ejection from the group and physical punishments like murder (LaPiere, 1954).

Hirschi (1969, 2002) attributes conformity behavior to four types of social control: attachment, opportunity, involvement, and belief. For those more socially connected, attachment encourages conformity and discourages deviance. Hirschi suggests that people with greater opportunity exhibit less deviance because they have more to lose, such as a job. He also suggests that greater involvement in legitimate activities also discourages deviance specifically due to the time these activities take. Finally, belief in conventional morality and respect for authority discourages deviant behavior. These factors do not consider whether societal norms or authority figures in

these scenarios could be deficient or lacking and that deviance from these norms might have a deeper moral appeal.

Beginning in the late nineteenth century, the concept of social control was a sociological subdiscipline that assessed society's ability to self-regulate without more formal means such as force. In a sense, this was society self-governing itself according to the norms and values that predominated. It was seen as a tool for socializing the youth and immigrants into the value systems that were established as part of society. Social control in this sense provided a first line of cultural defense whereby coercion would only be used if this method failed. This framing of social control was a popular conceptualization in U.S. sociology prior to World War II led by the work of Ross (1901, 1974) and Mead (1934). As the spiral of silence theory is anchored in a social control framework, it is useful to note that the origin of scholarship regarding the social sanction in this context originated with Edward A. Ross, the pioneer of social control as a specialized sociological field. Ross conceptualized methods of social control based on a dichotomy between the ethical on one hand and the political on the other. This related to how sociological thinking was considering the maturation of society from primitive and community-based to modern and atomized. Tönnies (1887, 2001) and the concept of *gesellschaft* versus *gemeinschaft* indicate the belief that society was becoming less close knit where social control and culture were essentially the same to a society of anonymous individuals connected loosely by interests. In this sense, social control evolves from informal, social based instruments of control such as reprimand or shunning to more societal based formal control mechanisms like law and legislation. Ross (1974) noted the control role that society's institutions such as law, education, and religion play in

facilitating social control. He also viewed the more nebulous concept of public opinion as an important factor influencing behaviors (ibid.) as Noelle-Neumann (1974) later built her spiral of silence theory on the foundation of public opinion as social control. Ross's focus was on belief as a determining factor of individual conduct (LaPiere, 1954; p. 10). Mead (1925) viewed social control in terms of a voluntary act, as the ability of people to modify their behavior by considering the expectations of others (Deflem, 2007).

LaPiere (1954) wrote a seminal text on social control entitled, *A Theory of Social Control*. LaPiere perceived that the scholars who adopted the *gemeinschaft-gesellschaft* dichotomy were at a loss to explain what holds the latter form of society together since they assumed that while culture is the main controlling force in *gemeinschaft* societies, no cultural forces operate in *gesellschaft* societies (p. 16). Like Cooley (1909), LaPiere considered an individual's primary referent group to be an important factor in their behavioral anchoring within the greater culture (LaPiere, 1954) and that culture in general is no less an influence in modern society than it is in earlier cultures (pp. 20-21). Central to LaPiere's conceptualization of social control were the techniques used to facilitate it referred to as sanctions, which include physical sanctions (p. 220), economic sanctions (p. 229), and psychological sanctions (p. 238). Each of these sanction types shall be detailed below.

1. *Psychological Sanction*: A psychological sanction consists of social punishments (or withholding of rewards) derived from individuals or groups that the speaker holds in esteem or value within his/her social network for violating a group norm or standard. Such sanctions induce fear, guilt, shame, and self-protective behaviors. Socially imposed sanctions can change one's relations or status in a community or group and can include a disapproving look or frown, cool reception or behavior, reproof or retort, derision or shaming, a personal slight or being overlooked, losing group membership, social distancing, and outright loss of friends and acquaintances. Psychological sanctions, according to LaPiere, are

applied by varying the symbolic acceptance of the members of the group rather than applied as the meting out of a specific symbol (p. 240). This type of sanction is applied via psychology and acts upon the psychology of the recipient, but the end result is social through varying degrees of isolation.

2. *Economic Sanction*: The threat of or actual removal (or reduction) of economic viability from an individual is a technique of social control called an economic sanction. According to LaPiere, changes in the goodwill of others can and do impact the flow of goods and services enjoyed by an individual and upon which the individual is dependent upon for status and indeed for survival. Some examples could include the loss of a job, failure to be promoted, a professional rebuke, the loss of contracts or sales, professional marginalization, punitive reassignment or task assignment, framing or setup, greater work scrutiny, boycotting, loss of financial support, blacklisting or graylisting, inability to secure a job, harder to function professionally, harassment on the job. Note that an economic sanction can be closely linked to a psychological sanction since shunning can and often does result in a severing of economic ties as well.
3. *Physical Sanction*: According to LaPiere, a physical sanction is intended to physically punish an individual for violation of group norms. This could include expulsion or being banned from the community, physical punishment such as a beating or other violent act, or at the most extreme end, extermination. LaPiere considers physical sanctions a negative control that is solely intended for punishment and has no reward component that economic sanctions can. LaPiere claims that physical sanctions are simple and direct but limited in effectiveness since their application creates alienation in the victim and offers little chance that they will regain a role in the group.⁶ Other examples of physical sanctions include property vandalism and sabotage, killing pets, verbal abuse (as it may threaten subsequent violence), assault and battery, physical threats made verbally or symbolically, sabotage. One could even argue that psychiatric medications, which include a social control mechanism, can be a physical sanction if used as a punitive response to a non-normative act.

Zald (1979) notes the disparate disciplinary scholarship regarding the concept of social control with economists, political scientists, and legal scholars considering macro issues while sociologists and social psychologists consider micro perspectives such as deviance and conformity, normative and comparative reference groups, exchange and power dependence relations, and internalization and socialization of norms (p. 80). He

⁶ The question of physical sanctions directness and effectiveness is open to question and shall be discussed more in the conclusion.

notes five major advantages for a comprehensive sociological approach to social control. First, an interdisciplinary approach would allow scholars to see the interconnection and limits of their own disciplines, an integrated framework would contribute to a more comprehensive overview of policy proposals aimed at changing the performance levels of particular industries, it would be easier to identify and study mechanisms and processes of control which have been ignored because they fall between the disciplines, we would advance the study of the macro processes of societal, industrial, and organizational change in modern society, and a general sociological approach would open the door for a distinctive contribution and perspective to a major area of policy analysis (pp. 80-81).

Zald contributes to the scholarship of social control also by offering a definition which is, “the process by which individuals, groups, and organizations attempt to make performance, the behavior and operations of other groups, organizations, and individuals, conform to the standards of behavior of normative preferences.” (p. 83). He notes that this term suggests that standards of behavior emerge from a collective process of characterization and development as do the application of sanctions and mechanisms of control. Zald suggests that many of the conflicts between control agents and target objects arise from conflicts over norms and standards of behavior plus the very legitimacy of the control agents seeking to enforce norms and standards (p. 83).

The term deviance is almost exclusively considered a pejorative term and most often applied to criminals, drug users, or other violators of the law. But the term deviant may also be applied by society to individuals who do not conform to other normative frameworks like social, political, or religious beliefs. Deviance is the divergence from normative behavior patterns by an individual (or a group or institution). Jenness (2011)

defines deviance as “Behavior that does not conform to group-shared norms; behavior that (in some way) does not meet the expectations of a group or a society as a whole.” Macionis (2005) puts it more simply as “The recognized violation of cultural norms.”

A key for identifying deviance is what norms are violated, who or what established the norm as valid or universally held, and who determined whether an act or behavior constitutes a violation and therefore is deviant (Jenness, 2011). In some cases, deviant behavior is fairly easy to recognize such as juvenile vandalism, public drunkenness, or expressing racial slurs. In other cases, deviant behavior might be more difficult to draw a consensus in defining. This could occur where there are political or cultural differences that result in factional disagreement between what constitutes normative behavior. For example, for conservative individuals, support for growth, capitalism, and limited government might be normative while avid environmentalists with a deep ecology perspective might view a growth economy as dangerous. Krassa (1990) notes that individuals holding minority positions in a political debate are considered “political deviants”.

McLeod & Detenber (1999) cite ample literature that demonstrates how the mass media marginalizes radical movements (e.g. Gitlin, 1980; Shoemaker, 1984; McLeod & Hertog, 1992). The media buttresses the labeling of deviant behaviors by strengthening stereotypes, framing issues, and filtering content. Miliband (cites in Shoemaker & Reese, 1996) notes that “As agents of social control, the media must first identify threats to the status quo...the media do not screen out deviants but rather portray them in a way calculated to underscore their deviance.” They suggest that the status quo is reaffirmed by mocking deviant ideas as “irrelevant eccentricities that serious and reasonable people

may dismiss as of no consequence.” An important political strategy of cultural majorities is the marginalization of opponents, often through the characterization of them as deviant while ignoring their message. Such a characterization often renders opponents as impotent and ineffective since they find it more difficult to receive positive media coverage, attract supporters and new members, and gain admittance to forums for political dialogue (Miliband cited in Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). Depicting social groups and protests in a negative light may predispose mass media audiences to oppose social protest as a reasonable form of democratic expression and they “...may reinforce other socializing agents in promoting obedience to authority.” (Gitlin, 1977 in McLeod and Detenber, 1999). These premises are also supported by Boykoff (2007; pp. 216-247). McLeod says that as a key source of cultural information, the media “serve as agents of social control shaping public tastes, preferences, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors.. One of the most powerful ways media play this social control role is by communicating the boundaries of what is acceptable and what is deviant.” He cites research that media coverage of groups that diverge from mainstream norms and values, “highlights their ‘deviance’” and frames it to question the legitimacy of such groups (Cohen, 1972; Cohen & Young, 1973; Gitlin, 1980, Shoemaker, 1984; McLeod & Hertog, 1992). By doing so, the media protects the interests of the power elite as the propaganda model devised by Herman & Chomsky (2002) notes.

While the term deviance connotes a negative behavior, some sociologists have given consideration to the concept of positive deviance. An early article by Dodge (1985) suggests the conceptualization of positive deviance as a means to broaden the definition of deviance. Ben-Yehuda (1990) speaks of empirical and theoretical support

for the concept of positive deviance but that most deviance scholars in sociology reject the construct. He notes that, as a result, most scholars who are advocating the term are “generally quiet, typically hesitant...” In other words, they appear to self-censor or use other communication apprehension techniques in order to avoid the wrath of the normative majority of their disciplinary specialty.

Spreitzer & Sonenshein (2004) echo Ben-Yehuda’s observation of resistance by conventional researchers on deviance who are opposed to the idea that positive deviance can exist conceptually (Goode, 1991; Sagarin, 1985 in Spreitzer & Sonenshein, 2004). They summarize four different conceptual approaches to deviance that sociology has devised that are, statistical, supraconformity, reactive, and normative. Statistical, the most common approach, merely refers to normal distributions with outliers as deviants. Supraconformity is otherwise referred to as excessive conformity to norms, which relates to overachieving or extending pro-normative behavior to excess. The reactive approach is merely predicated on the reaction one receives to a behavior. If an “audience” deems it “deviant” by their reaction, then it is (Spreitzer & Sonenshein, 2004). The final type, normative, is based on compliance with or departure from norms. They cite the organizational studies literature where deviance is defined as “...intentional behavior that significantly departs from norms” (Robinson & Bennett, 1995 in Spreitzer & Sonenshein, 2004). Spreitzer & Sonenshein define positive deviance using a normative approach to deviance whereby; “intentional behaviors that depart from the norms of a referent group in honorable ways” is considered positive deviance, focusing on the nature of the behavior and its relationship with norms. They also note that positive deviance as they define it relates to behaviors with honorable intentions regardless of the outcome

(Spreitzer & Sonenshein, 2004). The authors distinguish positive deviance from other similar constructs. In particular, it differs from whistleblowing in that whistleblowers may not act out of purely honorable intentions (e.g. retaliation against a boss). Finally, Spreitzer & Sonenshein conceptualize positive deviance as both an individual level construct and an organizational construct giving the example of positive deviance exhibited by organizations in both the Merck and Malden Mills cases (see Spreitzer & Sonenshein, 2004).

Critical Theory

Introduction to Critical Theory

An important component of this dissertation is a critical theory frame in the most sincere traditions of Marx, Kant, Weber, and the Frankfurt School from the early years of Husserl, Marcuse, and Fromm through Horkheimer and Adorno up to the contemporary theorizations of Jurgen Habermas. Critical theory, as first defined by Max Horkheimer in his 1937 essay *Traditional and Critical Theory*, "...is a social theory oriented toward critiquing and changing society as a whole, in contrast to traditional theory oriented only to understanding or explaining it" (Held, 1980). In this sense, the purpose of my research is the revelation of a form of cultural repression exemplified by unspoken social dynamics that result in self-censorship choices. These choices, singularly and collectively, can prevent a potentially important contribution to the public domain of values and opinions that could reveal a significantly different cultural landscape than would be perceived had these opinions not been expressed and circulated in the public domain. Not only is the intent to develop a better and more comprehensive explanation of the dynamics and complexities of self-censorship through a qualitative methodology

that can arguably better elicit the stories and details of self-censorship; it is also predicated on a clear critique of a culture that does not allow free expression and the circulation of competing ideas. Critical theory also offers the opportunity for mechanisms to change society through communication.

The Theory of Communicative Action

Through the lens of critical theory, Brulle (2000) advises that we may be able to understand the structure and norms of society and use this knowledge to develop a “rational and moral society.” By using Habermas’ Theory of Communicative Action, Brulle suggests a method for just decision-making that can adjudicate competing claims of how the natural world should be cared for. As noted by Braaten (1991, p. 20), Habermas consensus theory of truth is characterized as a pragmatist theory of truth with its roots in the works of Charles Saunders Pierce and from this pragmatism Habermas believes that understanding the meaning of “truth” is based on a conception of how “truth claims are justified” (Ibid, p. 21).

Carey (1997, p. 77) warns about the potential for abuse within the pragmatic perspective that is arguably most relevant when an actor utilizes a strategic focus rather than a communicative focus like Habermas develops with his pragmatic bent that becomes the Theory of Communicative Action (TCA). Pragmatic philosopher William James (1907, pp. 75, 222, 299) states that “an idea is true so long as to believe it is profitable to our lives’ and that ‘the true’ ...is only the expedient in the way of our thinking, just as ‘the right’ is only the expedient in the way of our behaving.” Recent ideological utilization of such philosophical perspectives has proven problematic and thus the reference to Habermas grounding in pragmatism must include this caveat.

The origins of the Theory of Communicative Action lie in Habermas's project of developing a theory of societal evolution that emerged from his first major work entitled *Knowledge and Human Interests (KHI)*. In *KHI* (1971) and subsequent writings, Habermas approaches theory development through the distinctive German methodology of evolutionary social theory by introducing the important concepts of classical theorists such as Hegel, Kant, and others in subsequent works and critiquing their work as a judicial hearing might and offering his own improved version of the concepts. This "history of ideas" was intended to salvage the "rationalist heritage" and explain how reason has become beholden to the limitations and narrow focus of empiricism (Pusey, 1987; p. 20). Habermas is not against science or blindly for narrow traditions. He favors conducting scientific inquiry in a more philosophical knowing way with stricter epistemological standards whereby science is resituated as just one category of knowledge among many. He seeks a more balanced relationship between science and philosophy (Ibid.).

Habermas's definition of the lifeworld and its interpretation "is intended to identify the ways in which the functions of the lifeworld are performed, because this is indispensable in acquiring a grasp of the genuine possibilities for societal change available from the perspectives of individuals and institutions within the lifeworld" (Braaten, p. 81). Braaten notes that society's ability to adapt and change is determined by the level of lifeworld rationalization that has occurred. Thus, pre-enlightenment culture would be constrained by loyalties to feudal or church authority whereas modern societies have become ethically neutral, becoming distinct from the norms and values that used to govern social action prior to that time (Ibid, pp. 82-83). This functional rationality in

modern society has led to an uncoupling of the system, which governs corporate and administrative relations, from the lifeworld which allows the system to function autonomously from the lifeworld, separate from the consensual basis of relationships that exists in the lifeworld based on traditional cultural norms and values. This consensual socialization, taking place within the lifeworld, leads to social change through communicative interaction (Ibid, p. 78). Conversely, these dynamics are constrained by the requirements of functional rationality. As material reproduction governed by the logic of functional rationality is facilitated by the system, symbolic reproduction within the lifeworld follows the logic of communicative rationality. This form of reproduction is facilitated by developing and maintaining consensus in regard to needs and interests, social and ethical norms, and cultural traditions within the lifeworld (Ibid, p. 78).

Symbolic reproduction, according to Braaten, is a discursive process, which establishes meaning, the significance and value that actions, traits, objects, and events possess for members of a community (p. 78). For Habermas, the lifeworld and its constituent norms serve as a limiting mechanism to the system and its economic and administrative functions. Left “ungoverned,” the functions of the system would operate with optimum system efficiency to the potential detriment to the non-systemic functions of life and culture.

The Relevance of Critical Theory and TCA to Research

This introduction has summarized the colonization of the lifeworld through framing and agenda setting by system-based steering media. This steering media limits the range of acceptable discourse to the outer boundaries of the system’s organizing principles and foundational philosophies. Even a description of these principles and

philosophies undergoes a constant fine-tuning to insure that the system cannot be threatened by a weakness in these frames and agendas.

The “normal” distortions of speech that we expect to find and often do find in the settings included in this study, can be thought of as forms of censorship. Habermas legitimation crisis theory explains the reason for these actions to control dialogue (Webler, 2010).

The system defined by Habermas has a rough equivalency to modern society whose adherents possess a worldview that has been defined as the dominant social paradigm (DSP). This paradigm is inclusive of a set of beliefs and norms that give primacy to free markets within a system of economic liberalism or laissez faire global capitalism. Within this worldview, belief in an economic system of perpetual growth, limited government, free markets, and a consumption driven economy is paramount.

As propaganda becomes a part of the cultural story (e.g. Independence Day), citizens form strong emotive attachments to these stories, which further reinforces the efforts to perpetuate the dominant worldview. Systemic gatekeepers include technical experts in the scientific, legal, and political realms who seek to limit public discourse to that narrow scope determined by the frame and agenda. This insures that alternative or competing frames and worldviews cannot get a legitimate opportunity to state their case since the variables and frames they would bring are pre-deemed irrelevant. Habermas would argue that this relationship between the system and lifeworld could result in a legitimation crisis.

Held (1980) developed the critical theory lens that this research will be viewed through as he discusses factors in our culture that have marginalized critical thought. He

suggests that the rise of technical rationality (see administrative rationality below) has increased the “coercive power” of the state but it has also led to the internalization of previously external compulsion and authority into individual self-control and self-discipline that maintains the system. Since individuals, through the maintenance of their own standards of living, must act rationally according to system standards and norms, the system uses the oppressed to maintain their own oppression. He notes, “...they have to act according to the standards which insure the functioning of the apparatus. The introversion of authority reinforces and sustains modes of behavior that are adaptive, passive and acquiescent. Needless to say, the mechanisms of social control are strengthened.” (Held, p. 69).

Management and Public Policy

Administrative Rationalism (AR)

Administrative rationalism (AR) is a “problem-solving” discourse that relies on the testimony of technical experts as opposed to the more value-oriented discourses of the average citizen or other non-expert (Dryzek, 1997; p. 63). AR is a common tool for public processes when the issue is a highly complex technical issue such as nuclear energy, climate change, or forestry practices. The relevance of AR to this research is that such a discourse mechanism precludes or supersedes the introduction or discussion of other discourse strategies such as democratic pragmatism, economic rationalism, or other strategies that include the introduction of values, letting the market rule, or allowing other non-technical testimony. In many cases, there is an explicit prohibition of non-technical testimony or introduction of non-technical information into the record of proceedings.

Dryzek notes that AR is practiced by several types of institutions such as professional resource management agencies like the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), pollution control agencies such as the EPA, and expert advisory commissions like Germany's Council of Environmental Experts. It also relies on the following practices such as regulatory policy instruments such as regulation, tools such as environmental impact assessments, and rationalistic policy analysis techniques (1997; pp. 64-73). Brulle (2000) observes that the conservation movement was one of the early discursive frames within environmentalism and that it "defines a utilitarian/managerial perspective regarding nature (p. 145). The Conservation movement was instrumental in the establishment of U.S. federal land management agencies such as the U.S. Forest Service, the National Park Service, and BLM.

Dryzek's discourse analysis of AR is predicated on the following elements:

1. Basic Entities Whose Existence is Recognized or Constructed: According to Dryzek, AR is a problem-solving discourse that operates within and does not question the liberal capitalistic framework (p. 74).
2. Assumptions About Natural Relationships: AR, as the predominant discourse in our political culture, assumes that the natural world should be subordinate to human problem-solving (p. 74).
3. Agents and Their Motives: AR assumes that those assigned to administer to complex, technical discourses of which environmental problems often fall, the technical experts and managers, have a greater capacity to function as problem solvers than do others (p. 74).
4. Key Metaphors and Other Rhetorical Devices: Dryzek asserts that within an AR framework, there are two levels of looking at environmental problems. First, "...environmental problems are serious enough to warrant attention..." But second, "...they are not serious enough to demand fundamental changes in the way society is organized." (p. 75).

While Dryzek is an experienced policy analyst, his discourse analyses are not without critics (Blau, 2011; Tuler, 1998). Tuler gives Dryzek the benefit of the doubt for his field experience with his discourse analysis typologies, including administrative rationalism. Tuler considers Dryzek's narrative style a limitation since he ponders why "his 'meta-view' of environmental discourses is any more compelling than that of others." However, the analysis of AR as provided by Dryzek provides a useful insight into a likely self-censorship contributing factor, albeit one that is quite focused and situational.

Whistleblower Literature

According to the Oxford Dictionary and Thesaurus (2007), a whistleblower is "one who reports wrongdoing in a workplace or organization to authorities, the news media, etc." while U.S. employment law defines it simply as "an employee who reports illegal activities of the employer." In general, most definitions refer to an employee or someone connected to an institution who observes wrongdoing and reports it internally, externally, or both. Disciplines that research the concept of whistleblowing include law, sociology, and business management and ethics. For the purpose of this research, it should be clear that the act of whistleblowing is considered counter-normative behavior to the organization and the sense of obligation and loyalty an employee is thought to owe a company. Whistleblowing can be very costly to the organization financially or in other terms, and that it is a risky act and often results in severe negative consequences to the whistleblower in the form of one or more types of sanctions.

Miceli and Near (1992) outline a four stage whistleblowing process where first a triggering event occurs that involves some illegal or unethical activity on the part of the

company or one of its component departments leading the employee to consider whistleblowing or exposing the wrongdoing for the purpose of putting a stop to it. Second, the employee assesses the act and makes a determination of the extent of the act, gathers additional information, and speaks to others. Third, the employee either actually blows the whistle, exercising voice, or leaves the organization and remains silent. Finally, members of the organization react to and often retaliate against the whistleblower.

Dworkin and Baucus (1998) note that data collected from survey instruments on whistleblowing “cannot fully capture whistleblowing processes” whereby they conducted a qualitative analysis of 33 actual whistleblower experiences. Using prior research, they developed a number of hypotheses and research questions, two of which I will relate here. First, they considered factors related to the wrongdoing. In this sense, wrongdoing or harm was classified as physical, endangering public or workers safety or health; economic, which represented moderately serious wrongdoing (i.e. embezzlement), and psychological, such as discrimination or harassment (p. 1285). They initially concluded and hypothesized that wrongfully fired employees reported harmful (as opposed to more benign) violations externally while those reporting economic or psychological violations likely reported wrongdoing internally. This hypothesis was not supported as their research results showed the type of harm in the wrongdoing did not affect the choice of reporting channels, internal or external.

The second relevant hypothesis is related to the retaliation process against the whistleblower. Note that Dworkin and Baucus only considered whistleblowers who were terminated, which unquestionably effected their findings. However, they note that while all informants received some form of retaliation in the form of firing, they expected

whistleblowers who used internal channels to encounter more forms of retaliation than those who used external channels. They note that managers usually immediately terminate internal whistleblowers limiting sanctions to the single act of dismissal. However, external whistleblowers present a dilemma to managers who do not want to give the public impression that a dismissal is related to the act of whistleblowing, particularly since an external process may be open to media scrutiny (p. 1287).

O'Day (1972) describes four stages of retaliation for whistleblowing, which actors may receive none, several, or all four. First, there is nullification which are efforts to convince the whistleblower to withdraw the complaint using verbal abuse, reprimands, or criticism of job performance; second, there is isolation including transfers to other departments or reassignment, restriction on activities, access to information, or access to resources; third is defamation where the organization seeks to destroy the reputation of the whistleblower or their credibility; finally there is expulsion where the whistleblower is removed from the organization, voluntarily or otherwise (pp. 373-386). Note how closely these stages correspond to the degrees of social sanctions applied by group members to normative violations as noted by LaPiere (1954). This hypothesis was confirmed as organizations were discovered to use more extensive forms of retaliation against external whistleblowers, largely because their firing is delayed and there is more time to apply a series of sanctions.

A second study of interest, conducted by Rothschild (2008), performed a meta-analysis of recent whistleblower literature to determine why whistleblowers act while the powers are stacked against them, their dignity is assaulted, and their job security is threatened. In her introduction, Rothschild gave the example of a Mr. Welch, a CFO who

blew the whistle regarding financial wrongdoing in a small southern Virginia bank expecting to be protected by the recently passed Sarbanes-Oxley bill, which included protections to whistleblowers at financial institutions. However, Welch was soon terminated, he appealed to OSHA who ruled against him, he appealed again and won, but the bank subsequently appealed and won and sought to discredit Welch. After four years, his reinstatement at the bank was not enforced by the U.S. District judge. He was even shunned and refused service in a pharmacy in the town he lived in and used to work (Rothschild, p. 885). Rothschild relates that management disciplinary inquiry indicates a strong pressure toward compliance with authority and leadership in modern organizations and management seeks to control worker dissent (p. 885). De Maria (2006) observes that “most employees still remain silent in the face of organizational misconduct...”

Rothschild interviewed nearly 400 whistleblowers and she noted that three motivating factors stood out. First, many individuals expressed their belief in and motivation from the First Amendment to the Constitution of the U.S. protecting free speech. Second, they considered their personal integrity at stake and felt that their actions were a matter of right versus wrong. Third, they related success stories where whistleblowers succeeded and retained their jobs.

Rothschild rhetorically asks why everyone who observes illegal or immoral acts in the workplace doesn't report it to the authorities. She believes that it is due to people's fears and their observations of retaliatory actions (sanctions) that have been used against past whistleblowers (p. 890).

Organizational Science

Picking up on the work of early pioneers of social influence and group pressures, researchers in a subdiscipline of management science, organizational science, have sought a link between organizational performance and communication barriers. Noting that lower level employees tend to avoid communicating bad news upward through the hierarchical management structure, Athanassiades (1973) claimed that this might be a form of self-protective behavior.

Milliken, Morrison, & Hewlin (2003) conducted an exploratory study about employee silence in private industry. This research was a qualitative study using in-depth interviews of 40 full-time employees. Their results suggest that employee silence regarding issues and problems is a common experience (p. 1459). Primary reasons for silence included fears and beliefs, which included fears of social sanctions and fears of retaliation and punishment including job loss. Other factors included a range of individual, organizational, and supervisory characteristics (p. 1462).

Shaia & Gonzenbach (2007) researched how employees communicate with management in times of crisis. Two key findings were that employees chose silence because they feared reprisal and they also feared isolation. These two findings confirm two of three sanction types conceptualized by LaPiere (1954).

Kilbourne (2004) conducted a study on green advertising and sustainable communication within the context of the dominant social paradigm (DSP). The study determined that achieving sustainable consumption is problematic for both areas because it is contradictory to the basic elements of the DSP. Essentially, adherence to the precepts of the DSP would not allow sustainable communication.

Finally, Van Dyne, Ang, and Botero (2003) developed a detailed conceptualization of employee silence and employee voice identifying both behaviors as complex and multidimensional. They differentiate three types of silence including:

1. **Acquiescent Silence:** Withholding relevant ideas, information, and opinions based on resignation suggesting disengaged behavior, being resigned to the current situation, and belief that speaking up is pointless and not likely to make a difference (p. 1366).
2. **Defensive Silence:** Withholding relevant ideas, information, or opinions as a form of self-protection, based on fear. It is intentional and protective behavior intended to protect the individual from external threats (p. 1367).
3. **ProSocial Silence:** Withholding work-related ideas, information, and opinions with the goal of benefitting other people or the organization. It is based on altruism or cooperative motives (p. 1368).

They also consider three parallel types of employee voice:

1. **Acquiescent Voice:** The verbal expression of work-related ideas, information, or opinions based on feelings of resignation. This can result in expressions of agreement and support based on low self-efficacy to affect any meaningful change (p. 1373).
2. **Defensive Voice:** Expressing work-related ideas, information, and opinions based on fear with the goal of protecting the self. This can include excuses, justifications, and disclaimers (p. 1372).
3. **ProSocial Voice:** Expressing work-related ideas, information, and opinions based on cooperative motives (p. 1371).

But they note, similar to the suggestion by Neuwirth et al. (2007), that silence and voice are not always antitheses and that silence does not necessarily depict absence of voice.

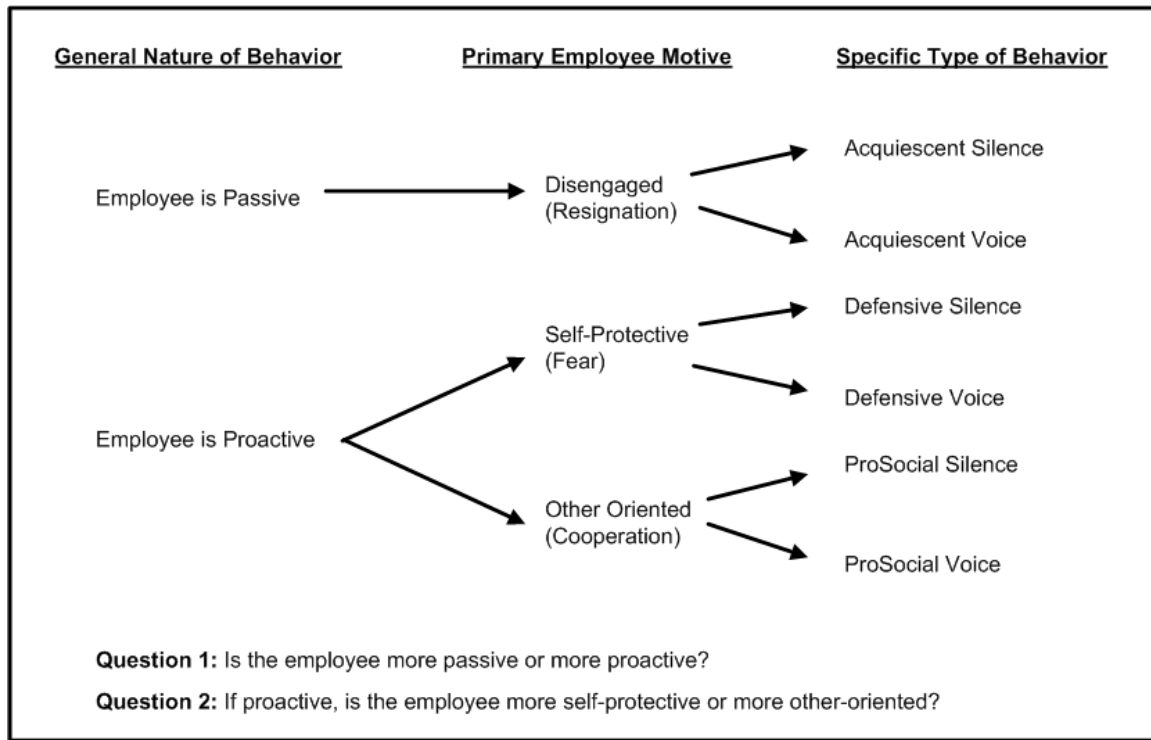
Each of these six behaviors is depicted in Figure 2-1 below. The authors suggest that a key feature that differentiates voice and silence is the actor's motivation regarding the withholding versus expression of ideas, information, and opinions about work-related improvements (p. 1360). Such motivations include disengaged behavior based on

resignation, self-protective behavior based on fear, and other-oriented behavior based on cooperation.

Van Dyne et al. set five boundary conditions for their framework that limits the comprehensiveness of the model. These conditions include a focus on purposeful forms of silence and voice where the focus is on the actor's motivations. Also, they ignore extreme instances of mindless behavior outside of conscious and intentional decision-making. Next, they limit their consideration of silence and voice to situations where employees have ideas, information, and opinions about work-related improvements. The authors also limit their focus to silence and voice occurring in face-to-face interactions in work organizations. Finally, they suggest that the processes they note are most likely to occur when silence or voice is unexpected.

The research conducted by Van Dyne et al. was intended to be an initial step in the development of a conceptualization of silence and voice that differentiates between different types of silence and voice. They also sought to determine whether silence or voice was accurately depicted by others and what the consequences to employees were based on these depictions. This study offers several characteristics that could contribute to the conceptualization of self-censorship such as the development of three types of motivations for silence: acquiescent, defensive, and prosocial. In particular, their identification of a defensive motivation for silence corresponds to my presumption that people self-censor out of a fear of sanctions. As they suggest, this motivation could include the belief that expressing opinions could be personally risky (p. 1367), which in a work environment could include losing one's job.

Figure 2-1: Employee Motives As Critical Characteristics of Silence and Voice
 (From Van Dyne, Ang, and Botero, 2003)



Other Contributions

Three texts were important in creating the structural framing of the analysis and serving as initial justification for the a priori premise that physical, legal, and economic sanctions were obvious influences in self-censorship. These include Boykoff's *Beyond Bullets* (2007), Soley's *Censorship, Inc.* (2000), and Helvarg's *The War Against the Greens* (2004). I will summarize contributing data below from each of these primary texts and weave additional material throughout these discussions plus provide additional analysis below as a wrap up. Essentially, the primary texts build a strong case for the cultural web of censorship that emanates from commerce and government which is intended to prevent criticism and dissent from the standard values and practices in our

culture. Each serves as a particular set of exemplars that show how social control operates to maintain society's institutions and cultural practices.

Beyond Bullets (2007)

Government censorship in purported democratic societies such as the U.S. use more covert methods than repressive societies. They harness the power of the media to assist in marginalizing and demonizing dissident groups and others with deviant viewpoints. Boykoff describes twelve mechanisms that governments use to marginalize dissent (2007, p. 36) including direct violence; public prosecutions and hearings; employment deprivation; surveillance and break-in's; infiltration, badjacketing, and agent provocateurs; black propaganda; harassment and harassment arrests; extraordinary rules and laws; mass media manipulation; bi-level demonization; mass media deprecation; and mass media underestimation, false balance, and disregard.

While Boykoff's modes of suppression are focused on those wielded by government and the media (often in partnership with the government), by extension they can be used by other agents such as corporations and private citizens and citizen groups to staunch dissent. In fact, many of these twelve modes can be classified within the three primary types of sanctions that LaPiere (1954) cites. Boykoff asserts that dissident citizenship serves a vital role in a democracy by challenging privilege and criticizing the validity of normative political discourse. Dissidents identify structures of power and authority and question their practices, motivations, leadership, and their very legitimacy (p. 10). Suppression by government and allied actors inhibits movement activists and their activities by either raising the costs of these actions or minimizing their benefits. Citing Tilley (1978), Boykoff speaks of the two ways in which suppression can make

activists ineffective. First by focusing on group mobilization and activities whereby groups can be channeled into inaction. Second are the more subtle forms of suppression that minimize the benefits of mobilization.

Dissent is indicative of a rejection of norms and commonly held ideas but Boykoff asserts that dissenters take it to the next level, actively working for change. He notes that dissent is the “collective mechanism for activating social change.” (p. 19) and observes that proposals for controlled and sensible discourse can be a deliberate strategy to dictate the terms of negotiation and subvert the ability to face sensitive or alarming truths. He shares the critique by Fraser (1992) who claims that the “deliberative realm of conventional politics, established actors, and traditional rules, emphasizing its ‘bourgeois, masculinist,’ nature. She says the idea of the public sphere, supported by Habermas, is actually an exclusionary device that marginalizes significant groups of people, including women, ‘the plebian classes,’ and other groups.” (p. 19) which is a claim that will be revisited in the conclusion of this paper. Boykoff declares that the state (and arguably their corporate partners) hold an ideological and cultural hegemony which narrowly focuses the range of acceptable discussion topics and frames. He speaks of Foucault’s “disciplinary society” in which people police themselves and each other in the name of the state, culture, and its normative framework (p. 312).

Censorship, Inc. (2000)

Soley (2002) describes how corporations, using their significant legal and financial power bases, wield significant power to protect their narrow interests. He lists the range of legal tools they use to stifle speech critical of their practices. Each of these tools uses an arm of government such as the courts to facilitate an erosion of First

Amendment rights of citizens. The net result is a propensity for self-censorship on the part of citizens so that they do not pay the legal and economic costs associated with criticizing or opposing a big corporation and their interests.

Corporations have spent over a century seeking laws, court decisions, and other legal and political means to further their narrow interests and influence. These include ordinances limiting speech in public places, banning books critical of agribusiness (p. viii), and laws restricting speech by employees (p. ix). Given the massive resources of multi-national global corporations, their ability to influence legislation and policy has grown swiftly and steadily so that modern mega-corporations now wield much more power than local or state governments and, in many cases, many countries (p. ix-x).

Soley notes that the emergence of corporate-centered censorship activities are not well recognized because they largely go unnoticed as they are part of daily life, because corporations and their activities are equated with freedom and anti-communism, and because the legal system views them as torts and contracts that are a part of everyday business activity—such as how lawsuits like SLAPP suits or Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation arose (p. xi).

Soley emphasizes the power of the at-will employment doctrine that so many laborers in the U.S. are subject to. Because workers can be fired for any reason at any time, Soley views this doctrine as “...perhaps the greatest impediment to free speech in the United States.” Employees must practice self-censorship in order to avoid termination or any number of other penalties used by employers (p. 23).

Soley also describes litigation, contracts, and legislation that limits free speech by corporations over its employees and the public. These include confidentiality agreements

or restrictive covenants such as non-disparagement contracts that prevent employees from engaging in any speech that could be injurious to the company (pp. 58-59). Companies also obtain gag orders aimed at former employees or critics arguing that criticisms can be defined as “defamation, copyright infringement, tortious interference with business contracts, or some other imagined harm” (pp. 81-82). These forms of corporate legal maneuvering compete head on with any protections that employees or former employees might possess regarding whistleblowing law.

Soley gives a great deal of attention to SLAPP suits, which are more formally called Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation. Intended to stifle speech critical or scrutinizing of the corporation, these civil lawsuits are filed against activists and everyday citizens for raising questions or voicing opposition about a development, project, product, or practice. They are effective because they require the defendant to spend significant time and money defending an often frivolous lawsuit frequently dismissed after closer scrutiny by the courts. But the defendant must respond to the suit or they will receive a default judgment by the court for non-responsiveness. SLAPP suits also intimidate defendants and any other potential critic from speaking out in the future. Beyond the direct impacts on defendants, Pring & Canan (1996) suggest that SLAPP’s transform public debates in three major ways. First, what was a public policy controversy (e.g. product safety) becomes a private legal dispute. Second, the dispute moves from a public arena to a private, judicial forum. Third, the focus of the debate shifts from the corporations wrongdoing to the defendants actions (Pring & Canan in Soley; p. 89).

Soley explains that citizens are often silenced by SLAPP's and many choose not to speak out at all due to the threat of litigation. He notes that such suits are cost effective for corporations compared to actual litigation and are highly effective as most critics are forced to retract their statements. Even if the suits are settled, corporations often require litigants to sign secrecy provisions to maintain the silence regarding the issue at hand (pp. 89-90).

Other concerns raised by Soley include the privatization of the public sphere where places like malls, shopping centers, and plazas are replacing the "antiquated" town square as centers of civic gathering where acts like protests, pamphleteering, political speech, and even wearing a provocative t-shirt are often prohibited (p. 144). Soley addresses the role of the mass media in narrowing the bounds of appropriate public speech. Describing America's mass media system as libertarian based on the typologies constructed in *Four Theories of the Press* (Siebert, Peterson, & Schramm, 1956), Soley claims that the profit-making rationale of the mass media reduces the First Amendment to a profit-making tool for corporations (p. 194). He relates concerns raised by Seldes (1935) who charged that advertisers, as opposed to government, are the primary censors in the U.S. pressuring newspapers to kill, alter, or bury stories that were critical of their client companies or they run the stories on quiet holidays. More insidious is the propensity of newspapers to self-censor in this manner without outside prompting as they learn who is the source of the money and act accordingly (pp. 195-196). Soley contrasts media gatekeeping, which refers to filtering due to time and space constraints and other factors with media censorship, which is purposefully keeping information from the public for the purpose of protecting and furthering their own institutional interests (p. 223).

They also control which advertisers and what content are permitted to have space in their publications, keeping out ads that challenge the ideological perspectives of management, investors, and other advertisers (p. 224). Soley concludes that corporations are only fulfilling their fiduciary responsibility to their stockholders to protect their business interests and that censorship is a part of that responsibility.

The War Against the Greens (2004)

Based on his research of the Wise Use movement, Helvarg (2004) documents anti-environmental violence throughout the United States including incidents in Maine, New York, Washington, West Virginia, Colorado, Alaska, Arkansas, New Mexico, Montana, Alabama, California, Florida, Texas, and Louisiana. People have received death threats, experienced property damage and vandalism, had their pets killed, their homes and barns burned down, and their vehicles sabotaged. Women have been raped, children accosted, numerous people shot at, and the number of threatening phone calls are countless. In many cases, Helvarg notes that people who have been directly intimidated as well as others who have observed or heard of these incidents have chosen not to speak out anymore. Their self-censorship is clearly a goal of the intimidation.

Summary

The spiral of silence theory dominates research into self-censorship in the mass communication literature. The spiral of silence theory served as the primary theoretical inspiration and foundation for this research. However, the spiral of silence theory was arguably never intended to serve as a comprehensive theory of self-censorship. Noelle-Neumann and Petersen (2004) distinguish thirteen “salient points” that delimit the application of the theory. They include the claim that the spiral of silence is limited to a

time and a place, only relevant for issues with a moral component (which they claim does not include the environment). This would suggest that while the spiral of silence has some merit as a very narrowly defined theory of self-censorship under certain circumstances, it does not serve as a model for inquiry into self-censorship in a more general sense. What is useful to pull from the theory is the fact that self-censorship is connected to a fear of social isolation, a sanction, that emanates from an external source—either the public at large or a person’s reference groups (and individual peers). It is also useful because of the connection between self-censorship and the spiraling process of issue irrelevancy. This is a process which is likely applicable to any self-censorship or broader communication apprehension model where people’s opinions are not shared and thus not circulated in either the public or private spheres. But these limitations speak to the need to develop a broader, more comprehensive theory of self-censorship because this would be a more valuable tool to determine the range of social and cultural influences that keep people silence and choosing to self-censor. This conceptualization should consider the full range of independent variables that relate to a dependant variable of “choosing to self-censor,” should develop a clear definition of what self-censorship is and then apply that definition consistently throughout future study.

By using spiral of silence theory variables along with variables from the communication apprehension (CA) literature, Neuwirth, Frederick, & Mayo (2007) were able to develop a compelling and logical outline of the components of self-censorship. Using CA’s trait, state, and issue-based constructs of communication apprehension, the authors find a relationship between fear of isolation (FOI) and the CA variables related to opinion expression (p. 450). By doing so, they suggest that prior research suggesting the

spiral of silence effects are mixed and nominal, suggest that these new variables “breathe new life” into the theory. Their research suggests the construct validity of fear of isolation, the importance of including a wider range of speech strategies by respondents, and that subjective norms likely play an important role in self-censorship and expression.

Neuwirth et al. (2007) drew upon the communication apprehension literature developed by McCroskey (1970) which has evolved from a narrow focus on verbal communication and strictly a trait-like construct to a much broader domain that includes multiple forms of communication and several forms including trait-like-CA (individual differences), generalized-context-CA (individual differences in specific contexts), person-group-CA (reactions to specific people or groups), and situational-CA (state-like or situational differences) (McCroskey, 1984). Neuwirth contributed to the CA conceptualizations by developing an issue-CA to refer to communication related to specific issues (2007).

The discussion of norms and mores contributes to the belief-attitude behavior hierarchy while the discussion of social control fleshes out the literature about this concept highlighting the relatively quiet conceptualization of social control as a more informal non-institutional process. LaPiere’s development of sanction types is a key contribution to this research but does have some shortcomings. Note that specific sanctions do not necessarily fall precisely within each of LaPiere’s categorizations. For example, while property damage is usually intended as a means to intimidate and threaten, it also possesses an economic penalty as well. Also, as I noted above, being socially isolated also may manifest itself economically through the inability to get a job or make contacts in an area. In response, I have proposed (see Chapter 5) two additional

sanction types that arose through this research: legal/political and professional. A third sanction type, spiritual, could also be argued as one participant did hint at such a construct, but a single response does not warrant conceptualization at this point. Finally, the discussion of deviance is important because the (again) fairly unsupported subarea of deviance, the concept of “positive deviance” is a logical way to define activists and dissidents who may recognize problems with facets of or the entire rationale for a culture and society.

Since critical theory is a foundational methodology for this research and is core to the rationale for conducting the research, I felt it important to summarize the thread of critical theory that most related to this purpose. In addition to discussing the major contributors and thinkers in critical theory, I also discuss how modern scholars such as Brulle believe that critical theory can be a useful tool to adjudicate competing claims over the natural world. His recommendations transition into a discussion of Habermas and his theory of communicative action which may offer an alternative mechanism for engaging in constructive discourse in the course of seeking to address our most compelling social problems such as environmental decline.

The relatively brief discussion of management and public policy research is intended to illustrate to the reader that I have sought to exhaust the different realms of academic literature to find how self-censorship has been researched by those in management, organizational science, marketing. Even so, there were threads and crumbs that proved useful such as the Milliken et al. (2003) finding that many employees in corporations fear speaking out about problems due to concern over possible retribution including dismissal.

Finally, a text analysis of three important works including Soley (2000), Boykoff (2007), and Helvarg (2004) contributed to what I call the facilitators of self-censorship. While there are clearly other factors that contribute to self-censorship decisions such as shyness, knowledge of the topic, importance of the topic, moral salience of the topic, and so on, a ripe atmosphere for self-censorship has been created by the corporate domain, government, and individuals who either are connected to the first two entities or who possess a philosophical kinship with the cultural model that encourages growth and development. In particular, Helvarg's numerous case studies of people intimidated into self-censorship or punished severely for speaking out indicates that depending on the issue and situation, physical and legal sanctions can be the key contributor to such a response.

CHAPTER 3 – METHODOLOGY & METHODS

Introduction

In order to enhance or extend the spiral of silence theory (and self-censorship scholarship more generally), a qualitative methodology is suitable. Discourse analysis can capture individual narratives of self-censorship experience through analysis of in-depth, semi-structured interviews with volunteer informants who have self-selected as having engaged in self-censorship behaviors. The research questions for this study are:

RQ₁: How do people understand their decision to self-censor their strongly held beliefs, values, and opinions?

RQ₂: What types of sanctions are they concerned about?

RQ₃: What strategies do people use to overcome self-censorship and speak out?

Of particular interest are the factors that influence self-censorship including fears of sanctions for speaking out, what strategies people use to overcome fear of speaking out, and other factors contributing to self-censorship that have not yet been considered by researchers studying self-censorship.

Methodological Philosophy

This research falls within a constructivist scientific paradigm. It also includes as well as a critical social theory component. Each of these frameworks will be described below.

Constructivism

Constructivism embraces the idea that reality is socially constructed, hence researchers learn about reality by studying how people construct their understandings of the world. Because of natural variance among people, it is necessary to study multiple people. The number of people is determined by the notion of “saturation.” In

constructivist research, the research continues to collect data from different people until he or she ceases to learn anything new from further inquiries.⁷

Critical Theory

Critical theory is a form of inquiry that is “ideologically oriented” (Guba, 1990). There are several forms it can take. For the purpose of this research, I have used a more generalized definition situated in the framework conceptualized by Lincoln & Guba (1990 and in Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). This framework provides for an ontology based on critical (historical) realism, an epistemology that is subjectivist and transactional, and a methodology that is dialogic, dialectical, and transformative. As Lincoln & Guba articulate, “If the aim of inquiry is to transform the (real) world by raising the consciousness of participants so that they are energized and facilitated toward transformation...critical theorists...take a dialogic approach that seeks to eliminate false consciousness and rally participants around a common...point of view.” (2005). Thus, the critical theory aspect of this research stems from the fact that it is infused with values of emancipation and empowerment. These values are facilitated by revealing the historically generated contradictions—the ideological distortions in social and cultural conditions (Smith, 181-182 in Guba (ed., 1990). The critical theoretic objective of this research is to raise the consciousness of participants and readers about how and why self-censorship happens. People who possess a greater understanding of the underpinnings of cultural communication, its frequent grounding in oppressive social structures, and the role it plays in creating a fertile ground for self-censorship can then act decisively to

⁷ Data saturation refers to adequacy in the amount and appropriateness of the data collected for a study that suggests sufficient power to make a compelling argument related to findings (Rudestam and Newton, 2001; p. 99).

transform these relationships. Transforming those relationships to empower individual voices who speak to unchallenged exercises of power may, among other things, help transform the system that degrades the natural environment. Horkheimer's inaugural address as the director of the Institute of Social Research included three themes. The third theme "...emphasizes the necessity for social theory to explicate the set of interconnections (mediations) that make possible the reproduction and transformation of society, economy, culture, and consciousness" (Held, 1980; p. 33).

A Novel Approach to Self-Censorship Inquiry

This approach differs significantly from the traditional research into self-censorship and the spiral of silence theory. Most of the published research on the spiral of silence theory and self-censorship has been strictly positivist or post-positivist in nature. Unquestionably, there are a number of advantages to positivist approaches in research areas like self-censorship. For example, research using multivariate statistical testing is a good fit for disciplines such as mass communication or behavioral psychology because researchers are seeking to determine causality between one or more variables and others. The sophistication of statistical testing in the social sciences using tools such as structural equation modeling (SEM) has increased greatly over the years (Hayes, 2009). Quantitative methods also offer the researcher the opportunity to engage in wider studies employing more subjects or data points. This greatly increases the ability for the researcher to generalize using the findings and to replicate the study (USC, 2011). However, quantitative methods often miss contextual detail or nuances that an informant story can provide. The use of standardized surveys with standard questions conceived of by researchers has the potential to lead to structural bias and false representation. These

instruments might not capture how informants truly feel about a subject or issue and do not offer the opportunity to suggest answer options or shaded nuance. Quantitative results provide less detail on human behavior, attitudes and values, and motivations for engaging in or avoiding behavior. Quantitative data is limited to numerical data rather than text, such as narratives, that do not capture the account as described by an informant. It also is conducted in artificial as opposed to “real-world” settings and artificial as opposed to realistic situations so that results are always “laboratory-based” (USC, 2011). These shortcomings do not position quantitative research to be applied to exploratory, investigative research where new variables are sought and processes explained.

My research questions speak to the limitations associated with positivist research approaches undertaken to date. These questions are best addressed using a qualitative exploratory approach because these questions require a method that examines and probes in-depth into a highly complex topic seeking to discover the how and why of self-censorship. It is a method that can be employed to investigate the dynamic processes that are involved in self-censorship (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). Naturalistic research should take place where the actual behavior occurs and the complexity exists (p. 57). It also is a valuable method for research for which relevant variables have yet to be identified—precisely what RQ₁ is seeking an answer to—and developing new hypotheses in regard to concepts like self-censorship. It seeks to discover the informant’s own categories of meaning regarding their experiences (UAB, 2011). Finally, while I have argued that neither experimental research nor hypothetical scenarios can capture the realism and emotional intensity that an actual experience can, I also suggest that attempts to approach such behavioral manipulation may be ethically questionable. However,

qualitative research possesses some weaknesses and limitations. Conclusions can be subjective and different from researcher to researcher, studies contain fewer subjects and thus have less generalizability, they are more difficult to replicate, they require a higher degree of researcher skill and experience, and they can take longer since the data is textual, is more difficult to process and analyze, and it often takes longer to collect (USC, 2011).

I suggest that qualitative in-depth interviewing, even with the limitations and weaknesses noted above, is the best method to understand actual lived experience of self-censorship processes. Finally, I suggest that for quantitative experimental and survey methods into self-censorship, these techniques may very well contribute to findings that are skewed based on savvy or wary participants or participants who want to please the surveyors (p. 58).

A constructivist approach forgoes making assumptions about the variables to test and instead opens the door to encounter new constructs or variables that future studies might incorporate. There is an exploratory and confirmatory aspect to this research. Therefore, I chose to learn about actual self-censorship experiences by conducting in-depth interviews with subjects who have self-selected as self-censors, that is, once self-censorship behaviors have been described to them, they identified themselves as having self-censored on one or more occasions.⁸ Qualitative research is a way of exploring lived experience and the results, if conducted properly, form a picture of the cultural experiences of people. It can reveal what self-censors were thinking about, what concerns they had, and what strategies they tried to employ to get their opinions out into

⁸ Nonetheless, some informants actually did not self-censor either by definition or practice.

the public sphere. Essentially, qualitative methods are a means of discovery and in this case, aimed at discovering a more holistic picture of the self-censorship decision.

I presume that there are potential variables comparable structurally to fear of isolation (e.g. fear of economic or physical sanctions) that have been absent in tests of the SoS theory. These variables are occasionally hinted at in literature reviews or introductions to studies (e.g. Hayes, Glynn, & Shanahan, 2005a) but not included as independent variables for testing. For example, Noelle-Neumann (1993; p. 9) refers to all three types of sanctions referred to by LaPiere (psychological, economic, and physical) as methods of social control (1993, p. 95). Professional sanctions are referred to by spiral of silence scholars (Hayes, Glynn, Shanahan, and Uldall, 2003; p. 1) and Hayes, Glynn, and Shanahan, 2005, p. 3) and the fear of physical assault or violence is cited by Hayes, Scheufele, and Huges (2006, p. 260) and by Hayes, Glynn, and Shanahan (2005, p. 5) as reasons that someone might choose to self-censor. The exclusion of such variables worthy of mention in article background or literature review text but not employed as independent variables for the purpose of statistical testing suggests that alternative methods of data collection might elucidate their relevance and could provide a rationale for the inclusion of these types of variables in subsequent quantitative research and other methods. This study is situated in a more exploratory investigative area that is intended to generate pertinent new independent variables and extend or enhance the theory.

Data Collection Processes and Procedures

Select Research Participants

Introduction and Description of Targeted Population

Because the inspiration for this research was rooted in concern over environmental degradation, I initially sought informants who exclusively held pro-environmental opinions but chose not to express them. Thus, the original design of this research involved the selection of three communities that had recently (over the past five years) experienced a significant and controversial environmental conflict.

Unfortunately, this method failed to identify any effective or willing primary contacts. Therefore, the snowball-driven methodology had to be abandoned⁹ in favor of a targeted outreach methodology designed to seek participants in specific groups and organizations where I expected that views of members were likely in the minority as compared to the general public opinion range¹⁰ and who may be more prone to self-censorship. To facilitate this new focus, I chose to search for respondents in groups and organizations who responded to a web-based questionnaire on self-censorship. From this pool of questionnaire respondents I selected twenty-eight (28) interview informants who professed to have had self-censored themselves. Ultimately, a total of twenty-three (23) interviews were conducted which resulted in data saturation for this topic.

I proposed a three-step process to identify relevantly experienced informants to interview that included the questionnaire and a subsequent in-depth interview. The steps that I followed to obtain participants were as follows: 1) I developed an online

⁹ See Appendix F for full explanation of the procedures followed vetting the snowball approach for this research and why it proved infeasible.

¹⁰ The SoS theory suggests that self-censorship occurs when subjects are in the minority related to their opinion (Noelle-Neumann, 1993).

questionnaire inquiring about self-censorship experiences and distributed the URL widely to a list of groups and organizations (Table 3-1). Participants initially responded by filling out the questionnaire where they were asked if they self-censored. If they responded affirmatively, they were permitted to complete the questionnaire; 2) participants who completed the questionnaire were asked if they would volunteer to participate in in-depth interviews. If they answered affirmatively, they met the second criterion; 3) finally, if their responses to the questionnaire indicated that the respondent self-censored regarding an issue important to them and if this circumstance or event appeared to offer a narrative that could contribute relevant data, then they met the third criterion and were contacted with the contact information provided on the questionnaire.

Data Collection Phase 1: Web-Based Questionnaire

The initial research participants who completed the questionnaire were a self-selected/volunteer-based purposive (criterion) sample with a secondary snowball sampling option. Criterion sampling seeks cases that meet specific criterion (Marshall and Rossman, 1999). In this case, the primary criterion was to find participants who self-identified as having self-censored themselves. I considered groups that have traditionally been subject to suppression and other dissident marginalization tactics that would have primed or optimized them for self-censorship (see Table 3-1 below for a partial list). To facilitate this, I prepared a web-based questionnaire using SurveyMonkey™ and e-mailed the survey link to a number of groups and organizations who I believed had members that met my criterion or posted the link directly on their bulletin board or discussion group.

Table 3-1: Partial List of Organizations, Groups, and Individuals Contacted

| Name of Contact |
|--|
| Jonathan Harr, author of A Civil Action |
| Two noted participants in the Woburn well contamination case |
| MoveOn.org |
| Oak Hill CDC, Worcester, MA |
| Canal District Alliance; Worcester, MA |
| Alliance to Protect Nantucket Sound |
| Cape Wind Associates, LLC |
| The Coalition for Buzzards Bay |
| Mountain Justice |
| Coal River Mountain Watch |
| Sierra Club |
| Society of Business Editors and Writers |
| American Planning Association |
| Relocalize.net |
| The Wilderness Society |
| The Oil Drum Campfire |
| Massachusetts Planners Listserv |
| Concord (MA) Climate Action Network |
| Post Carbon Cities |
| Derrick Jenson Forum |
| Investigative Reporters and Editors |
| Project Censorship |
| Iraq Veterans Against the War |
| Code Pink |
| ATV Tracks |
| Pro-Life Action League |
| Center for the Defense of Free Enterprise |
| Earth First! |
| Center for Health, Environment, & Justice |
| Environmental Communication Listserv |
| ACE Investigations |
| Political Research Associates |
| The Unification Church |
| Ralph Nader at nader.org |
| The Audubon Society |
| Former professor at a major U.S. university |
| Several prominent environmental writers |
| Antioch University Bulletin Board |
| The Energy Bulletin |
| General Facebook posting |
| Concord (MA) online discussion forum |
| PLANET@LISTSERV.BUFFALO.EDU |
| Trust for Public Land |
| National Wildlife Association |
| Massachusetts Attorney Jan Schlichtmann |

I approached initial organizational contacts and they essentially served in a “gatekeeper” role similar to that of “snowball” sampling since they ultimately made the decision as to whether the survey link would be passed along to members or associates. If they declined, the organization was removed from consideration. If they choose to participate, they were asked to supply their membership or associates with the initial survey link, which thus lends a quasi-iterative design to this research. This method of identifying respondents is a common path for quantitative research helping to facilitate qualitative research. British sociologist Rachel Cohen considers a survey instrument like a questionnaire a useful tool to locate interview candidates, “Through the selection of people to interview...a survey can isolate people with particular characteristics who it may be interesting to talk to.” (Cohen, 2010)

Web-based surveys have a distinct advantage over paper or telephone surveys by their cost-effectiveness, speed of administration (Roztoki, 2003), and the opportunity for a wider range of participants (Reips, 2000; Stanton, 1998; Schmidt, 1997). On the other hand, web-based surveys also have disadvantages such as the loss of control by the experimenter including not being available to answer questions, address concerns, or deal with problems. In some poorly designed systems, data integrity can be a problem, which could include the possibility of multiple submissions, incomplete responses, and data security (Reips, 2000; Stanton, 1998; Schmidt, 1997). This survey targeted individuals who were associated with a wider range of potential conflicts, both environmental and more generally political and social. This survey (see questionnaire form in Appendix A) was distributed via the release of a URL (Uniform Resource Locator), a link generated by the survey site, SurveyMonkey™ (<http://www.surveymonkey.com>).

Table 3-2: Questionnaire Design

| No. | Question |
|-----|--|
| 1. | Can you recall a specific experience with self-censorship that is particularly memorable when you wanted to speak out about a sensitive or important issue? |
| 2. | How long ago (in years) did this experience take place? |
| 3. | What was the topic or type of issue? For this survey, please pick the issue that was of greatest interest and sensitivity to you if more than one. |
| 4. | OPTIONAL: Can you provide detail about the specific issue in which you chose to self-censor and, if you wish, your position or perspective? |
| 5. | What was the situation or circumstance and what was your role? |
| 6. | At that time, how important was the issue to you that was at the center of your decision to self-censor in comparison with other issues. |
| 7. | All in all, when you look back on it, how important was this self-censorship experience to you? |
| 8. | If you self-censored yourself, please briefly explain how this made you feel? How does it make you feel right now in recalling this episode? Choose whether you agree with each feeling or emotion. |
| 9. | When you chose to self-censor, did you believe your opinion in regard to this issue was in the minority? |
| 10. | Why did you feel that your opinion was in the minority? Please choose all that apply. |
| 11. | How would you characterize your outspokenness on this issue before you chose to self-censor? |
| 12. | When you chose to self-censor, did you feel that discussing your opinion(s) openly would be risky and that you might be punished or sanctioned? |
| 13. | If answer to #12 above is Yes, please convey why you felt speaking up was risky and that self-censorship was necessary. In other words, please determine how important each of the following types of sanctions was to your concerns over speaking up. |
| 14. | What other reasons might have motivated you to stay silent? Please note how important each of the following types of reasons might have influenced your self-censorship. |
| 15. | When you chose to self-censor, what was involved in the act? What did you actually do? Please choose all that apply... |
| 16. | At the time that this happened, please recall your thoughts or feelings: |
| 17. | Did you, on the other hand, ever chose to speak up in a similar situation? What was the result? Were you punished? How? Did this experience or the experience of others influence your willingness to speak out? |
| 18. | Please provide some demographic information: |
| 19. | Would you be interested in participating in an in-depth interview to discuss this experience in more detail? If Yes, please provide your contact information in the optional section below. |
| 20. | CONTACT INFORMATION You can provide optional contact information so that I may get in touch with you if you indicate an interest in a follow up discussion regarding a possible in-depth interview. You do not have to provide this information if you do not want to participate in Phase 2 |

Data Collection Phase 2: In-Depth Interviews

Locating and contacting informants

A total of 163 responses were received and a total of forty-four (44) expressed an interest in participating in an in-depth interview. I reviewed and assessed the responses and identified twenty-eight (28) noteworthy responses that I was confident would generate rich data from in-depth semi-structured interviews. A list of finalists for interviews was selected on the basis of several criteria including: the divisiveness of the issue, contemporaneousness of the issue (so the issue could be fresher in their memories), and the proximity of the community¹¹ to facilitate efficient and cost-effective research. I contacted each volunteer from the contact information they provided in the questionnaire to confirm whether they were still willing to participate. I described my research and explained the relevance and importance of the topic. While “snowball” sampling was no longer a primary device for locating contacts, if the respondent appeared to be a good source of other potential contacts, I did ask them if they were aware of additional people that might be good subjects for this research. This proved to be useful and three additional interviews were conducted with secondary contacts. In all, twenty-three (21) participants were interviewed. A complete list of participants (as aliases) is included as part of Appendix B. Additionally, a brief biographical sketch has been developed for each participant in the following chapter.

¹¹ While proximity was a factor, it should be noted that several interviews were conducted by telephone which did not appear to have any negative impact on the data collected.

Interviews

In preparation for interviews, I developed an interview guide with questions designed to elicit detailed and relevant responses (see Table 3-3 below and Appendix C). I edited the guide based on responses in initial interviews and this modified guide was used for all subsequent interviews.

Table 3-3: Interview Guide Introduction

With this study I am seeking the experiences and perceptions of people like yourself. In particular, I'm interested in narratives of personal experience with situations within your present or past local community in which you felt reluctant or constrained from speaking your opinion about a political or social issue.

Additionally, I am going to ask you to describe whether you feel or have ever felt that in general, the social environment of the community was or was not conducive to expressing yourself freely about issues of concern to you. Further, I'll ask you to describe the specifics of any such situations including who, if anyone in particular, made you feel uncomfortable or wary of expressing yourself; what the issue was, what your primary concerns about expressing yourself were, and if you felt that by expressing yourself, any negative consequences might result.

I will first ask you an open-ended question and I want you to feel free to answer the question as you might tell a story, in as much detail as you can. As I need to, I will ask follow up questions when you have completed your story.

Let me remind you that this research is completely confidential and that at any time, you may choose to refrain from participation. Do you have any questions before we begin?

With this introduction, I was providing the informant with the general guidelines of the interview session and a summary of the topic. The introductory and follow up questions are provided in Table 3-4 below:

Table 3-4: Interview Guide Questions

In the first phase of this research, you responded to a questionnaire where you noted that you experienced one or more situations in which you held a strong opinion that you wanted to express related to an issue important to you, but felt reluctant to do so, otherwise referred to as self-censorship. Could you describe: your experience in as much detail as you can?

- a. Explain the situation and any other such situations that come to mind?
- b. What the issue was that created this dilemma? Discuss your personal experience and interest with this issue.
- c. Provide detail about how you were feeling at the time, what your decision was (either to express yourself or not), what your reasons were for this decision, and how you felt after this experience?
- d. Do you wish to discuss what your opinion was regarding the issue?

If you chose to self-censor, what was your reason for doing so. You may consider the following as possible reasons for choosing to self-censor:

- a. Fear of social isolation
- b. Lack of knowledge about the subject
- c. Desire to keep the peace, avoid conflict
- d. Lack of communicative confidence or dispositional shyness
- e. Perception of opinion climate, current and anticipated future (determine how perceived)
- f. Opinion strength
- g. Lack of opportunity to discuss (why?)
- h. Moral tenor and emotional loading of the issue
- i. Fear of other sanction (e.g. economic, physical, legal, or political). Was there a concern over job? Friendships or acquaintances? Personal safety?

[for people who spoke up] Were there situations surrounding this issue in which you considered self-censorship but went ahead and spoke out anyhow? What were your feelings about that? Were any of your concerns actualized? Does that experience make you more or less likely to make the same decision?

1. I am particularly interested in whether you had misgivings or concerns about speaking out. If so, what were your specific concerns were about expressing yourself (why you were reluctant). Could you elaborate about the concerns you had? Who or what you were most worried about?
2. What were the potential consequences in your mind that could result from expressing that particular opinion, at that time, and in that situation? Could you elaborate about what the potential consequences were in your mind that could result from expressing that particular opinion, at that time, and in that situation? Please provide as much detail as you can including the source of discomfort (e.g. situation, people, etc.)
3. Please describe whether you feel or if you have felt that in general, the social environment of the community was or was not conducive to you expressing yourself freely about issues of concern to you.
4. If you chose to self-censor, please discuss what strategy you used:
 - a. Staying completely silent
 - b. Changing the subject
 - c. Moving away from the proximity of the conversation
 - d. Expressing feigned indifference
 - e. Nodding
 - f. Lying about your opinion
 - g. Changing the subject.
 - h. Other

The last portion of the interview guide contained demographic questions for informants where that information was already obtained.

I conducted the in-depth interviews at a location selected by the informant. This was designed to make the informant more comfortable and at ease and encourage them to provide more sensitive information than if they were at an unfamiliar location or site.

Many interviews were conducted in public places such as places of work, café's, bookshops, or restaurants.

Upon commencement of the interview, I explained the purpose of the study and secured informed consent by asking the informant to sign two copies of an informed consent form. The interviews were all digitally recorded with consent of the informant. I began each interview by asking the initial introductory question, listening to the response, and taking notes. I paid particular attention to whether any of the pre-developed codes from the interview guide were addressed, whether markers related to other potential subjects of interest were provided, and how thoroughly the informant appeared to understand and answer the question. If additional detail was necessary, I probed further with priming questions such as "Can you provide specific examples of that?" (Weiss, 1994).

I queried informants in regard to the self-censorship topic; context, site, and situation, why they engaged in self-censorship, and if and why they feared or anticipated specific sanctions as a response to speaking out. Each interview lasted between 30 and 90 minutes with most completed in just short of an hour. One interviews lasted four hours in two separate sessions. There were no problems or issues with informants and most interviews were commenced and concluded without interruption (exceptions included a visitor and moving to a quieter location).

I personally transcribed ten interviews while I hired I transcription service for the remaining thirteen interviews. For interviews transcribed by others, I performed a quality and accuracy check by listening to the audio of the interview while I followed along the transcript and made edits where necessary.

The digital recording and/or notes were transcribed into a text document consisting of the interview data. I explained to each participant that I would give them the opportunity to review and comment on the transcript draft to correct errors or elaborate or clarify any points made. However, most respondents did not respond with any corrections, even after a follow-up reminder. In some cases, I also asked follow-up questions via e-mail or by phone but I did not receive answers from all.

IRB Review and Approval

Prior to any sampling or interviewing, I acquired Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval to assure that the proposed human subjects research is appropriate and benign. The Board was concerned that informants could experience a sense of loss or vulnerability, become embarrassed about what they disclosed, or experience some other negative emotion as a result of the interview. However, since the informant was knowledgeable about the subject of study, I argued that distress or discomfort would occur infrequently and if it did, I did not expect it to be severe enough to forgo the study or modify the data collection procedures. For all potential participants, I limited the subject pool to adults. Other demographic characteristics were not a factor in selection. Due to modifications to respondent selection criteria, it was necessary to contact the IRB and submit a revised set of procedures for review by the IRB Coordinator. The Coordinator approved the proposed modifications in December 2008. Note that I structured this research to provide confidentiality to the participants. This was done to maximize the response rate and to elicit the most forthright narrative possible under the circumstances.

Data Analysis Procedures

The qualitative in-depth interviews conducted for this study generated numerous transcript pages with the personal stories or accounts of informants and the analysis performed was interactive based on the model by Miles & Huberman (1994). I initially analyzed the data by reading the transcripts, determined patterns in the data, began to develop additional statement categories defined on the basis of the research question, and coded information by category (Glaser & Strauss, 2004). Using the procedures outlined by Weiss (1994) for qualitative data analysis, I coded, sorted, and used local integration to develop the structural categories within the data (see below for coding categories). I assessed all relevant statements to develop a representative sample statement for each category and determined that three examples of the code category warranted exploration of that narrative while other responses would merely be listed. I then assessed and summarized the categories and variables to identify patterns in the data related to self-censorship. However, each interview provided an opportunity to analyze and interpret data to begin to form ideas for categories. After this step, the process of inclusive integration (Weiss, 1994) tied each previous analytical step together. Each of these steps will be described in detail below.

Coding and Sorting

I collected the data in the form of transcripts and coded the raw data in a way that linked the information to the structural categories, concepts, and variables that had been developed. I developed the majority of coding categories as they emerged from the data (see Appendix D for complete coding scheme) but I devised several preliminary categories such as “Type of Sanction” and “Method of Self-Censorship” prior to data

collection as a part of the Interview Guide. In all, there were seven primary coding categories including:

- “opinion expression inhibition mechanisms” (a priori);
- ”activism, speaking out, and expression” (a priori);
- “response to expression or dissent suppression” (from data);
- “other spiral of silence theory variable” (a priori);
- “other concern (predicted)” (a priori);
- “other concern (unpredicted)” (from data); and
- “communication apprehension” (a priori).

Each primary category also contained subcategories. For example, “other concern (predicted)” included “inappropriate setting, situation, or audience” and ten other subcategories. Each category and subcategory was assigned a code number using decimals as hierarchical separators. Each transcript was read and reread thoroughly and text highlighting was used to select text passages that either contained a statement that was affiliated with a coding category or text that was useful for narrative explanation.¹²

Data Reduction

I developed excerpt files from selected passages and I sorted coded material and placed them into text files related to the same issue or concept. Successful coding resulted in structural categories that are internally consistent as well as externally divergent or distinct from other categories (Guba, 1978).

¹² Note that no qualitative data analysis software was used in this research.

Table 3-5: Primary/Secondary Coding Categories

| |
|---|
| Opinion Expression Inhibition Mechanisms 1 |
| Self-Censorship 1.1 |
| Other OEI mechanism 1.2 |
| Impact of Silence and/or External Censorship 1.3 |
| Activism/Speaking Out/Expression 2 |
| Motivation/Predication/Motivation 2.1 |
| Comfort 2.2 |
| Strategy 2.3 |
| Type of Expression 2.4 |
| Ultimate Impact of Speech 2.5 |
| Dissent Suppression or Response to Expression 3 |
| External Censorship 3.1 |
| Media Deprecation 3.2 |
| Black Propaganda 3.3 |
| Mass Media Manipulation 3.4 |
| Mass Media Underestimation, False Balance, Disregard 3.5 |
| Sanctions (expected (a) or experienced (b)) 3.6 |
| Bribery or Purchase of Voice/Silence 3.7 |
| Other Concern (unpredicted) 4 |
| Other Concern (standard) 5 |
| Inappropriate setting, situation, or audience 5.1 |
| Response efficacy or seeing no useful outcome through speaking out 5.2 |
| Peace keeping motivation or desire to avoid social conflict 5.3 |
| Amount of knowledge on topic 5.4 |
| Level of Interest in political affairs 5.5 |
| Importance or salience of topic to individual 5.6 |
| Communication apprehension and dispositional shyness 5.7 |
| Lack of communication skills, confidence in 5.8 |
| Confidence in the correctness of one's opinion (opinion strength) 5.9 |
| Extremity of one's opinion on the topic 5.10 |
| Extent to which one's opinion has a moral basis 5.11 |
| Has other goals and interests to pursue 5.12 |
| Do not want to test or threaten authority 5.13 |
| Do not want to expose identity or beliefs 5.14 |
| Do not want to use time and energy in this way (Diversion Principle) 5.15 |
| Other SoS Variable 6 |
| Willingness to express an opinion (dependant) 6.1 |
| Current climate of opinion (independent) 6.2 |
| Perception of future climate opinion (independent) 6.3 |
| Perceived congruence between one's opinion and perceived public opinion 6.4 |
| Moral salience or emotional loading of issue (independent) 6.5 |
| Media tenor or position on issue (independent) 6.6 |
| Fear of social isolation (independent via Neuwirth et. al 2004) 6.7 |
| Communication Apprehension 7 |
| CA-trait (personality) 7.1 |
| CA-generalized context (trait modifier) 7.2 |
| CA-person/group (state+trait) 7.3 |
| CA-state (situational) 7.4 |

I developed a findings chapter (Chapter 4) that includes a summary of the questionnaire results, a biographical sketch of each informant to provide the reader with enough background on each informant so that they will not be confused by a lack of situational context, and the findings. Chapter 5 provides a discussion of the findings while Chapter 6 is the conclusion.

Local Integration

I conducted a process of local integration, which for issue-focused analysis like this study, should organize each structural category of data and placed it in a logical sequence internally (locally). *Local integration* is a process that organizes and integrates the data within each separate code category (Weiss, 1994; p. 158). Each category of coded data was summarized and a statement of interpretation was generated.

Weiss also (1994) suggests developing “minitheories” or hypotheses to help provide meaning to information from specific sections or related to specific issues as a step in the local integration process. These hypotheses can form the basis of the development of more substantial theories as the study progresses. This is precisely what occurred as the “minitheories” gave meaning to specific behaviors allowing me to build more substantial theory related to those concepts. For example, based on a minitheory developed from the data on how most of the informants self-censored proactively, that is without being prompted for a response, I was able to generate a theoretical distinction between reactive and proactive self-censorship.

Inclusive Integration

According to Weiss, (1994) the local integration process should result in a series of isolated sectors of analysis, the separate categories developed in local integration, that

need to be integrated into a logical and cohesive whole. This is what *inclusive integration* does by way of developing an overall framework for the study, placing categories or sections logically within the structure of the framework so that each connects coherently to the previous and succeeding sections. In this study, the framework concludes with a discussion section that follows the findings chapter that ties everything together with explanations of the data and a conclusions chapter that provides study conclusions, and suggestions for future study.

Trustworthiness

It is important that a qualitative research project establish a strong measure of trustworthiness. Trustworthiness in qualitative research consists of four (4) elements including credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln, in Guba (ed.), 1990; p. 71).

Credibility

Credibility is an assessment of whether the research findings represent a sound conceptual interpretation of the data extracted from the raw data collected from informants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Credibility for this research was met by providing informants with the draft findings containing their narrative and my interpretation of the meaning of the passages and allowing informants to make corrections or clarifications. This is referred to as member checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Transferability

Transferability is the degree to which the findings of this research can be applied beyond the bounds of the project (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I assert that the *thick description* that I employed in describing the phenomena in great detail meets the evaluative criteria for transferability as described by Lincoln & Guba (1985). Each research question that I have sought to answer and the presumptions made a priori were backed up with detailed data from informants.

Dependability

Dependability is an assessment of the quality of the integrated processes of data collection, data analysis, and theory generation and is often performed as an external audit (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). For this study, I sought to create a consistent approach to contacting potential informants, conducting the interview, and following up with data checks. Interview data in the form of transcripts was analyzed by developing coding categories and reading each transcript closely to identify individual code instances. I reviewed each separate code to re-evaluate the fit of the code to category and once this quality check was completed, I developed a master code table that provided a code count for each category. Code categories that resulted in a minimum of three instances were selected for more in-depth analysis and description. Other code categories were noted in the text as well in summary form. While this process was conducted manually and the dependability assessment made internally, I suggest that there was a high degree of dependability due to the effort to conduct each step consistently.

Confirmability

Confirmability is a measure of how well the inquiry's findings are supported by the data collected (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). According to Lincoln & Guba, there are four techniques for determining confirmability: the use of a confirmability audit, the use of an audit trail, triangulation, and reflexivity. I used an audit trail that is a "transparent description" of each step in the research process. Each step in the process has been described clearly in a text journal in MS Word. I created a file folder for each informant in which I kept notes from telephone conversations, e-mail correspondence, the interview guide with notes specific to each informant, and a coded transcript with margin notes.

Developing Trust with Informants

Thus, I sought to establish a trustworthy relationship with each informant. This began with first contact and developed in each subsequent contact. It was extended with the proper handling of ethical concerns that are described below plus follow through with all of the steps discussed in the initial materials presented to the informant (e.g. the informed consent form) and continued throughout each stage of the study to completion. The relationship I developed with interview participants was important because face-to-face contact and interaction occurred and established a level of trust that permitted the respondents to share their stories without any perceptible hesitation. Each separate interaction with informants was important in establishing trustworthiness and the completion of each step built or enhanced this characteristic. Successful steps taken such as a quick contact in response to volunteering as part of the questionnaire, diligent following through with a meeting time and place or phone call, a clear explanation of the

study, an adequate discussion of confidentiality concerns, the description of survey instructions, and answering any questions that participants may have regarding the survey, the process, or the study in general, all enhanced trustworthiness. The researcher-informant relationship was conscientiously continued after the interview with the sending of the draft transcript for comments and corrections, making the corrections, and repeating the process for draft findings as well.

Delimitations

Delimitations are criteria that provide limits or restrictions on the scope of inquiry so that the research will be clearly defined and bounded (Creswell, 1994; p. 110). This study was restricted to interviewing individuals located through the criterion-based samples who agree to participate. I had expected that a sufficient pool of potential interviewees would emerge from these techniques and while I extended the period of seeking participants, I did ultimately secure enough interviews to reach data saturation. Since certain sources and organizations were more likely than others to provide informative subjects, I had selected prospective sources and organizations (and the occasional individual) that I expected would generate richer and more informative data. However, since self-censorship and the motivations for that behavior are inherent in most individuals, a strict delimitation was not a major concern. If this research into self-censorship was focused on specific respondent traits such as shyness or other trait-based communication apprehension characteristics, then delimitation would be more prominent and relevant.

Limitations

Creswell defines *limitations* as potential weaknesses of the study (Creswell, 1994; p. 110). This study included several important limitations, which include the weaknesses of criterion-based sampling, the narrow focus of the questionnaire, the weak responses to participate in interviews by avowed self-censors and conversely the inordinate number of activists who did participate, and the potential for inaccurate information provided by the informants.

In-depth interviews involve the narrative perspective of the informant. As such, this is not information developed by a trained observer but information filtered and framed by a participant through a lens containing their biases and memory. When conducting in-depth interviews with informants on a topic of social concern, there is always the possibility that informants will provide fabricated or otherwise inaccurate information. Informants may wish to conceal or provide false or misleading information due to its sensitive nature or they may wish to tell the researcher what they believe the researcher wants to hear or that may provide a more flattering portrait of themselves. To an extent, these limitations can be minimized by the amount of trust that is developed between researcher and participant. However, this is not a measurable condition. They may also have faulty memories, which could be more pronounced over time. It was also possible that no relevant data at all would be collected. However, this was seen as unlikely since responses may still provide useful data about what people may *not* consider related to self-censorship or what they are willing to risk to speak out. This

limitation was ameliorated and the research enhanced by modifying the study to be inclusive of individuals that chose to overcome self-censorship pressures.

Marshall & Rossman (1999) caution that interviews rely on the skill of personal interaction brought by the interviewer. An interviewer with poor social skills is less likely to elicit useful information than one that can make a positive social connection with an informant and who can use those skills to encourage the informant to share their story willingly and trustingly. The technical skill level of the interviewer is also an important factor noted by Marshall & Rossman (p. 110). Important skills for conducting successful interviews include listening skills, successful question framing, and the ability to sensitively probe for the information needed and outlined by the interview guide. Prior to conducting interviews, I studied methods and practices of in-depth interviewing to develop and sharpen techniques and the necessary skills and I also practiced interviewing with acquaintances using the study instruments.

Next, the method of informant acquisition may be associated with the potential for bias given that those who agree to participate may be more outspoken individuals who care less about the potential penalties of speaking out. Furthermore, individuals found through participant-driven sampling are more likely to be activists or those with vested interests and these characteristics may give them greater incentive to express their views. These people might include the “hard core” or “avant garde” described by Noelle-Neumann (1993) who speak out in spite of the costs. These factors may limit the generalizability of findings and to some extent this turned out to be true. However, many of these activists were not always outspoken and a portion of their life was less activist and self-censorship did occur in these pre-activist time frames.

Finally, the questions posed during the interviews focused strictly on one or more events or occurrences of self-censorship on the part of the participant. The framing of the question in this way could have limited responses to a specific event whereas the participant may be a regular self-censor but that one specific event does not necessarily stand out.

Generalization of findings for any qualitative analyses should be approached cautiously. However, while generalizability may not be possible in some cases, qualitative research results can have a range of other positive outcomes including theory development and variable identification. In this case, valuable information was indeed gleaned from the “hard core” or outspoken informants who participated in the study.

Most of the limitations described above can be overcome by experience and familiarity with the techniques and skills of in-depth qualitative interviewing. In this study, experience was gained by conducting initial interviews, which gave me the opportunity to test the interview guide and questions and to gain experience in administering in-depth interviews. In addition, I acquired knowledge of the techniques in in-depth interviewing by referring to texts that explain interviewing such as those written by Weiss (1994). For respondent outspokenness bias, the interview questions will attempt to determine whether a participating individual is particularly outspoken by asking about the propensity to engage in political participatory and free speech behaviors and political conversation.

CHAPTER 4 – FINDINGS

Introduction and Structure of Chapter

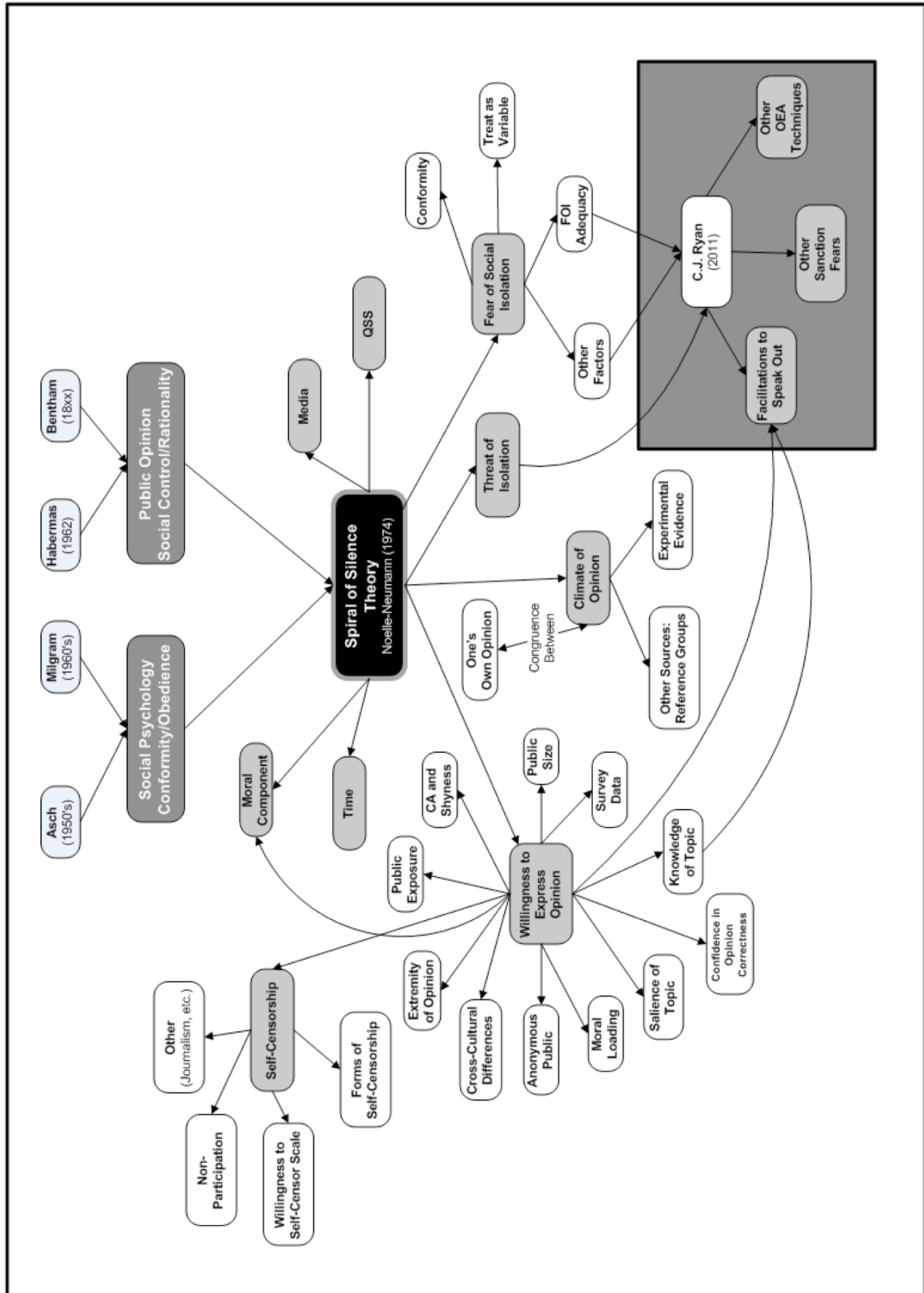
This chapter describes the findings for this research. First, I will provide background on the responses to the questionnaire that respondents initially filled out prior to their engaging in interviews as a second phase of the project. This data set, while not subject to statistical analysis, is an informative portrait of people who identified themselves as self-censors. Next, I will provide an initial biographical summary description of each informant which shall serve as providing some background and context to their story and make it easier to situate their narrative within that framework.

Following the informant biographies, I will describe the key finding from this research, that additional sanction types beyond fear of isolation are relevant to a self-censorship calculus. Next, I will describe a secondary finding that was anticipated by Hayes (2005) in his study of opinion expression avoidance (OEA) strategies. I will discuss some additional OEA strategies employed by study informants. Finally, I will summarize a series of additional findings that could be inspirational for future research in the area of self-censorship. Each of the findings situated in relation to the literature is depicted in Figure 4-1 on the following page.

Questionnaire Results

As I noted in the methods section, I used online web-based questionnaire containing 21 questions to locate participants for the in-depth interview phase. A total of 163 respondents participated in the questionnaire and 46 responded that they would be willing to participate in the second phase, an in-depth interview. The entire data set from the questionnaire can be found in Appendix E.

Figure 4-1: Findings in Relation to Literature



Of the 163 respondents to the questionnaire, nearly 91% answered that they had experienced a self-censorship situation. The majority of topics that the self-censorship acts were related to included politics and public policy or science. Other topics identified included religion, social welfare, or religion. Respondents were split between the type of situation in which the self-censorship experience occurred with 45.8% answering that it occurred in a social situation or setting with family, friends, colleagues, and neighbors while 41% answered that it was in a professional or work-related situation. One of the key variables related to the spiral of silence theory is that the topic or issue at the center of the self-censorship experience must be considered important to the self-censor. Indeed of the questionnaire respondents 98.7% said that the issue was somewhat important, very important, or most important to them. The questionnaire asked how respondents felt after they had self-censored themselves. Noteworthy responses included the fact that 50.6% of the respondents said that they agreed that the self-censoring experience made them feel “safe and self-preserving.” Other responses that relate to spiral of silence variables include the feeling “I don't think what I would've said would've made any difference anyway” which elicited a response of strongly agree or agree from 53% of the respondents, 64.5% of respondents said that they disagreed or strongly disagreed they were comfortable and at ease with themselves for self-censoring. And nearly 60% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that as a result of their self-censorship, they were angry at someone or something else.

Corresponding closely with the spiral silence theory, 65.8% of respondents said that they felt that their opinion was in the minority. Reasons stated for how they came to

this opinion included; that they didn't hear their opinion repeated often enough; that family, friends, or coworkers often expressed opposing opinions; that the mass media reported that the majority of people held an opposing opinion; and that the mass media expressed opposing opinion in editorials.

Most (64.3%) of respondents said that they felt that discussing their opinions openly would be risky and they might be punished or sanctioned for their expression. Of those who felt it would be risky to speak out, the primary sanctions they were concerned with were: 72% of respondents felt that social isolation was of concern; over 50% of respondents felt that economic sanctions were likely; 26.1% of respondents felt that physical sanctions were possible, and 18.9% of respondents felt that legal or political sanctions were likely. Twenty-one respondents (18.6%) answered that they were concerned about a different type of sanction but further inquiry revealed that respondents were unclear about the category into which their sanctioned fell. For example, one respondent was concerned about the moral judgments by others. This could be classified as concern over social sanction. Two respondents were concerned over potential harm to others, an issue that I learned more about from my interviewees. One woman was concerned that by speaking out about child abuse that she witnessed occurring on a public bus, her actions might result in further abuse of the child in private after her rebuke. Another respondent was concerned about the reaction or the possible repercussions to others in his group by his speech. This indicates an altruistic motivation for some self-censorship decisions.

Another respondent was concerned about being “outed” in terms of their identity—that particular identity was unclear but it was indicative of a gay or lesbian

person being “outed” in public, which could be classified as a social sanction. A respondent was concerned about an academic sanction, which could be classified as a professional sanction. One respondent indicated that they were concerned about a sexual sanction. While this is not made specifically clear as to what this referred, it could be a physical sanction for sexual abuse or rape or a social sanction if there was a gender bias involved. A respondent indicated that they were concerned about affecting group morale in a military setting. In this particular instance this is a very complex variable that might include a physical sanction but might include others as well. And finally, an activist was concerned that the viability of their campaign might be threatened if they spoke out. This is another complex variable in which professional or economic sanctions might be of concern but that there might be something more multifaceted taking place here in the sense that the campaigner is not working on this job strictly for economic or professional reasons. He also had a strong concern over the issue that they're involved with and thus must have some additional reasoning behind their concern for self-censoring. By factoring in these other responses into the four primary categories, I was able to increase the percentage of those responders concerned over social isolation to 73%, those concerns over economic sanctions to 52%, those concerned over physical sanctions to 29%, and those concerned over legal or political sanctions to 20%.

Question number 14 was most directly related to the variety of variables associated with the spiral of silence theory. The following results (Table 4-1 below) indicate how many respondents by percentage indicated that the following variables were either extremely important, very important, or important to the respondent. Note that for “concern over sanctions” 66.7% responded that this was an extremely important, very

important or important factor. But that data in Table 4-1 also demonstrates that concerns can be expressed in a multitude of ways. For example, the strongest reason people gave was that, “Expressing your opinion would not have led to a useful outcome.” There could be many reasons for this, but one reason might be that sanctions would produce “undesirable” outcomes. Similarly, “Desire to keep the peace or avoid social conflict” is not necessarily independent of concern over sanctions. In summary, teasing apart the forces that motivate decisions to censor is clearly a challenging enterprise.

Table 4-1: Question 14: What other reasons might have motivated you to stay silent? Please note how important each of the following types of reasons might have influenced your self-censorship

| | Important | Not Important | Response Count |
|--|-------------|---------------|----------------|
| Concern over sanctions | 66.7% (98) | 33.3% (49) | 147 |
| Inappropriate setting or situation | 45.7% (69) | 54.3% (62) | 151 |
| Expressing your opinion would not have led to a useful outcome (response efficacy) | 82.2% (125) | 17.8% (27) | 152 |
| Desire to keep the peace or avoid social conflict | 84.2% (128) | 15.82% (24) | 152 |
| Lack of knowledge about the topic | 28.0% (42) | 72.0% (108) | 150 |
| Shyness | 29.5% (44) | 70.5% (105) | 149 |
| Lack of confidence in communication skills | 31.1% (47) | 68.9% (104) | 151 |
| No appropriate audience to discuss it with | 60.3% (88) | 39.7% (58) | 146 |

I gained further illumination on the nature of self-censorship by examining answers to question 15. Here I asked respondents to explain what they actually did when they self-censored. A total of 37.3% of respondents said that they chose to ignore the question or problem, another 37.3% said they changed the subject or steered the topic in a different direction, 23.5% said that they walked away, 17.6% said that they modified their opinion to be closer to group opinions and norms, 9.2% said they nodded their heads

in agreement, 7.2% said they stated that they had no opinion on the matter, and 1.3% said that they stated the opposite of their true belief in order to agree with the speaker.

Description of Respondents

A total of twenty-three respondents were interviewed as part of this study and nineteen transcripts were generated for data. Of these nineteen, twelve were female and seven were male. I found four participants on the Massplanners Listserv, which is a professional listserv for practicing town planners and planning officials in Massachusetts; I located four participants through local non-profit networks in the vicinity of my community; I found three participants through the Bulletin Board at the university I am studying at; three participants were found by contacting an activist organization in Appalachia that seeks to stop mountaintop removal coal mining; I contacted two leading author/activists with the query that they might know people in their own communities who fit the profile I was seeking and they agreed to participate themselves. In addition, each made recommendations that led to one additional participant each and one of these two was included in the data. I also found one participant through the Environmental Communication Network Listserv. I located a participant by contacting the non-profit organization Investigative Reporters and Editors. As a means to secure the confidentiality of the respondents in this study, I changed the names, locations, institutions, and other identifying variables of each story. These changes were made in a way to try to preserve the tone and character of each story so that a Mary might be changed to a Marie or Ellen rather than a less culturally consistent Carmela or Khalida. A brief description of each participant shall be provided as follows:

1. ALLISON: Allison is a middle-age town planner for a small New England town located about an hour from Boston. She has worked for the town for a number of years and is well respected by her Planning Board and the citizens of the town generally. Allison does not consider herself very outspoken and in fact, while she considers herself extremely honest, she does not see the value in speaking out just for its own sake, which to her may do more harm than good. Allison was interviewed in a meeting room in the Town Hall in which she works. The primary experience that Allison's recalled had to do with legislation her planning board chairman wanted passed at town meeting. Allison had strong misgivings about the legislation but chose to remain silent about her concerns and the legislation passed. Allison also is the president of the municipal employees union in town and expressed her feelings regarding this role as well.

2. RON: Ron is a town-planner in his late 40's who works for a small shore community in Massachusetts. Common in New England, Ron is essentially a one person department and serves as the professional and administrative staff for the Planning Board and Board of Appeals. Ron generally has no difficulty speaking out and also is active in his home community with volunteer tasks. Ron was interviewed in his offices in Town Hall. There are two issues that Ron wanted to talk about. The first had to do with the fact that Ron wanted a similar position in the town that he lived in so that he could reduce his commute and be closer to home. Ron believed that if he self-censored himself related to all town issues, there would be no controversial positions or opinions that could be attributed to

him and that with his strong planning background, he'd be an ideal candidate for his town to hire. In addition, Ron chose not to speak out about the questionable practices the school district engaged in related to construction of playgrounds that contained significant amounts of latex. Ron's son has a latex allergy. However, Ron feels that speaking out on this issue might be harmful for his son socially so he tells his son to avoid the latex areas.

3. **CHERYL:** Cheryl is a thirty-something town planner who works for the fictional town of Eastwich On Cape Cod in Massachusetts. I interviewed Cheryl in a coffee shop in a town near her work. Cheryl hadn't been a town planner for very long and her current job was her first. The issue that Cheryl self-censored herself over related to how a co-worker spoke disparagingly to others about racial minorities which she was easily able to overhear. While Cheryl did initially speak to the co-worker about this, the behavior continued and Cheryl did not follow up with the co-worker nor did she report the behavior to their supervisor, who was a member of the minority group that the co-worker spoke disparagingly about.
4. **MIKE:** Mike serves as a community liaison for a non-profit regional organization in north central Massachusetts and makes his home in New Hampshire. He is also a planner by profession and experiences many of the same circumstances as planners who work directly for municipalities. In his 40's, Mike is generally moderately outspoken but has gained his voice over the past decade with issues such as the Iraq War and peak oil moving to the forefront. Mike was interviewed in the courtyard outside of his workplace. The issue that Mike wanted to talk

about related to the atmosphere in his prior planning office in the early periods of the Iraq war in 2003. Due to the overwhelmingly conservative staff at that time, Mike chose not to be as expressive as he wanted to be, and did not react to speech that he disagreed with strongly. Mike also related a story about his current workplace where his beliefs related to energy, economy, and the environment might be too strong for the clients working for his organization. Therefore Mike tones down his rhetoric to be more acceptable to the clients.

5. GRETCHEN: A retired grandmother in her early 60's, Gretchen is a volunteer appointee with an archdiocese council in a northern New England state. While she is respectful of authority, particularly that of the church, she has become more outspoken on selective issues in recent years. Gretchen was interviewed in the café of a large bookstore near the community in which she lives. Gretchen found herself in a difficult position related to the election of 2008 because she is a deeply devout Catholic and a faithful member of the archdiocese council of a very conservative state. The associate bishop strongly urged all Council members to vote for the Republican candidate for president because of the views on abortion and other issues related to the Catholic faith on the part of the Democratic candidate. Gretchen believed that it was time for a change and thought that the Democratic candidate, Barack Obama, was a good choice. But she did not express this opinion on the council nor to anyone else in her circle of friends and acquaintances. Gretchen also shared a story about how she felt that the

archdiocese council's position on gays and lesbians was unacceptable. But she also did not share these opinions publicly.

6. JOHN: John is a financial analyst in his late 40's who works for the social services department of a state government in northern New England. As a conservative, it is difficult for John to discuss many issues with his co-workers who are mostly progressive liberals even though he largely believes in much of the socially supportive work that the agency is involved in. I interviewed John in a restaurant near his home. As a financial analyst in a government department often associated with progressive politics, John found himself often at odds with the political discussion in his office. John learned to keep his mouth shut rather than create conflicts that could escalate. Another story that John related had to do with his own diagnosis of depression. John kept his affliction to himself for several years before "outing" himself.

7. MARIE: Marie is in her early 60's and is a foster caregiver. She served on the planning board and board of zoning appeals for the small western Massachusetts town where she resides. Marie is a very practical individual and respects authority. She is generally not outspoken, taking the position that everybody is entitled to their own opinion. She likes to keep the peace when matters such as religion or politics are broached. I interviewed Marie in her home with her husband present for much of the interview. Marie related a story that is probably very typical of small-town politics. As a member of the local planning board and board of zoning appeals, she kept silent in her early years on these boards as the

most inexperienced member. While not necessarily self-censoring herself by definition, she was strategically circumspect as she gained more experience and a stronger voice over time. However, Marie did experience some backlash from the decisions that she participated in as a member of the planning board when a service provider she often hired to plow her driveway in the winter time decided to no longer do business with her.

8. **MARCIA:** Marcia, in her early 30's, was a researcher and policy analyst based in western Massachusetts when she was interviewed. Marcia is generally quite outspoken as a matter of professional necessity but is occasionally circumspect when the situation calls for caution. I interviewed Marcia in a café in a town near her home. Her story relates to the environmental issue she is studying as part of her Ph.D. program. As part of her internship, she was working for an industry group who were suspicious of her motivations. She learned to temper her enthusiasm and the extent to which she spoke of her findings in order to complete the internship. She also self-censored herself with her classmates in graduate school who also felt she was too radical.
9. **MITCH:** Mitch is a wind energy campaign coordinator in his late 20's from the southeastern U.S. He is active with wind energy generation issues, particularly how wind can be used as an alternative to coal and other fossil fuels. As a professional activist, Mitch is generally quite outspoken. I interviewed him in a coffee shop in a college town in Appalachia. He began working closely in a campaign with an activist organization opposing mountaintop removal coal

mining. His self-censorship related to conflicts in working with this local organization. What Mitch considered standard practice in taking leadership and spokesperson roles in his position in the campaign was considered bold and bossy by one key local participant. At times, Mitch would stay in the background and keep thoughts and opinions regarding the direction and tenor of the campaign to himself. At other times, he would speak out and create conflict with the local if he felt the issue was important enough.

10. JENNY: Jenny is in her late 50's and she lives and works in a small mountain town in Appalachia. She is a leading activist who is seeking an end to the practice of mountaintop removal coal mining. Jenny is very outspoken and rarely holds back but does take careful measures to protect herself and her loved ones. I interviewed Jenny in the offices of the nonprofit organization that she leads. Jenny's story is less about self-censorship and more about being an activist in the face of daunting adversity; she has been threatened often and even been subject to physical violence. Yet even as outspoken as she is, she still needs to self-censor in certain ways and is selective and strategic in her activism when necessary.

11. LESLIE: Leslie is a middle-aged activist who works in the same office as Jenny and is active with alternatives to mountaintop removal coal mining including wind energy. Not previously outspoken, Leslie became more active in speaking out as the damage caused by mountaintop removal mining became more apparent in her rural Appalachian community. She was also interviewed in the offices of the non-profit organization she worked for. Leslie's self-censorship was largely

due to the fact that her children still lived with her and when the last child moved out of the house, she began her activism career. Leslie has also been threatened with violence for her activism.

12. JARRETT: Jarrett is an American environmental activist, author, and academic well known for his books about the destruction of the natural environment and what humanity should do about it. He is about as outspoken as anyone could be and occasionally gets into trouble and is routinely criticized by more mainstream environmentalists. Many deep green environmental activists consider Jarrett to be one of their spokespersons today. I interviewed Jarrett by phone and followed up by e-mail with additional questions. Jarrett's story is also one of lifelong activism. He often breaks the ice at public meetings taking the heat and making it easier for others to speak out on issues like timbering and the threat of salmon extinction in North America. Yet Jarrett also had a seminal self-censorship experience that still lives with him today.

13. CATHY: Cathy is an undergraduate college student at a small school in western Massachusetts who spoke about her experiences as a teenager growing up a lesbian and liberal in the rural Rocky Mountain west. She maintains that she has always possessed a quiet but determined outspokenness but that certain situations demanded silence. Kathy talks about self-censoring herself in a fairly tricky situation related to high school but off school premises. It related to how a teacher invited students to his home for a holiday dinner and proceeded to ask the

students to pray with him. She also spoke about silence in family settings. I interviewed Cathy in my private office.

14. RACHEL: Rachel is a woman in her late 40's who is involved as an activist in local politics. She also maintains a blog and a local e-mail listserv dedicated to local issues. Rachel is quite outspoken but events over the past several years regarding property development in her metro Boston suburban community have her concerned about her outspokenness. I interviewed her in her living room. Rachel became involved in a political situation over future planning for a portion of her community. She related how municipal leaders sought to delimit and steer the public input and decision making. In her attempt to broaden the public participation process, she was subject to significant backlash from these officials. She was concerned about potential sanctions and chose to self-censor herself until she figured out how to better approach her activism.

15. GARY: Gary is a retired professor from the U.S. southwest who established his voice late in his academic career and through his new found outspokenness, came in conflict with the administration of the university before choosing to leave and dedicate himself to activism and blogging. I interviewed Gary by phone after contacting him through his popular blog. Gary admits to being quite introverted for most of his life. His self-censorship was primarily due to being uncomfortable with his knowledge base and voice and when he gained these later in his academic career, he didn't hold back any longer and spoke passionately and frankly about issues of resource scarcity, environmental damage, and our culture's role in these

dilemmas. For his outspokenness, he incurred the wrath of the administration of the university where he taught and, after fighting a successful libel suit and avoiding wrongful termination, he later left academia to concentrate on his current activities.

16. JIM: Jim is a late 20's freelance journalist based in northern California. I located Jim through a professional journalists organization. Jim considers himself an activist as well as a journalist and has been fairly outspoken during his career. I interviewed him by phone. As a journalism student and activist, Jim attended an antiwar protest to chronicle the events for a blog. Jim was arrested and charged with a number of crimes and held for the FBI to interview. After his release, Jim decided to follow through and write his experiences for the blog, but toned it down significantly due to his fear of reprisal. This experience will affect him to this day and his writing is far more subdued because of it. Jim also related a story of how a media colleague was sanctioned by local businesses for a story that he wrote.

17. SCARLETT: Scarlett is a part-time homecare worker and stripper (exotic dancer) from rural Alaska. In her late 20's, Scarlett is extremely circumspect and solitary, preferring a life lived in the woods without much social interaction. While she hasn't expressed herself much on environmental issues, she considers herself an activist. I located Scarlett through an environmental discussion group and interviewed her by phone. Her story was an experience in her local community

when an oil company came to drill test wells and she spoke out against some of their practices. Since the entire native community shares in the bounty of energy strikes, there was significant opposition to her outspokenness. She relates in her story how her type of activism often elicits threats of violence and expulsion or banishment from the community.

18. ELIN: Elin is in her 40's and lives in suburban Boston. She is non-profit executive and community organizer. Elin is another activist personality and her self-censorship experiences are diverse and relatively unique. Her views on expression relate largely to their utility and if speech has no value toward culture change, she generally doesn't speak out. Elin's interest is focused more on community building rather than merely speaking out for the sake of it. She leaves the technical issues and problems of our growth society to others and focuses more on the development and nurturing of community at the local level. Elin has always been what she terms "edgewalker" referring to how she's never quite deeply embedded within any specific group but instead is located more on the periphery looking inward. This characteristic has allowed Elin to participate in numerous groups but she also maintains a critical perspective not easily achieved by hard core group members.

19. KENDRA: An environmental educator who works for a major west coast aquarium, Kendra feels a strong pressure to self-censor in her family setting. Her conservative grandfather is described as very condescending to progressive opinions and has a history of marginalizing and denigrating family members who

have clashed with his ideologies. Therefore, Kendra has self-censored herself to remain in good standing in the family and also out of a deep sense of respect for her grandfather. Kendra also shared how she needs to keep her environmental activism hidden at her job because it is frowned upon by management. Even so, she still experiences verbal abuse from visitors who disagree with her educational material. I spoke to Kendra by telephone.

Key Finding: Confirmation of Sanction Relevance

This section describes data from informants that are consistent with the premise that I developed for the study that I expected to find additional fear-based variables in addition to fear of isolation (a social sanction) that influences self-censorship. Existing quantitative-based research into self-censorship generally and the spiral of silence theory specifically did not consider other fear-based sanctions as explicit reasons why people chose to self-censor themselves. Beginning with the seminal text on the spiral of silence, “The Spiral of Silence: Public Opinion—Our Social Skin,” Noelle-Neumann (1993) describes how LaPiere, “...divided these sanctions into three categories: physical sanctions, economic sanctions, and, most important, psychological sanctions¹³...” Both Noelle-Neumann and LaPiere considered social sanctions to be the most significant of the three types of sanctions initially considered by LaPiere. And while in some circumstances and for some individuals, this is assuredly true, I argue that the other two types of sanctions, economic and physical, not only can and often do interact with social sanctions as will be described below, but they also can possess a far more fundamental threat to the

¹³ Note that while LaPiere and Noelle-Neumann both refer to “psychological” sanctions, most subsequent researchers into the spiral of silence and in other disciplines refer to this type of sanction as “social” and thus I will adopt and use “social” to refer to this type of sanction.

individual—that of life or survival—and in many circumstances, such threats would likely have a much larger and more immediate impact in determining whether one chooses to take the risk to speak out or not.

Table 4-2: Sanction Classifications

| Sanction Type | Description | Conceptualized By | Reference |
|------------------------|---|--|---|
| Social (Psychological) | A social sanction consists of punishments (or withholding of rewards) derived from individuals or groups that the speaker holds in esteem or value within his/her social network for violating a group norm or standard. | LaPiere | A Theory of Social Control; Note that this conceptualization is developed without references or explicit empirical foundation. |
| Economic | The threat or actual removal or reduction of economic viability from an individual is a technique of social control called an economic sanction. Essentially, according to LaPiere, changes in the goodwill of others can and do impact the flow of goods and services enjoyed by an individual and upon which the individual is dependent upon for status and indeed for survival. | LaPiere | A Theory of Social Control; Note that this conceptualization is developed without references or explicit empirical foundation |
| Professional | A professional sanction is a reaction to expression results in some cost to one's professional viability. This could include being made to feel foolish for making a professional error or faux pas (not sure the difference from previous because any professional cost could impact earnings or other economic viability). | Hayes, Webler, Ryan | Hayes et al. (2005) |
| Physical | According to LaPiere, a physical sanction is intended to physically punish an individual for violation of group norms. This could include expulsion, physical punishment such as a beating or other violent act, or at the most extreme end, extermination. | LaPiere | A Theory of Social Control; Note that this conceptualization is developed without references or explicit empirical foundation |
| Legal/Political | A legal or political sanction is the application of some legal mechanism to an individual as a result of their speech or to prevent further speech. These mechanisms include lawsuits, subpoenas (for testimony, deposition, etc.), harassment, monitoring or wiretapping, arrest, detention, prosecution, punitive bail, framing, deprecation, loss of custody. | Various including Bentham, Foucault, and Tittle. | Newly conceptualized for this research as applied to self-censorship. Possesses a long scholarly history in the criminal law and sociological literature related to criminal deviance and punishment. |

While LaPiere described each of the three sanctions he identifies in great detail, and Noelle-Neumann restates their relevance, (see Chapter 3) neither scholar recognized the applicability of a fourth significant sanction—legal/political—that is acknowledged by sociologists, legal scholars, and criminologists and is important to consider. The legal/political sanction possesses some elements of both economic and physical sanctions (e.g. litigation does impact economic resources and incarceration is physical), I argue that it is unique enough to stand alone as a separate sanction for the purposes of this research. Additionally, economic sanctions initially included a range of non-economic professional sanctions or penalties and this suggested a separate category. Thus, the professional sanction is conceptualized as the fifth type of sanction used to categorize the data as Hayes et al. (2005a) describes. These five sanction types are described in Table 4-2 above.

Data From Interviews

Each of the sanction types that informants experienced, were threatened with, or were concerned about are described in the following sections. Table 4-3 below provides a summary of many of these sanctions experienced by the informants.

Physical Sanctions

Helvarg's (2004) data in the form of personal stories of sanctions for speaking out suggests that people who are faced with physical threats would choose to self-censor or those who spoke out would experience actual sanctions for doing so. In fact, several of my informants bear those expectations out. Two respondents in particular, Jenny and Leslie, both activists campaigning against mountaintop removal coal mining in

Appalachia, experienced threats of violence and were assaulted. Their experiences clearly exemplify the threat of violence against environmental activists in coal country.

Table 4-3: Examples of Sanctions Experienced by Informants

| Threats | Informant | Context |
|--|-------------------------------|--|
| Physical Sanctions/Threats: Violence | | |
| Physical beatings | Jenny and Leslie, Cathy | Community |
| Attacked at march | Leslie | Community |
| Placed in dangerous situation | Marcia | Work Group |
| Car forced off the road | Jarrett | Community |
| Physical Sanctions/Threats: Property Damage | | |
| Truck shot at | Mitch | Community |
| Burn down cabin | Scarlett | Community/Home |
| Tamper with brakes | Jarrett | Community |
| Slash tires | Jarrett | Community |
| Physical Sanctions/Threats: Other | | |
| Verbal abuse | Kendra | Workplace |
| Rough arrest | Jim | Community |
| Economic Sanctions/Threats | | |
| Loss of job | Marcia, Gary, Allison, Leslie | Workplace |
| Not hired | Marcia | Professional |
| Laid off | Elin | Workplace |
| Loss of advertising revenue | Jim | Economic/Business |
| Loss of living expenses and other funds | Kendra | Home/School |
| Loss of contracts or sales | Ron, Jim, Jarrett | Community, Business, Intellectual Property |
| Observed threats against others | Leslie, Jenny | Community |
| Professional Sanctions/Threats | | |
| Not invited back to speak | Marcia | Professional |
| Not promoted | Marcia | Professional |
| Loss of professional credibility | Marcia, Gary | Professional |
| Loss of connections | Kendra | Family/Professional |
| Unspecified professional sanction | Cheryl | Workplace |
| Erode standing within office | Mike | Professional |
| Loss of ability to do job (car damaged) | Jenny | Community/Professional |
| Maintain professional credibility | Mitch | Community/Workplace |
| Legal/Political Sanctions/Threats | | |
| Arrest | Jim, Leslie | Professional, Community |
| Litigation | Rachel | Workplace, Community |
| Lose political capital | Allison | Workplace |

Jenny explained how she faces violence on a regular basis:

JENNY: ... my life is on the line right now, you know. My personal life is on the line right now. I've been attacked...assaulted, and...there are coal

miners, coal company operators everyday saying, you know, it's a war, we're going to take care of those tree huggers, and basically just Saturday there was an interview with a coal miner from Coal Country and she said the coal miners were taking a stand. It was going to be brutal and it was going to be physical. So basically they are literally telling everybody we're going to beat the crap out of you... There've been threats of burning the house down, physical violence....

Jenny's use of the term war evokes powerful imagery of a violent conflict and indeed she relates the violence she and her associates have experienced. This conflict between mining interests and opponents to the practice of mountaintop removal coal mining, the latter of which Jenny belongs, is described as a brutal battle that is a part of everyday life in the coalfields evoking "the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short." referred to by Hobbes (1629, 1904). Yet while the threat of violence is an everyday possibility, Jenny continues her activism and outspokenness out of her love of and connection to the land.

In response to these threats, Jenny indicated that she has learned as an activist to be strategic and selective about her speech as a self-protective mechanism. She recalls that when faced with imminent violence, she constrains herself. This is a strategy she learned from seasoned activists who marched with Martin Luther King at Selma. She noted that it took her experienced friends to point out that talk was not always feasible, that there are moments when talk is inappropriate, ineffective. In this sense, control over one's speech has both a strategic and a self-censorship aspect to it. And if speech in these situations will not be effective, then there is no reason to employ it at that time.

Physical violence and attacks can take many forms. Jenny noted that people's hearing was targeted in one protest, "...they had these little miniature air horns that they

blowed in people's ears." And she also noted that threats to damage property have also occurred, "...they tried to cut our power lines."

The next passage describes the potential for violence in the coalfields. Leslie, at the time of the interview, was a co-worker of Jenny in the same activist organization. She was also greatly aware of the potential for violence in the coalfields. She delayed her activism until all of her children had grown and left home so that they would not be a potential target as a reaction of her work:

LESLIE: There is only one thing that kept me from, for a number of years, from stepping forward on this [mountaintop removal coal mining] issue. Now I was active on another issue prior to this ...But when it came to this issue [mountaintop removal coal mining], I purposely did not step forward, I did some work in the background doing letters to the editor and speaking at hearings and doing just a very limited amount of stuff opposing mountaintop removal because I did not want to put my kids in danger...on this issue. So I waited, I planned for a couple of years, planning for my last child to turn 18 and getting ready to move out of the house.

While this strategy was intended to protect her children, the aspect of self-censorship that should be illuminated is that this effectively removed Leslie from contributing her unique speech to the conflict all during this time. As the spiral of silence theory posits, any individual act of self-censorship reduces the strength and viability of the issue in the public domain.

While Leslie's strategy was to delay her activism, her speech, Jenny's was to protect her loved ones by distancing them from her physically. She explained that she took steps to protect her children from potential targeted violence aimed at her and also sought to limit the possibility of her car being vandalized since she would no longer be able to work.

A covert physical threat emerged for Marcia, a plastics researcher, who worked with a prominent plastics manufacturer for an internship, was suspected as being a spy with the plastics industry due to her immense knowledge about plastics. She was invited to go surfing in a dangerous location and got into trouble and was injured while her invitees merely watched. She considered it a test of loyalty:

MARCIA: [It was] A really famous organization...I worked with them last summer and they were the ones that thought I was a spy with the plastics industry and so I was taken out on a research cruise and I was invited to participate in an activity that was pretty dangerous...to go surfing—I've never surfed—in a rocky spot and I got into trouble, the surfboard cracked in half and I was getting thrown against the rocks and they just watched and it was like, "What's going on here." I talked about it later with another crew member and he felt that I was being tested to see if I was really who I said I was and if I was loyal and...I think I passed but I was really injured so...

This type of self-censorship technique, holding back expression of one's knowledge, is frequently used to avoid sanctions as will be discussed later.

Threats or concerns of violence

Six informants described being concerned about violence or feeling threatened. Wind power activist Mitch was a witness to violence against coal country activists and was himself concerned about threats of violence. Environmental educator Kendra is often subject to argumentative and sometimes even belligerent guests who are upset about the aquarium's program to teach about climate change and how this effects the oceans. She has had to request that security remove people to maintain order:

Other respondents were either directly threatened with violence or believed that violence could result if they continued to speak out. Scarlett, an exotic dancer and environmental activist from Alaska, was concerned about oil test drilling near her home

and decided to address her concerns by circulating a brochure in the town. As a result, village elders were angered and gave her a warning:

SCARLETT: ...so I took it to town and I put it up everywhere all over the village and I talked to a few people about it and several people told me like, you know, the native council is not going to be happy, the people are not going to be happy with you doing this, your cabin is going to get burned down and you might as well just be quiet, you're not going to accomplish anything...you're going to end up with your cabin burned down and getting run out of here...so they were telling me, "somebody's going to burn down your cabin and you're already a woman who lives alone out in the woods and you should just shut up" basically. And so I did...shut up in my community.

While this threat was a concern to Scarlett, she decided to make an anonymous complaint to the Department of Natural Resources in Fairbanks. Somehow, word of the anonymous complaint was personalized and word got back to the tribal elders that she had taken her concerns to the State. This prompted a second visit to her by the elders, which, since she was unarmed, she avoided by hiding. While the immediate situation had resolved itself, Scarlett seemed to minimize the significance of the incident, attributing the visit to alcohol and the ultimate outcome to the sobering up of the visitors plus her normally armed status. These passages speak to an atmosphere of conformity to tribal customs and norms as dictated by the native council. She spoke of the lack of formal law enforcement in her community and the vigilante justice that serves in its place. Viewed as a progression of decisions on her part, Scarlett initially tried to communicate her concerns non-verbally but directly with a brochure. Warned by the native council about this act, she responded by trying to make an anonymous complaint to the State, which since it was intended to mask her identity, was arguably a mild form of self-censorship. But the anonymity was short-lived. She then decided to self-censor completely. The threat of

violence was always a background consideration for Scarlett because of her experience in other communities. She attributed her fear of retribution by the tribe to observing this kind of vigilante violence as a form of social control in other communities in which she'd lived

Jim was arrested while filming at an anti-war protest in San Francisco in 2005. A police officer notices that he's taking pictures and tries to grab his camera:

JIM: ...I just ripped it out of his hands and just chucked it behind me. And the next thing I knew him along with these two other riot cops had tackled me. And I believe...somebody had punched me in the face...they tackled me and arrested me and threw me into the good old pit where all the other protestors were. And I was at this point was kind of like 'what the hell are you doing? I'm taking pictures with the media...?'

This is a clear example of a harassment arrest, which Boykoff (2007) discusses. Boykoff notes that, "harassment arrests shift focus away from the ideas, institutions, and individuals that the activists are critiquing and onto the dissidents themselves," and explains that harassment arrests often generate negative media coverage of the activists that can overshadow later acquittals or dropped charges (p. 140). Within the journalism community, Jim relates that there are stories of what happens to fellow journalists trying to do their job, being beaten and intimidated. Because of this, Jim doesn't feel safe as a journalist in these situations.

Other informants, while not directly victims of violence or threats, observed others being threatened or assaulted or knew specific people who were assaulted for speaking out. Respondent Jarrett, the author from northern California, has also directly observed violence against activists for speaking out:

JARRETT: I've known activists who have had their tires slashed and who have had their brakes tampered with. I've known them who were forced off the road in their cars. I have been physically threatened.

Finally, there were several respondents who refrained from speaking out or otherwise expressing themselves out of a visceral fear of potential physical violence. Rachel is concerned that the selectman who has embarrassed her in public meetings, aspires to higher office. She is concerned that he might be capable of violence against her because he might view her activism as a threat to his aspirations..

Cathy, a lesbian from Wyoming would never walk the streets of her hometown holding hands with her partner at night. She explained that even during the day she knows that she and her partner would be stared at and probably jeered since that's happened already, even in the purportedly more liberal eastern U.S. But at night, she would fear for her safety

These vignettes indicate that the potential for and reality of violence and physical sanctions is a real possibility and does influence people when they consider speaking out. Similar to the stories portrayed in Helvarg, activists in California, Appalachia, and other locations whom I had the opportunity to speak to each had a slightly different brush with physical danger. Speaking out in the face of power and/or cultural norms is perceived by many as a form of deviance (LaPiere, 1954) and deviance is often met with sanctions of one type or another. In the cases portrayed above, the sanction of choice was a physical one against person or property and did impact informants willingness to speak out. Further, for those who have experienced violence, the act may have had the effect of silencing others who may have wished to speak, since they would not want to be similarly sanctioned.

Economic or Professional Sanctions

The second of three sanction types described by LaPiere (1954) is economic and as discussed in depth in the literature review, economic sanctions can be highly complex and interconnected with other sanction types. In addition, to speak of such sanctions with a focus on the term “economic” does not do justice to the complexity of the phenomenon. As stated previously, a better term might be “professional sanction” as this would, for example, include circumstances that could involve academic penalties and non-economic factors in one’s professional circumstances. A familiar means to provoke economic or professional sanctions is through whistleblower acts since the literature cites that 98% of whistleblowers were fired for their actions. Finally, since there is enough of a difference between the definition of economic sanction and professional sanction, each incidence will distinguish between the two in the text below.

Of the interview respondents in this study, 16 of 19 indicated that economic sanctions were either a concern to them or that they actually experienced economic sanctions or witnessed those who did. Recall that 56 of 113 respondents to the initial questionnaire (nearly 50 percent) indicated that economic sanctions were important to their self-censorship experience.

General concerns about economic or professional sanctions

Respondents concerned in broad terms about potential economic sanctions included three planners from Massachusetts, Cheryl, Ron, and Mike. Cheryl didn’t think speaking up about her colleague’s racism would end up getting her fired or anything so severe, but she was reluctant to speak and thought it might have some impact on her position with the town. Ron was coming from a more strategic position and had self-

censored himself in a general way in his local community so that he didn't say anything controversial that could disqualify him from being hired as the town planner in his hometown. However, he wasn't selected and now has no reluctance to speak on local issues.

Mike's situation involved several circumstances with two separate employers over a period of several years. Leading up to the Iraq War in 2003 and after it began, Mike found himself quite opposed to the War and the justifications for it but was reluctant to speak out in his workplace. The atmosphere in the planning office in New Hampshire was decidedly conservative and most people were in favor of the war. He indicates that being overtly anti-war might not be well received by some members of the agency's constituency and as such, might impact him professionally. Picking up on Mike's reference to a "poisoned" atmosphere at work, I asked him what might happen if he was outspoken. He explained that as a regional planning agency with a number of small towns as members, the ramifications of being openly anti-war were problematic with that constituency. He was worried that he would be perceived as a "malcontent troublemaker" with the "live free or die" types in New Hampshire. His biggest concern was that this representation as anti-war would erode his standing at the agency. This was clearly a concern over a professional sanction. This relates directly to how LaPiere (1954) describes the often insidious and hidden nature of economic sanctions such as the frame-up (p. 234) where co-workers casually and as a matter of an ever so minor shift in behavior, now view a difficult employee through different lens whereby previous minor faults are now compounded into a clear devaluation of the employee's skills and abilities.

LaPiere is clear that many sanctions are meted out in a seamless and often imperceptible way.

A good example of a professional sanction is the case of Marcia. As part of her internship she tried to be careful not to advocate for the complete cessation of plastics production, which was her own personal position, so she could work effectively with plastics firms whose existence depended upon the production of plastic. She chose not to share your ultimate opinion that plastics production should cease in order to avoid being labeled a radical. I asked her what she thought might happen if she ultimately did share what her true thoughts were. She explained that she would be “dis-invited” from her internship. While dis-invitation from one’s internship as part of an academic degree program isn’t exactly economic in a strict sense, it could have an impact on one’s professional portfolio and could also create a barrier to future contacts, contracts, or hiring. This is hinted at when Marcia spoke about how she was only able to secure a grantwriting position after her eventual supervisor calmed fears that Marcia was too radical. Marcia noted that at times she had been more blunt about her concerns about plastics and experienced professional sanctions by not being invited back to speak or dismissed as not credible. These experiences certainly informed her more strategic and careful approach later. Finally, even with professional organizations and groups that she feels most comfortable with, she finds that she still needs to be careful about overt association with these groups to maintain her professional credibility

Mitch also crafted his message strategically and did not share his disdain for coal as a fuel. Similar to Marcia with plastics, he personally felt that coal should not even be

used. But he compromised to make his campaign viable and to maintain his professional credibility:

MITCH: ...because it was a project that we wanted community support on in the coal fields, ... we had to tailor our message not only to public political realities but also to economic realities in the area and the fact that a lot of the jobs around that part of, even the county, all were coal mining, coal mining jobs. And so our campaign, while I'm personally against coal in any form, coal consumption, burning, whatever, we shouldn't be burning, shouldn't need it at all, they, our campaign was, our campaign message was necessarily tailored to, tailored around let's use the ridges for a wind farm and help expand underground mining to create more jobs and help the transition to a clean energy economy. So, you know, that was the right message for that campaign. For me, I just wish coal would go away altogether.

And just as John used an alias and blogged his true opinions, Mitch did the same regarding his opinion about coal.

Kendra had concerns about speaking frankly that were quite personal and close to home. She felt it necessary to completely mask her politics from her grandfather because of his stature in the family and what he would do if he learned if a family member wasn't the deeply passionate conservative that he is.

KENDRA: ...if I don't have the support of my grandfather, I don't have the support of any of his friends [or] connections to scholarships, I don't have good standing in my community, I don't [unintelligible] this name that he's built up for himself and claimed me.

I asked Kendra if she were worried about economic and professional impacts of alienating her grandfather:

KENDRA: All the time it comes into my mind...So since my grandparents are very conservative people and my grandfather is high up in the masonry...he does come up with some good stuff from the Masons...unfortunately a lot of the time, those kinds of scholarships ask me to write papers on things I don't believe in or support... I'm not going to write to support corporations and I'm

not going to write to support abortion...But I lie...take the applications from my Papa and either I tell him that I didn't have time to do them or I did them and I never heard back because I... know that he's working very hard. So it comes back to that respect thing...You don't lend money to people you disagree with

Kendra still receives funds from her grandfather and her self-censorship in this sense is maintaining an income stream from him that she relies on plus scholarships that he provides her access to. Therefore there is arguably both an economic and professional component that Kendra is protecting by maintaining her silence.

Direct fear of job loss

Another significant set of responses related to economic sanctions were those informants who specifically feared for their job which is classified as an economic sanction. Six informants possessed this concern including Elin, Gary, Leslie, Jenny, Allison, and Kendra. Elin worked for a non-profit and had been with this organization for a while. During a period of crisis and transition for the firm when the leadership became more fiscally conservative, Elin took a risk and shared her vision for the organization that, in retrospect, was an unwise choice. Her vision did not correspond to that of the director and soon thereafter, Elin was laid off. She directly attributes the layoff to her conversation with the director. Gary, as previously noted, was seeking a voice in the university where he worked, related to his concerns about the unsustainability of the culture. After getting no response from the Dean related to his inquiries, he sent an editorial to the city's newspaper and it was published. Since this looked bad for the dean and the university, the dean felt the need to try to get rid of Gary—a difficult task due to Gary's tenure:

GARY: I wrote a piece that appeared in the local daily newspaper.....The day it appeared, my dean called the director of communications for the college of agriculture and life sciences and said, “Anne, we have to either muzzle this guy or we have to fire him and I need you to find a way we can do that” and Anne points out, “Well, he’s a tenured full professor and I don’t think we can fire him because of that whole first amendment thing, not to mention academic freedom associated with tenure. And I’ll look into how we can muzzle him but I’m not sure that’s going to be possible either”... “Well, you just find a way.” So Anne hangs up the phone, turns to her one office mate, my wife...”You’ll never guess what Jack [the dean] asked me to do...”

GARY: [laughs] So, he then wrote a letter to the editor that libeled me and that led to a series of legal exchanges between us that three days later, he was promoted to provost. And so that was extremely uncomfortable from a legal perspective because it was clearly the university against me...and this is the guy that signs my paycheck, remember.

In this case, academic tenure provides a unique protection specifically designed to protect free expression in academia. Yet it is not infallible or insurmountable as Gary’s case indicates and as others in academia such as those who were subject harassment and job loss due to the House Un-American Activities Committee as well documented by Boykoff (2007), Finan (2007), and others. More recently, the University of Colorado was able to dismiss a tenured professor, Ward Churchill, for minor citation errors charged as plagiarism and defend its decision in court (Churchill, 2009) and Professor William Cronon of the University of Wisconsin was the subject of a FOIA request by the Republican Party of Wisconsin for researching a writing on connections between the State government and a right-wing policy group, ALEC (Rothschild, 2011).

Another informant who self-censored out of a fear for her job was Allison, the planner from Massachusetts. The chairman of the planning board she worked for was championing and advancing some legislation that Allison felt was punitive to a large

number of local landowners and, in her opinion, not legally defensible. But as the planner for the board, she couldn't voice her concerns in public, in the community, and most concerning of all, at town meeting where the legislation would be debated. She felt that if she did so, she would be threatening her job:

ALLISON: So I was really torn at Town Meeting when that article came up. I couldn't speak. I just couldn't speak. I work for the Planning Board....and I couldn't, so that I...because I was afraid of losing my job.

Finally, Kendra in her role as environmental educator was careful not to share her activist identity with her employers. She observed how some co-workers had been reprimanded and threatened with dismissal for letting their activism creep into their educational activities.

Restrictions in job mobility

Three respondents, Jenny, Gary, and Mike, had specific concerns that their speech might restrict their job mobility or advancement or that of others. Jenny feared that if she placed bumper stickers on her car and the car was vandalized, she would not be able to do her job. For Mike, as noted previously, he felt that his anti-war stance might endanger his consideration for a raise. For Gary, it was a matter of the power the dean held over him. While they couldn't fire him, they could marginalize him and convince him to quit:

GARY: ...My recent department head at my university was hired, in part, to get rid of me. Her first administrative action was to ban me from teaching in my own department. I was no longer allowed to teach courses I developed...I think that's a pretty clear case of shunning.

Loss of sales or contracts

Comparable to the loss of a job is for contract workers or proprietors to lose contracts or sales for speaking their mind. Three respondents either experienced this

directly or knew someone who had. Ron, the planner from Cape Cod, was concerned about not being considered for a coveted position due to his political opinions and thus he chose to keep them to himself. Jim, the young journalist from California knows a colleague who was directly boycotted due to a story his paper ran about the growing power and influence of *Cannabis* growers in the region. *Cannabis* growers and associated industries (i.e. gardening suppliers) immediately withdrew their advertising from the newspaper, threatening its financial viability:

JIM: ...I'll tell you a quick story. There's a colleague of mine, Ed Dyson, he runs the San Vincente Reporter here. He's a wonderful journalist, he's been in the field for years. And...here, marijuana, growing marijuana is huge, especially indoors in town, and he had the audacity as a journalist to challenge that institution. And it's a very powerful institution up here...And his reward for that was that, I think he lost something like half his advertising revenue. Because a lot of the advertising revenue, at least in town, is like hydroponic stores or like, you know, business that are affiliated in some way with growing marijuana...So when he went on the offensive against grow houses, you know, they just started pulling their ad money.

Author Jarrett faced the loss of his entire professional writing career by standing up to an editor who wanted him to cut the most visceral and powerful parts of his book for commercial viability—a significant act of self-censorship if he had complied:

JARRETT: ... But the moment at which everything changed for me was in 1997 I was writing “[name of book]” and it was the best book, you know, I had found my voice, found my muse, this was something...and I had this...big agent, Madison Avenue—Sterling Lord Literistic...one of the biggest agencies in the country... probably in the world. Their address used to be One Madison Avenue, let's you know...So I sent her the first 70 pages of [book]...she writes back and she says, “If you take out the family stuff and the social criticism, I think you'll have a book.”...I had a choice. I had the opportunity to sell out right there early in my career and...I fired her. I fired her that day...in terms of self-censorship you're talking about...I was sending my career down

the fucking toilet and...[the book] didn't get accepted for three years...I had no other offers, I sent it all out and everybody hated it. I was thinking of self-publishing, I didn't know what to do. But I knew that I had to remain true to that vision. This was not negotiable...

Compromising one's ideals or "selling out" is arguably a form of self-censorship, at least initially. Often such acts are a significant influence on normative shifts for individuals because such behaviors are often rationalized according to cognitive dissonance theory (Aronson, 1968; Festinger, 1959).

Observed economic sanctions against others

Finally, several respondents did not personally fear or experience an economic or professional sanction. However, they did closely observe people who did have such fears. Activist Leslie knew many coal miners and many others in her Appalachian community who were afraid of boycotts or other threats to their livelihood. She saw miners who knew the dangers of their profession and the blight mountaintop removal brought to their region. Yet these miners were susceptible to warnings by coal companies that their jobs and the region's economy will disappear if the practice of mountaintop removal mining were to be curtailed or halted. Speaking out about the dangers of their industry and its practices was out of the question. Whistleblower protection for miners and others who might report hazardous conditions for the worker or the public is weak¹⁴ and speaking out was risking one's employment:

¹⁴ As of July 2010, legislation sponsored by Congressman George Miller, D-California stemming from the Massey mine blast that killed 29 workers in West Virginia, was intended to increase whistleblower protections for miners who report dangerous conditions. To be known as H.R. 6495, Robert C. Byrd Mine Safety Protection Act of 2010, as of December 8, 2010, the legislation had not become law. In the vote it failed to received the required 2/3 majority. On motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended Failed by the Yeas and Nays: (2/3 required): 214 - 193 (Roll no. 616).

LESLIE: You know, I believe most of the people...some of us are driven, motivated by greed and selfishness. But I think most of the people who are vocal on the issue [in favor of mountaintop removal] who are working on, who have something to gain from mountaintop removal, a lot of them are just really, really scared. They're afraid that they are going to lose their job and lose their home and the reason that that fear can be so overwhelming is the fact that there are no alternatives here. We live in a mono-economy.

Leslie also noted the hopelessness of the people related to this intractable situation and that people didn't want to threaten their neighbor's job either, which could be defined as concern over a "proxy sanction." She also explained that they are reluctant to speak out and threaten their jobs or the jobs of their neighbors.

Jenny, the executive director from the office Leslie works, had a more direct and visceral explanation for the reason why miners didn't speak up:

JENNY: They're making more money...Slaves to the paycheck...And this is how the coal industry's always done it. This is how they control the men, is through stuff. Buying things through the women. They control the men through the women. And we realize that. And so does Don Blankenship (Massey CEO)...And they realize that once you give a person a good job, you get them out there getting loans for nice homes, boats, all those luxury items, then when you hand them a payoff slip or say, "well, you're poisoning somebody's water but, you know, they're taking your job away because they're speaking out," then that, it's easier to fight the little tree hugger than it is to fight your employer.

Several other categories of economic sanction are notable and will be discussed in the following chapter since they were not directly anticipated at the beginning of the research and thus are categorized differently and these include, property damage, professional marginalization, harassment, making it harder to function professionally, and those who self-censored to protect the professional interests of others.

Legal/Political Sanctions

The legal/political sanction is connected to other sanction types but deserves its own typology related to self-censorship since it creates unique fears. It can involve the fear of detention, arrest, litigation, subpoena, or any other legal instrument or technique that does not necessarily have an economic or physical cost but that does require attention and often inspires significant fear. Indeed the legal sanction has a long history beginning with Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon (1995) through modern sociological scholarship into criminal deviance and punishment. However, except for a small subarea of deviance called "positive deviance," little has been written in mass communication about sanctioning people legally or politically for speaking out or in sociology as a form of social control for political behavior. Therefore, I propose that such a sanction typology deserves to sit astride the three types of sanctions devised by LaPiere (1954) for the purpose of applying it to potential expression of ideas and values.

The trauma that comes from legal/political sanctions or fear of them can be highly effective at getting activists to drop their stance. It is very likely to inspire even greater fear and hesitation on the part of the average citizen who has no broad experience in speaking out or protesting.

Details of legal and political sanctions used effectively to stifle dissent are summarized and cited in Chapter 2. Several informants in this study either experienced one or more of these techniques or observed others who experienced them. The primary subcategories of legal/political sanctions are a general concern over legal/political sanctions, fear of arrest or detention, and litigation. Other categories that were mentioned

but not explicated include harassment, subpoena or call to testify at a hearing, prosecution, surveillance, break-ins, infiltration, extraordinary rules, breach of confidentiality, deprecation, restriction on public participation, framing or false charges, and loss of custody.

General fear of legal/political sanction

Allison, the planner from central Massachusetts, is concerned about a general political cost that she would pay, aside from possible job dismissal, if she were to speak out against the planning board Chairman's pet legislation. She believed that it was very important for the public to perceive staff and the Board to be unified. This gave them the credibility for the public to have full faith in their actions. Should Allison publicly disagree with the Chairman, this might lead to an erosion of public confidence that could threaten future legislation. And there is no question that effective political action is based on trust and if Allison takes a step that could weaken that trust, this could be a tremendous political problem in town.

Finally, Cheryl, the young planner from the Massachusetts coast, was intimidated by the political connections of the co-worker who was making inappropriate comments in her presence. It contributed to her reluctance to file a complaint against the man. For these last two examples, the political and social sanction potential are both present.

Fear of arrest or detention

Several respondents were directly concerned about potential arrest or detention for their speaking out or had already experienced this sanction. Jim, the young journalist from California, spoke previously in the section on physical sanctions, about his arrest and detention:

JIM: So yeah, they tackled me and arrested me and threw me into the good old pit where all the other protestors were. And I...at this point was kind of like 'what the hell are you doing? I'm taking pictures with the media. What the fuck?' So I asked this guy who had tackled me, the captain, and I asked him 'what are you arresting me for?' And he was like, 'at the least jaywalking, at the most conspiracy to assault an officer...And I wasn't really sure of my rights. And for me at the time this was very troubling and kind of frightening because I didn't know what to expect...And eventually got thrown in a van with a couple of other people and so I get to the station and...sitting in the cell for hours. No one's telling me what's going on, I'm not with the other protestors. Like I'm with two other people who weren't affiliated with it. One of which ended up having a backpack full of Molotov cocktails and he got thrown in jail. I'm not sure what happened to him. But the other guy was just some like heckler I guess they just pulled off the street. So I'm documenting all this in my head, they finally get a hold of the officer that arrested me originally and he tells me that they're going to charge me with possession of an explosive device in public....which is my lighter.

Leslie recounts her arrest for protesting Massey Energy's decision to begin blasting in the vicinity of a nine billion gallon toxic sludge containment dam near her home. Clearly, she had a lot at stake that led to her decision to join the protest.

LESLIE: And the pillars that hold up nine billion gallons of toxic sludge are cracked....and so Massey Energy decided that it would be a really good idea for them to start blasting at the edge of Coal River Mountain within 200 feet of the face of that dam. And directly in the path, should Brushy Fork blow out, the first thing that it's going to hit at the mouth of that hollow is a Head Start center....and our senior center...and the state police station. And yet, they want to blast within 200 feet of the face of the largest toxic sludge dam in the world.

Leslie was arrested on for her participation in a protest of the dangers the dangers at Brushy Fork.

Activists are often concerned about the potential for arrest as Jim's story indicates. Many activists are handled quite roughly. Some are assaulted by the

authorities as a punitive measure, to intimidate protesters, and to discourage future protest activity.

Fear of litigation

As was detailed in Chapter 2, lawsuits are a potent tool used by corporations and other organizations to limit or stop free expression by citizens. The fear of being sued or called as a witness in litigation is often sufficient to stifle even the most energized activist, and as mentioned previously, should have an even greater deterrent effect against the average citizen who may want to engage.

After his arrest, Jim's story continues through his period of incarceration when he is deeply concerned about the charges he is facing:

JIM: [these charges filed were] under the new Patriot Act Laws...and conspiracy to assault an officer. And the rationale that they told me was 'well we suspect that you were taking photography of the person who firebombed the Chronicle, that you were working with this person'...Obviously, this is...bullshit. But they didn't hear anything of it. And they're like, 'well the FBI will come, you'll have to talk to them about it.' And I'm like, 'Aw fuck. I'm screwed'...This is serious. They're like framing me, And just started creating all of these...paranoid scenarios in my head where the FBI was colluding and they were going to find some way to keep me in jail and I just started going nuts, I didn't know what the hell to think about this...And I was a student of history and particularly social movements and revolution so all I'm thinking is...the system is going to keep me away. I'm here as a political prisoner, what am I going to do?...So let's say they kind of frightened me and then I talked to the Feds and they were actually pretty nice and they told me that they thought I was a member of the Black Bloc which is like an anarchist group and cult...they're always causing trouble and blowing shit up, breaking windows, whatever. And they thought I was a part of that because of the way I was dressed; I had a black hoodie on, black, basically all black clothing. Which is what I usually wear...

Jim realized after the fact that his clothing was likely a red flag to the authorities who inadvertently identified him as one of the Black Bloc protesters. Later they determined that he was not a part of the anarchist group:

JIM: ...I wouldn't say they apologized honestly...Let's just say they put the fear of the Great Pumpkin in me because they're like if we find any evidence that you have anything to do with the firebombing we're going to find you in Humboldt because I live in Humboldt County which is like five hours north of San Francisco and we're going to go up there and drive you back and blah, blah, blah. San Francisco PD was, they showed me a good 36 hours in jail before they let me go, It was nice, good accommodations.

Rachel's battle with the selectman in her town over the issue of open government among other points had her concerned over the lengths the selectman would go to silence her since she believed he was positioning himself for higher office. She believes that her activism is threatening his image. She worries that her blogging and listserv activities about town government might be scrutinized and perhaps she might be sued. At this point, the selectman has not taken action against her but she has admittedly reduced her activism to a much lower level.

Other legal/political fears

A number of other specific legal/political concerns and experiences were discovered through the interviews. These include harassment which falls short of actual arrest or detaining or any other specific act but includes overt acts that lets the activist or potential speaker know that they are being monitored. In also includes being subpoenaed or called to a hearing to testify which many people do not want to participate in (i.e. the Committee on Un-American Activities). Another concern related to arrest was actual prosecution which was an obvious fear of Jim the journalist. Other actions that

governmental authorities can engage in to intimidate activists include surveillance, break-in's, infiltration, extraordinary laws, framing or false charges, breeches of confidentiality (which Scarlett experienced when she expected that her complaint to the State agency was to be anonymous), and public deprecation (Boykoff, 2007). The ambivalence regarding such tactics is that these are ostensibly legitimate tools used by ostensibly legitimate governments to control criminal and terrorist activity as defined by a particular society. The fact that they are used against activists and dissidents gives the strong impression that these groups and individuals are indeed criminally deviant which in a technical sense they indeed may be.

Finally, two completely unexpected legal/political sanctions arose during the interviews that highlighted how complex and multidimensional pressures to self-censorship are and how many facets of people's lives need to be protected. First, one participant, Elin, explained that she knew examples of people in her Wiccan spiritual community who were threatened with loss of custody of their children for being explicit about their faith.¹⁵ Also, Rachel described how a publicly appointed ad hoc committee that she served on was punitively limited to a much narrower scope after they were too successful with one area of their study. Rachel was also limited in her participation by the actions of the selectman who she believes has a vendetta against her for her expression. This suggests that activists and other citizens can be limited or kept from participating due to concerns they might have or the over actions to limit the focus of their inquiry.

¹⁵ This was the type of threat made against the mother of global activist Julian Assange, operator of Wikileaks, when he was growing up, to refrain from her own political activism. This was an act that motivated Assange to become an activist himself (60 Minutes, 2011).

Finding: Opinion Expression Avoidance Strategies

Hayes (2007) tested seven opinion expression avoidance (OEA) strategies in his study on how the climate of opinion affected such strategies. The strategies he tested for were trying to change the topic, walk away from the group, tell the person it was none of his/her business, not say anything at all, express uncertainty about what I think, express indifference about the issue, and talk about the opinion of someone you know.

Overwhelmingly, the strategy referred to by most informants was the one that Hayes suggests is usually not an option, complete silence. Eleven informants chose this strategy which was typified by ten of the eleven members who chose silence because their situation facilitated the total silence option. In most spiral of silence research, the speech situation is programmed to be reactive, that is, the potential speaker is reacting to an explicit request for an opinion on a topic.

However, reactive scenarios are only a fraction of potential speech situations where someone may wish or feel the need to express an opinion. Also, reactive but what one might term “passive reactive” is a situation where one is presented with an issue such as child abuse, assault, or racism, and one chooses not to speak out about the act. The opportunity is there but the individual chooses not to speak. A good example of this type of self-censorship is where author Jarrett chooses not to speak out when he observes the homeless man being beaten by the businessman. Another example is from the web-based questionnaire where the respondent says that she witnessed child abuse on a public bus but choose not to speak out. Also consider the case of Cathy from Wyoming who was forced with her class to pray with her teacher and didn’t raise any objection at the time.

Conversely, there are also speaking situations where a potential speaker has an opinion to express and wishes to do so proactively. This could hypothetically include wanting to engage in a protest march, writing an editorial to the local newspaper, attending a public hearing and speaking up about a development project, or choosing not to offer an opinion in a group discussion when you are not directly asked for your opinion. One could also classify situations where an environment of censorship creates a strong barrier to proactively speaking out. Ten of the eleven informants who chose complete silence did so within the framework of a proactive scenario. One example is Rachel who chose to silence herself and not attend public meetings anymore until she could develop a new strategy.

Two informants chose the OEA strategy of changing the topic. Informant Marie explained that while she attended Toastmasters, strategically changing the subject was one of the skills they taught. Kendra related the story of a family dinner when she let it slip that she might not be a strong supporter of President George W. Bush and she had to change the subject fast:

KENDRA: Like the time around the dinner table when I said, ‘When George Bush said that, I almost wished I’d voted Republican’ and the whole table went quiet. And my grandma...everyone just got quiet and my grandma folded her hands and looked at me and said, ‘you didn’t?’ ...And then I don’t remember what I did. I must have got up and done jumping jacks or told a story or did something funny to change the mood of the evening.

The only other Hayes-based technique used by the informants in this study was one respondent who walked away from the group. Cheryl, who heard her officemate express racial slurs also heard discussions of what she believed were illegal property development negotiations and she choose to walk away rather than hear their plans:

CHERYL: ...last week there was somebody in the office that said come on, sit down, we're working out a plan or something like that. Meaning they were trying to scheme or do something and I said oh, I don't do that. And so, you know, ok that's my cue, I'm leaving. But you know, whatever plan they concocted, you know.

While only three strategies derived from the literature were identified, an additional five strategies that were not a part of Hayes (2007) study and not likely part of other research given that the Hayes study was the first of its kind. These new strategies include another form of deception or deceit, holding back the full force of one's opinion, using a preface or buffer statement, hiding one's identity or status, and limiting one's speech to a safe community.

Holding Back Full Force of Opinion

First, nine informants or nearly half of those interviewed chose to hold back the full force of their opinion. Town planner Allison, who needed to self-censor in order not to cast doubt on her Chairman's pet legislation, chose a strategy to avoid revealing the full extent of her opinion when asked explicitly about her position:

ALLISON: ...the only person that I responded honestly to was the wetlands consultant. Everyone else I chose to respond, "It's going to be a growth...anti-growth technique. And since we don't have our building cap in place anymore, we'll give it a shot...It'll control growth to a certain extent." So that was my answer to anyone outside of Town Hall...it was an honest answer but it was like only two percent of how I felt about it.

Mike, the planner from New Hampshire, felt it necessary to present a cautious scenario regarding the potential impacts of climate change and peak oil to his employer and their constituent communities rather than share the more dire scenario that he knows is a possibility. He believes that sharing his candid concerns about these issues and their possible impacts could paint him as a radical or extreme.

Plastics researcher Marcia also felt the need to hold back both her opinion about the role of plastics and the amount of knowledge she possesses. She felt that sharing the extent of her technical knowledge was threatening to her employer and made them suspicious of her:

MARCIA: ...they just said I knew too much about plastics. And so I was self-censoring that I should not give as much information...of course I know a lot about plastics because it's my whole focus of my doctoral program. They didn't understand how I could have that much information so...it was weird....so anyway, after those experiences I was cautious about the quality of information that I...I just tried to do a lot more listening than speaking...and learn from them.

Marcia considers her holding back her knowledge as both self-protective and strategic since she does want their knowledge as well. Marcia used strategic phrasing and reframing to deflect the fact that she herself felt that plastics should be banned totally, a position that she will not disclose. Instead, Marcia chose to rephrase her concerns as more general and not emanating from her. Marcia was also cautioned to avoid criticizing a new BPA-free bottle that the company she was working for was promoting as a better alternative. However, Marcia was aware that these polypropylene bottles also had toxins dangerous to humans:

MARCIA: ... I said to the main organizer in private, "Did you know polypropylene contains quaternary ammonium biocides and is neurotoxic and that's going to be the next battle...do you want to be seen giving these away as safe to new babies and pregnant mothers?" She was like, "We can't say that because it will confuse people, confuse the issue, and glass bottles are so expensive...please don't say anything about that in your interviews with the press when they ask you about these substitute bottles." So I made it more vague and said something like, "I would recommend glass bottles and here we have some alternative polypropylene bottles here" but I didn't say that I specifically recommend them or they're safer or anything like that. So that's an

example of very explicit [self-]censoring.

Mitch found himself in a similar situation with his expertise on wind energy. While he was specifically brought into coal country to promote a wind energy campaign as an alternative to mountaintop removal coal mining, his energetic and aggressive work could have been seen as a threat to local activists who wanted to be the face of the campaign, particularly one woman in the campaign. As a result, Mitch softened his approach, compromised the edge of his message about coal, and often let locals have the campaign spotlight. He considered it a crash course in activism. Mitch also softened his message on the role of coal in our energy future much like Marcia did for plastics. He felt that coal should no longer be used.

Coalfields activist Jenny, a very outspoken activist, also found it necessary to modify her message to avoid physical violence and to increase her effectiveness. Jenny learned to be more diplomatic and strategic in her messages:

JENNY: ...it's about being also a little diplomatic, you know, instead of saying what I would like to say...I need to control that and rearrange it so it doesn't look so, so bad. In a letter to the editor, like, you know, to these coal miners it's not about feeding their kids, it's a bunch of bullshit...most of the people in West Virginia are making \$35,000, \$40,000 a year. Coal miners [are] making \$70,000 and \$80,000 dollars a year. It's about buying a brand new truck every year, a new bass boat, it about the women...it's about tanning beds and jewelry. Ain't about feeding your kids...it's a very luxurious way of life to them...the women, you know, are afraid their husbands had to take another job making \$35,000 or \$40,000 a year and they'd have to get their lazy butts out of bed before noon...Ok, so that's why they're angry. And I would like to say those things publicly. But that's about stirring up a hornet's nest...and other people paying the price for what I've said...So it's about choosing your words...I guess you could consider it a form of censorship, but it's basically, I think about it as arranging your words and saying what you're saying in a different sort of way...to

keep violence down. Right now, at this point it's about keeping violence down.

Jenny's clear disgust with the miners and their wives who she views as lazy and consumptive is revealed in her narrative. But she also recognizes that if she spoke up about the motivations she feels is contributing to mountaintop removal, it would be counterproductive. Finally, she does show an altruistic tendency by exercising discretion in her outspokenness to avoid harm to others.

California journalist Jim exemplifies how self-censorship through moderating one's message can have important negative implications for democracy. Once he returned from his incarceration in San Francisco, Jim wanted to write about his experience:

JIM: ...I did eventually write the story...but it was definitely toned down and I just felt like I was so afraid of the police and the authority and the state coming down on me and throwing me in jail for an undetermined amount of time that I just found myself silencing myself...especially in hindsight I know I could have probably have prosecuted or sued the city and won more likely than not for illegal arrest. But I didn't, I didn't even want to make an issue of it. I just wanted to move on with my life and sever those connections and you know, eventually I got better. But I feel like to this day, now that I'm like a real full-fledged journalist and stuff I do find myself being very careful to publicize even though I feel very passionate and strong about my criticisms toward the state right now and you know, the war and a lot of what's happening. I find myself silencing my real serious opposition and I mean like watering it down or just not writing about it. Because I'm just afraid that even to this day they've got a file on me and are still kind of watching me...But that is to say it does like, even today, five years later, I still feel that lingering instinct, that concern that I'm being watched and that if I say something too radical or too extreme, especially in this day and age that, you know, who knows what will happen...I'm sure it's all paranoia, but it's very real for me.

INTERVIEWER: ...how did you soften the story when you initially wrote it?

JIM: ... I feel like I didn't really dig in as deeply as I could have into the fact that they profiled me. I feel like I kind of just glossed over it. Like I didn't really pour my heart and soul into that, to really like make people understand what had happened...It was all very glossed over and...even though I did mention yes, they illegally arrested me, yes, you know I felt sort of profiled, I just didn't dig deeper. Like I felt I could have used that experience to write a real good strong criticism about just our surveillance at that time and the Patriot Act and how it's targeting people who are innocent...And I just didn't. I just kind of kept it isolated to that incident without giving the context I think readers or people would have appreciated from that story you know.

INTERVIEWER: And do you think, has that made any impact on your willingness to attend those types of events and protests from that point forward?

JIM: Oh absolutely. I've never been back to a protest as an activist. I've been there as a journalist, but...I definitely feel like it de-radicalized me to some degree...made me more apprehensive to really participate in that stuff...

So for Jim, that single experience with authority during the protest has impacted both his activist and professional activities years after the fact. Jim notes how his colleagues in journalism also self-censor out of a concern for authority:

JIM: ...we definitely discuss it. And we usually discuss it in terms of censorship, like what this conversation's about and bias and, you know, activism, activist journalism and things of that nature...I've heard stories from other people...it seems like every journalist for the most part has had some story to share where they've self-censored themselves. Whether it's as crazy an incident as myself or something very minor like writing about a proposition that they didn't agree with...

The final informant who noted holding back the full force of their speech was Elin, the non-profit manager. She was considering whether her employment circumstances would impact her speaking freely about what direction the organization should take:

ELIN: ...I like to think about myself that I would just say it anyway and let the chips fall where they may, but in practice it's not so pure, you know. But that's my tendency, you know, I think I have a reputation for being kind of forthright in that way and I have a reputation for integrity which means I say what's real for me. Sometimes people don't like it. I know that people might think that I'm like way out here with that, but in reality it's actually dialed back a couple of steps because I *do* think about the consequences when I am aware of them. In this particular case, because it was my job, it was my livelihood, and there were so many things about it that supported the rest of my life, I was highly invested in it and therefore I had a high interest in not seeing the dissonance between my perspective and where the organization was going, particularly because it had been, at one time, much closer...

Elin also spoke of her local organizing where one group she was leading originally formed out of fears of the Y2K threat. The Preston Neighborhood Network or PNN came together to prepare for a worst case scenario in the event of a collapse due to the Y2K computer glitch. And while emergency preparedness was a reasonable response to this threat, Elin found it hard to discuss the same preparatory issues in relation to peak oil, climate change, the economic crisis, or other more contemporary threats. They could still discuss preparedness for a graspable scenario like an ice storm but not for a cultural collapse due to peak oil although Elin believes this is a possibility.

Other Forms of Deception or Deceit

There were several other forms of deception that informants used to veil their true opinions. For example, using misdirection or balancing can soften or weaken the message that you want to convey. Mike placed an American flag sticker on his car to soften his criticism of the President and the Iraq War but convey that he was still "pro-American". Jenny found it necessary to remove bumper stickers from her car altogether to prevent possible vandalism of her car. Elin, the activist from the Boston area debated the use of

the word “green” because some in the group felt that it gave the image of a “tree hugger” and while the use of specific words in an activist campaign could be a strategic calculus, it also, as Elin’s group showed, can be a concern to groups that do not want to be labeled negatively.

Gretchen found herself in a dilemma in one of her theology courses as part of her Masters degree program. Her spiritual advisor recommended an approach to answering questions on the comprehensive exam required for the program on the issue of gay marriage, an idea which she supports:

GRETCHEN: ...I have a spiritual director, and I have talked to her about my silences. I’ve said to her, “You know, I’ve looked at the comprehensive that will be required in the Master’s and it’s a very conservative school. I’m extremely comfortable with Orthodoxy in scripture, I’m not comfortable with Orthodoxy in ethics.” She said to me, “Well, when you write on that part, you write down, ‘the Catholic Church says’, rather than, ‘I say’”. I said, “Well, it’s a very good copout because if I ain’t part of the church, why am I writing it?” And so I suspect that there may be a lot of people underground and it concerns me because I think it’s the equivalent of, knowing in the 1950’s that segregation was a horrifying thing but remaining silent and floating with it except maybe to pat a black person on the back and say, Atta boy, I know you’re right. And maybe that’s what I’m doing.

Kendra, the educator from California, found it necessary to deceive her grandfather, who she respected very much, regarding the scholarships that he recommended she try for. She felt it necessary to lie about sending them out. To be candid with her grandfather would require Kendra to reveal her political differences with him and out of respect and fear of repercussions; this is something that she will not do. Finally, informants also used strategies such as a preface or buffer statement to deflect the full force of their opinion. Others sought to hide their identity or status since that

information would in itself be an expression. Lastly, one informant explained that they limited their risky speech to a safe community; a strategy that I assume is more widely used than reported by the informants to this study.

Other Findings of Note

This research captured a significant amount of depth around informant consideration of self-censorship. Some chose to self-censor partially or completely for a range of reasons. Yet some chose to overcome self-censorship and speak out anyway even though they still held concerns over the potential repercussions of their expression. Finally, there were several informants who had always been outspoken about issues of great concern to them. They may have observed others self-censoring but never felt the need to do so themselves. These latter two categories of informant provided rich data in regard to how they were able to overcome their self-censorship, what motivated their speech, and how they cope with being an outspoken citizen—in other words, what provides support and encouragement for these activities.

Overcoming Self-Censorship

Motivation for Speaking Out

Many of the informants who participated in this study are either activists who never self-censored themselves or who at one time self-censored but at some point overcame their reluctance to speak out. The three most frequent motivations for speaking out were life experience, status in life, and an event or issue that they experienced..

Life experience

Cathy, the student from Wyoming related that her own experiences and education along with observing her own mother live a taciturn life was a strong motivation for her to speak out about her identity:

CATHY: Well, for me it's really complicated because, I mean, I read so much about this sort of thing too in my classes and there are a lot of ideas about it, about how...I mean, some people think you should always come out at all times to everybody because until everyone does that, there isn't going to be change. Then there are other people who recognize that that's not safe for everybody all the time. Then there are other people who think that no one should ever have to come out because straight people don't have to come out, so as long as we're making a big production of saying I'm a lesbian or I'm gay, it just continues to demonize it or pathologize it or set it aside somehow...And so...I struggled with all of those things...feeling like I shouldn't have to make a big production out of it—it's not my grandmother's business who I'm dating [laughs] really or my cousin's or whoever [pause]. But then...for me, it just became an issue about who I'm going to be as a person...am I going to be a person that speaks about what's happening in my life or doesn't...because my mother doesn't, she doesn't speak anything...that has happened to her...in her life, and I don't, I don't want to be that...

Elin's activist persona was present from an early age but developed through her academic career studying gender issues and this led to other concerns such as the environment. She explained that her self-identity as an activist developed as a teenager and was focused on feminist issues. Her interest in environmentalism was a natural evolution of treading an Earth-based spiritual path. But Elin admits that part of her possesses what she terms an “edgewalker” persona that skirts the edges of the various groups and issues that she's interested in but does not fully embrace into any of them. She suggests that this is because she sees multiple sides to a situation and can't commit to

a position or stance that is unidimensional or disconnected. This also contributes to her skills in conflict mediation because she can see multiples sides to an issue.

Elin finds that she needs to be careful about expressing her opinion in the groups that she is a member of since she often has perspectives that might differ from other members. It was difficult and stressful for her to maintain memberships in separate groups that were treading different paths. She needed to find a way to integrate her separate worlds, to reduce the stress, and further develop her identity:

ELIN: ...And I took steps...I really needed to find a path that was going to be more flexible, that was going to allow me to do more, to do my arts and spiritual stuff at the same time but ideally they would totally feed into each other. And I made a lot of decisions about my life based on seeking integration in that way. However, despite that, I still found that I was on the fringe in just about any place I was. So in employment situations, I would put all my weird funky stuff on my resume based on the theory that if people were going to be put off by that, I didn't want to work there, they probably didn't want me anyway, it was going to be sooner or later...was going to be a run-in, you might as well know sooner, ok?...So I at some point stopped hiding anything and I just put everything right out there and I figured if people were intrigued by that and they wanted to know, then I would like to work with them. And it actually worked out.

Elin and I continued to pursue the question of her defining herself as an “edgewalker” and all that entailed including how this kind of persona often becomes an activist because they can see the bigger picture since they're not too firmly embedded into any specific ideology or idea, can be less biased and see the bigger picture, and provide critiques that more firmly embedded members might not be able to.

Ron, the town planner from coastal Massachusetts, found his voice after making the initial decision to self-censor his political opinions in the town he lived in. He did so

to avoid expressing anything controversial that might lessen his chances for obtaining a position with the Town. After the Town selected another candidate, he decided that the experience of keeping his opinions to himself about local political issues was unnecessary:

Experience also gave planning board member Marie a voice since she chose to keep silent as a newcomer on the planning board. But as she gained insight and experience as a member, she felt more comfortable voicing her opinion on the issues that came before the board. She also became motivated to speak out about issues of people with disabilities due to an experience involving her sister and a whistleblower who tried to call attention to her abuse.

Event, issue, or identity

A number of informants experienced an event, embraced an issue, or were motivated by their personal identity to speak out. Cathy spoke about how her identity as a lesbian required her to be forthcoming to her family and others. Given her and her mother's progressive politics juxtaposed against the conservatism of her family and its general reticence regarding conversation, this was obviously a very difficult step for her to take.

Local activist Rachel found motivation to keep speaking out from being told explicitly to keep quiet. As an appointee to a local task force, Rachel was preemptively admonished to avoid complaining about staff, which she considered an effort or act to censor her speech within the context of the group. Her experience with this task force gave her an uncomfortable insight into the operations of the Town's local government and this served as a motivation to continue speaking out.

Appalachian activist Jenny combines her experience of place in Appalachia with the strong motivating issue of mountaintop removal coal mining to inspire her speech. Many who have grown up in the mountains of Appalachia have a strong connection to the land, “Because of many Appalachian peoples’ close interaction with the land, they have given land a strong sense of place. Because of this close interaction, land serves as a significant construct of identity for many Appalachian people.” (Utz, 2001; p. 22).

JENNY: ...they’re never going to get the diversity that we have here now. All the different types of trees, the ashes, the birches, the mulberries, you know, the tulip maples, and trees such as that to grow back...seven generations of my family will never get to ever, ever see ginseng grow back on these mountains again...Cohosh will never grow back on these mountains. Take me to a reclaimed sight that’s got a squirrel on it, please...You’re not going to see it. The wild boars are becoming extinct because of it...you can’t put it back, you know. They can, they can make it green and get a few nonnative bushes to grow, but they can’t put it back. You can’t put it back to what it was. And the streams are never the same. And, you know, new scientific evidence that’s just been released agrees with what we’re saying, that the streams are never the same. It causes a domino effect from the mayflies to the snowflies, to the rodents, like squirrels and chipmunks so on all the way down to humans.

Chad Montrie’s book, “To Save the Land and People” (2003) describes how strip mining contributed to the deep poverty and unemployment in the region, contributed little to developing support systems in local communities, destroyed adjacent property including private homes, and essentially ruined the land for farming and negatively affected the environment generally (Montrie, pp. 2-3). Jenny’s position parallels that described by Montrie. She is motivated by the unsafe conditions the miners have to work in plus the damage to the environment that their form of mining causes—damage that is essentially permanent:

JENNY: ...safety is worse now than it's been in the past thirty years because of people like Massey Energy taking chances with men's lives. You know, men are...not worth as much as the equipment are. And so it's...still a blue collar, hard working job. But then again, when you begin surface mining, you're no longer just putting the miner in danger. It's not just a safety problem for the miner, it's now a safety problem for the entire community.

Part of Jenny's motivation stems from the sense of outrage she feels about the miners and their prosperity relative to the rest of the local population. She views their participation in mountaintop removal mining as a sell-out but also could be defined as a social trap (Platt, 1973) or tragedy of the commons (Hardin, 1967). An acute motivating factor for Jenny and many of the activists in the area is a large coal ash slush dam situated above an elementary school and Massey Energy is about to begin blasting near the dam. While speaking about the dam angers many in the community who want to protect the interests of coal, including people with children in the school, the dangers associated with the blasting and the potential for dam failure are too great to keep Jenny quiet.

Leslie, Jenny's associate, also attributes life experience for her activism in addition to the motivating issue of mountaintop removal mining. Leslie possesses a strong sense of place which motivates her against the practice of strip mining:

LESLIE: ...those of us who are native Appalachians and are connected to where we are...and we have what's called a sense of place...those of us that won't leave. For those of us who have made the decision or who have always lived...with the understanding that we certainly would not leave ...we cannot stop fighting this because if we stop or when we stop, then they will continually try to destroy the place...and they will continue to destroy the air and the water and I believe that we have a responsibility to the next generations and when I say that I think of this little five year old girl that is my granddaughter. What's the air quality and the water quality going to be like for her if we don't stop it?...

Leslie talks about the activists who come to help with the campaign but leave after a while versus the local people, the “mainstays” as she refers to them, whose families have been in the hollows for generations, have ancestors buried in the community, who feel the most visceral need to protect the area for succeeding generations.

Jarrett, the writer from California spoke about a very deeply personal moment of shame in his life where he witnessed the beating of a homeless man by a businessman and how he chose not to say or do anything about it:

JARRETT: Well, the one that comes to mind was one I wrote about where I was walking out....this wasn't in an overtly political scene but it affected me deeply, and that was....I was walking out of a grocery store and a homeless person came out and asked me for money and I didn't give the person any, and then I took a few more steps and then I heard the homeless person ask the person behind me, and then I heard someone else begin to curse very loudly and I heard the sound of someone punching someone. And I turned around and there was a, probably 25 to 30 year old very clearly business person was punching a homeless person in the face. And the homeless person had been very courteous...there was no....he simply asked, “Did he have some change?” and he was a standard panhandler, he wasn't...I'm sure you've encountered people who have been aggressive or obnoxious or something and this was not the case. No trigger whatsoever...And, the business person probably hit the guy three or four times in the face and then walked away and I was utterly ashamed of myself that I did not intervene, and that was when I was maybe somewhere between 29 and 31 [years of age].

Jarrett explains that this event influenced his activism and his willingness to engage and speak up in uncomfortable circumstances.

Elin's decided to speak up to her supervisor at work because she was keenly interested in having the organization get involved with a culture change agenda and take more of a leadership role in this area. However, her outspokenness and candor eventually

resulted in her dismissal since Elin's goals and values and those of the organization were more incongruent than they had been early in her tenure.

Life status

Finally, other motivations for speaking out included noting a weakness in an opponent or a pressure to speak out. Regarding the latter, respondent Cathy from Wyoming provides a compelling narrative for pressure for lesbians and gays to "come out" as she notes the pressure exerted by her clearly lesbian appearance and the need to be forthcoming to family:

CATHY: Well, it was actually just about a week ago that I came out to some more people...I have an aunt and uncle and the aunt is my mother's sister and they've always been like a second set of parents...a surrogate family, since my dad was never around in my life, this uncle has been basically my dad. And I've always never been sure what they would think, or if they would...I just wasn't sure, but I could be entirely surprised either way. And...this time, I don't know, I don't know, I just felt like I couldn't do it anymore, I felt so uncomfortable...being there, and I look sooo obviously gay [laughs] I don't know how they could have missed it...

Cathy explained that the pressure of masking her identity became too great to keep up but the stakes were high regarding being candid with her uncle since he was like a surrogate father to her:

CATHY: ...the stakes were just so high, you know, I couldn't afford to lose him...like that, I mean, if he shut me out of his life...And I've already lost my father, I mean I couldn't do it...

Planner Ron said that after his initial reluctance to speak out in his home community, he's now quite comfortable expressing himself on any topic. Since it's not a particularly warm and friendly town—he refers to the town as its own social ostracization—he believes that there's little to lose from a social standpoint.

A connection between Elin's "edgewalking" status and Ron's standoffish town is that if one has few strong social ties either to a community or a group, there may be much less to lose socially when speaking one's mind. As Elin relates her group participation, she tends to push each group she belongs to into a more holistic perspective:

ELIN: ... And I aligned myself with groups that were much more spiritually oriented where, true to my edgewalker persona, I was constantly pushing them to put some political analysis on top of what they were doing. And so I moved back closer to center, but it's really interesting that...I clearly have this activist persona and I would sit back and I'd think, well I guess that's true, but I sort of back into it...after removing myself from it.

Expression Support

Expression support is essentially comforting or inspirational people, groups, or situations that can make it easier for one to choose to speak their mind regarding a controversial but closely held issue. Primary mechanisms brought up by informants include having a supporting community to fall back on or to be encouraging, developing an internal speaking voice or eloquence to brave speaking up, developing a core technical or subject competency, and having a sense of general safety or security for speaking out.

Five informants spoke of the importance of having a supporting community to facilitate their speaking out. The informant with the most to say regarding the importance of a supporting community was author Jarrett who provided several examples of how a supportive community helps people he knows muster the courage to speak out. He spoke of developing a "culture of resistance" which serves as a nurturing and supporting community for activists. When the brave first speaker gets sanctioned for speaking out, he explains, everybody else is cowed and intimidated. But if it happens repeatedly, then people get fed up and "eventually they'll stop self-censoring"

themselves....Jarrett learned at a public meeting that having someone there at the meeting to support you for your speech is crucial and that activism is much less effective as a solitary undertaking:

JARRETT: ...I think the thing that is absolutely central to the reason I can do this [activism]...is that a personal support network...people who say, "I've got your back" ...as I said in [book], I said what I wanted to say at this Department of Natural Resources debate and the activist sitting next to me leaned away from me as though I farted and that night I got home and I was just sobbing because I had said, I had called them on their bullshit, the question I asked them is "*Pretend we're children a hundred years from now and convince us not to hate you for what you've done to the natural world*" and what I learned from that is whenever I go to those things, I have to take someone with me...and I have to take someone with me who will not lean away from me when I say it but instead will touch my arm or will be there for support, because you can't do it by yourself.

Jarrett feels that a support structure need only be one defender or ally who would have a kind word or another expression of validation. He spoke of his mother as a source of support back when he didn't have a larger community yet and over time, he has built a network of supporters who express to Jarrett their pride or support for his speaking out and other actions in support of his passions.

Coalfield activist Leslie spoke with pride when she mentioned the coalitions and alliances that her organization was forming all over Appalachia and throughout coal country that is coalescing into a larger community of activists:

LESLIE: ...the Alliance for Appalachia put together a program called Power Past Coal and you can Google that and look it up...which was 100 days of action that started the day after Obama took office and there were actions all across the country...we band together with people from Black Mesa [Water] Coalition in New Mexico and Arizona, and people from Michigan, a little village outside of Chicago, Ecojustice Collaborative, people from South Carolina with the Cliffside Power Plant, people from all over the United

States and that networking. And as a result of that, a big part of that was of course over 2500 people protesting in D.C. demanding climate change. And what they did before we actually got on the streets on Monday morning was Pelosi and Reid got together and said, “We’ll go ahead and shut that coal fired power plant down and we’ll power it with something else.” On Friday, we went ahead and did our march and our speakers and everything and there were a whole bunch of us that were willing to be arrested that day...and the Capital police are real cool about that. We just about froze to death [laughs] but the networking and joining together is power.

Cathy became more and more uncomfortable in masking her identity as her appearance and demeanor became more obvious. She was motivated by this discomfort to “come out” with members of her family as. She explained. “I just felt like I couldn’t do it anymore, I felt so uncomfortable...” While she was growing up in Wyoming, there were very few situations in which she felt truly comfortable and that she lacked a supportive community. However, she did have the opportunity to attend a summer camp for young writers that served as a place of refuge for a progressive in such a conservative region.

Planner Allison from Massachusetts laments that she didn’t really have any community or support and there was no one to share her feelings or concerns with about issues such as the legislation she was struggling with:

ALLISON: ...my family...my ex-husband...could care less what I did, never wanted to discuss anything like this. My friends are very... well, they just don’t understand planning...Who would really care? I mean I could talk to them but they wouldn’t listen or understand what I was saying...there was really no sounding board...Which is really sad, I mean especially where it’s vitally important...or vitally important to me. But it’s so hard to find a civilian who would even care to talk about it.

The development of a voice or confidence in speaking was cited by five study informants. While interrelated with the development of a knowledge competency, developing one's personal voice is more of a trait-based functionality that fits within McCroskey's conceptualization of Generalized Context Communication Apprehension or CA-Generalized Context (McCroskey, 1988); Each will be discussed below. The informant who focused most on this aspect of developing confidence and overcoming speaking reticence was Gary, the professor from the southwestern U.S.

GARY: So, I had many questions but I was self-censoring along the way because I didn't feel confident enough in my knowledge and my ability to express myself...to pose questions...as I proceeded through my academic career, I gained increasing confidence, both in my ability to express myself, which I might call poise, and...in my knowledge of the subject matter. And so I would say it was a very gradual transition for me in which...when I was 22 and even when I was 30, to when I was maybe 35, I self-censored on basically a daily basis. And that gradually gave way to less and less self-censorship so that now probably the best advice I could take for myself is never miss a good chance to keep your mouth shut [laughs] And now I can't seem to stop myself...

And while it took Gary years to develop the poise and presence he has today and the knowledge to go along with it, it took an accident to bring him on the main stage of social criticism. He wrote a series of letters to the president of his university that were ignored and finally sent one to the editor of the local newspaper that was published. This opened the door to Gary to throw the shackles off of his reticence and facilitated a public persona that he continues to grow with his blog and speaking appearances.

Regional planner Mike also cited pairing the development of a core knowledge competency with a poised speaking voice for his increased willingness to speak out about issues of importance to him, particularly peak oil:

MIKE: Well, at first I didn't feel ready to [speak out] because I felt for at least a year when I was learning, when everything was new about it and all different ramifications and watching the DVD End of Suburbia kind of gelled everything for me...But then when it did come time to, in 2005, when I was here for just six or seven months or so, I gave that Oil Depletion, Smart Growth, and Sustainability Workshop over two evenings and I felt, "Hey, I'm not afraid..."...by then I felt comfortable enough to talk about it and get people on board and that helped precipitate a movement to form the Luton Local...so I think that was very effective. So it really didn't come in to play with this because things were moving so fast. Again, I think the more comfortable a person is with the information, the more comfortable they are sharing it so I felt pretty comfortable by that point and I feel quite comfortable now....talking about that sort of thing.

Author Jarrett also attributes his comfort with activism and speaking out to experience at speaking out and the accumulation of knowledge over time:

JARRETT: ...now days I get questions during a Q&A when I do a talk or something, I'll get questions that I'll just blow and I don't even worry about it because its become one of my jokes so that somebody asks me a really hard question and I'll say, "You know what, I have no idea. Ask me again in six weeks." And I say, I'm not nearly as smart my talks make me seem and there's a reason that I can answer all these questions because I get the questions 300 times before but the first 15 times I got 'em, I blew 'em. And so for me, there are two elements. One is the element of censorship and the other is the element of experience...and in my experience, my perception is that experience helps me get past self-censorship.

Experience, according to Jarrett, also stems from the groundwork laid by others, and he sees the work he's doing as laying the groundwork for others to follow:

JARRETT: ...I think this is part of how a movement grows...I can write my books but one reason I can write my books is because...A. because it's becoming so clear that civilization has become so incredibly destructive but B. that...and oh, I got more to say about this too...but B. because there have been a lot of people that have done a lot of groundwork. If I'd have written my books in the '50's, people would be, "what the fuck's he talking about?"...so there needs to be groundwork laid which is in some ways not been laid.

Several informants mentioned that a sense of safety or security led them to choose to speak out. Scarlett notes that since she carries a gun, she's developed a reputation in her community as someone who is not afraid to defend herself. She brings this up in context to the situation when the village elders are seeking her out for a discussion after her purportedly anonymous complaint filed in Fairbanks:

SCARLETT: Umm...I think the situation kind of...I mean, they were drinking and they were pissed off that day and, you know, they sobered up and they weren't as mad, and, you know, the situation kind of passed, I guess. I kind of have a reputation...well, I had one all already and at that point I've invested a little bit more in my reputation, you know, I usually don't go anywhere without a gun. You know, they call me pistol packin' mama...

Jenny and Leslie also mention the fact that they own weapons which help them muster the courage to continue to speak out. The both keep guns in the house because of the threats they regularly receive and Jenny has a permit to carry a weapon. Leslie added that nothing has happened to her yet but she sleeps with a .38 and may consider getting cameras if things get worse. Jenny does have cameras situated on her property for security.

Other mechanisms mentioned by informants include experience at speaking out, preparedness for speaking out, judgment (accurate or otherwise) of a welcoming or open speaking environment, a willingness to take more risks speaking out, identifying safe people and circumstances for speaking out, and expecting conflict and having the confidence to address it.

Expression Techniques

Overall, informants pointed to six specific techniques they used as a speaker or activist. The two primary techniques identified were having an effectiveness strategy and

the use of a proxy or communicating anonymously. Wind activist Mitch explained that he used an effectiveness strategy to include underground coal mining in a plan to use wind power on the mountain ridges instead of strip mining them. By including shaft mining in the plan, especially given Mitch's opposition to coal generally, his coalition was removing a key argument that activists were anti-coal. This focus on finding an effective argument that included a compromise was critical for the campaign:

MITCH: ...because it was a project that we wanted community support on in the coal fields, it was, we had to tailor our message not only to public political realities but also to economic realities in the area and the fact that a lot of the jobs around that part of, even the county, all were coal mining, coal mining jobs. And so our campaign, while I'm personally against coal in any form, coal consumption, burning, whatever, we shouldn't be burning, shouldn't need it at all, they, our campaign was, our campaign message was necessarily tailored...around let's use the ridges for a wind farm and help expand underground mining to create more jobs and help the transition to a clean energy economy...that was the right message for that campaign...it also helped us with the counter-argument against the politicians and the agencies and the coal industry officials. They couldn't say we were against coal because we were actually supporting an expansion of underground coal mining.

Elin's strategy regarding speaking out was much more nuanced as she chose not to speak out about her most grave concerns except to those close to her but instead focused on community building efforts. And in the process of community building, if she formed deeper relationships with the people she was working with, then she might feel more comfortable sharing her deepest concerns. Elin confirms that the choice to keep her opinions about controversial issues to herself and concentrate on building community to be a strategic one. She feels that these issues about where our civilization is headed are so uncomfortable for many people that it's difficult even to get a conversation started. She

believes that shared experience and connectedness will eventually lead to receptivity to the message:

ELIN: ...I always come up with the same conclusion, which is, building community any which way that I can get any people together in the room, get people to share an experience together that makes them feel connected, getting people to have even just a little bit more openness and willingness to listen to somebody who doesn't already agree with them, and see themselves as having a shared interest in...survivability.

Another key effectiveness strategy includes how several informants viewed themselves as spokespersons for their activist groups. They paved the way for others to speak through their own outspokenness—they “break the ice” and take whatever initial flak is destined to fly for that role. Local activist Rachel explained that in regard to the land use conflict in her community, she feels that if she stops expressing herself that it's going to make it hard for other people to express themselves because her peer group values her honesty and integrity.

Jarrett also saw himself in much the same role as a public icebreaker. He spoke about how in resistance movements, there are fits and starts when the initial brave people take risks and pay for it in blood. In some cases, that might be where it all ends as bystanders witness the brutality or ridicule and not want to pay that cost themselves. But sometimes the brutality sparks further outrage, which leads people to overcome their reluctance and join the movement. Jarrett explained the importance of the artist in moving thresholds such as Lenny Bruce's moving the bar of appropriate speech or others who take the heat because it opens doors for others.

Four informants discussed the use of a proxy to speak for them or the use of anonymous postings on bulletin boards or similar venues, which, at the very least,

allowed their concerns to be voiced. For example, Allison was able to convince a local wetlands ecologist to voice her concerns at Town Meeting about the legislation that she disagreed with:

ALLISON: ...at that point I very discreetly contacted a local...he's a wetlands (pause) ...he delineates wetlands on a lot of the subject parcels in the area...He's a consultant...I forget his actual title. I consulted him because he felt the same way I did and that he could be my voice at Town Meeting ...so I had, you know, this person speak for me...and for himself.

She explained that the wetlands ecologist acted as a sort of surrogate or proxy for voicing her concerns but that it wasn't nearly as effective as if she would have done it:

ALLISON: ...they were not listened to because of the power of the Planning Board Chairman.

John, the state worker from northern New England, found an outlet for his concerns by making anonymous comments to a local television station's social media network. He explained that he can say what he needs to say without it coming back to him personally.

Mitch also posts anonymously on a blog regarding his opinion about coal but is concerned about maintaining his anonymity in this setting because of his role as an objective researcher that often works for mining companies.

Type of Expression

Another facet of people's expression is the type of expression they use. The use of a proxy as noted above is one type but while direct verbal expression is generally the most common pattern of purposeful opinion expression, several informants talked about non-verbal and indirect forms of speech. This method could be analogous to Sade's use

of coded language that he used when writing letters from prison from 1778 to 1790. This coded language used allusions, ambiguous expressions, and pseudonyms (Phillips, 2000).

Gretchen, the archdiocese board member who wanted to vote for Obama against the guidance of the associate bishop and other members of the council, spoke of how the board wanted to use clothing as an identifying attribute of McCain supporters at the polls:

GRETCHEN: ...the implication, not from the bishop, but from the associate bishop and from other members of the council, and other people off the council at other meetings that I had gone to, which were primarily Catholic was, if you are a Catholic, you vote for McCain. And it got down to conversation about him, welcoming you to go to the polls, dressing in a color specific to that candidate...

Mike, the planner from New Hampshire, used a non-verbal passive-aggressive approach to expression. While he didn't express his opinion regarding the President and the Iraq War directly, he left behind reading material for opponents to read. Mike also used non-verbal communication when he placed anti-war bumper stickers on his car and also an American flag sticker to also convey that he was a patriotic American regardless of his war stance.

Scarlett from Alaska chose to use an indirect method of communication when she decided to file what she believed to be an anonymous complaint to the state Department of Natural Resources regarding the test drilling and road building activity near her cabin. She chose this route since her more direct method of expressing her concerns on flyers passed out in the local community resulted in angering the village elders. However, the confidentiality that she expected, was breached:

SCARLETT: ...And so I did...shut up in my community, but since they were building this road going right past my cabin basically, I had a chance to read their permits and I had a chance to photograph their violations of their permits and so I took them to town...all they

way to Fairbanks to the Department of...I think it was the Department of Natural Resources where I didn't tell them my name, I told them I was an anonymous citizen and they promised me that I would stay anonymous. And so I gave them all the pictures and told them the different things that had been going on in accordance with the permits. And I went back home...it takes like a day to get to Fairbanks and it takes a day to get back home...and so I went back home and a couple of days later I was out in the woods checking my rabbit snare and I saw like these four old guys on the native council coming down the trail, you know, to my cabin. And I didn't have my gun with me so I just hid in the woods, behind my shed. And they banged on my door and yelled and banged on my door and walked around...and I just pretended I wasn't there. So then the next day...or no, later that day, another older guy who's on the native council but who's nicer to me, he called me and like, "Hey, guys came to your house but you weren't there." And, it was like, "Well, why'd they come out here?" And he was like, "Well, we heard you had given trouble in town." And it was like, "What were they going to do?" and he said, "I don't know, they were going to have a talk with you." So, that made me feel like I couldn't express my views in my community or even to the law enforcement agencies that were supposed to be...handling that kind of thing.

Summary

The key findings for this research fall into three areas. First, the data confirmed the existence and relevance of additional sanction types. Second, the informants discussed additional opinion expression avoidance techniques. Finally, the study identified how people overcame self-censorship or what motivated them to speak out.

While many informants indeed were influenced by concerns over possible social sanctions as Noelle-Neumann (1974, 1993) suggested they would be, the data also confirmed that other sanction types are of concern to people as well. Each of the five sanction types that I described earlier in this chapter emerged from the data as relevant and informants either experienced each of these sanctions or were concerned about them.

Second, informants used several forms of opinion expression avoidance (OEA) strategy that were not a part of Hayes (2005) study on OEA strategies. This finding was in line with Hayes (2005) claim that "...it is possible that there are other means of opinion expression avoidance that people when placed in a real situation might actually use that were not in the list provided to the participants in the study" (Hayes, draft manuscript, p. 30).

Finally, many informants were either never self-censors or overcame self-censorship at some point in their life. These informants provided information about what motivated them to speak out, what helped them maintain their outspokenness, and some of the ways in which they communicated their opinions, in most cases other than direct expression of their unvarnished opinion.

CHAPTER 5 –FINDINGS DISCUSSION

Introduction

In the introduction, I posed four research questions based on two premises. I noted that prior research into the spiral of silence theory and self-censorship scholarship in general has not considered a broader set of sanction types other than fear of isolation (FOI). Researchers have explicitly made reference to or even spotlighted other types of sanctions such as psychological, economic, professional, and physical. However, they have not been the subject of direct scientific inquiry. Hayes (2005) appears to concur with this assessment when he notes that “...opinion expression is governed by more, indeed much more, than opinion perception, social pressures, and fear of isolation.”

This research has fleshed out the scientific understanding of sanctions other than social isolation using data acquired from in-depth interviews of informant stories of their own self-censorship experiences. My analysis of these interview data reveals rich complexities of meaning about the nature of self-censorship, sanctions, and how people respond to them.

This research has explored the stories and experiences of individuals who identified as having self-censored themselves. Through this process, these informants have revealed their lived experiences in situations in which they wanted to communicate an attitude or opinion but chose to self-censor themselves for a range of reasons that have been captured in the data and presented in the findings. As Neuwirth, Frederick, & Mayo (2007) note, fear of isolation is “a psychological variable representing a negative emotional state associated with the prospect of voicing one’s opinion *about a given topic*

[emphasis theirs].” If fear of isolation is predicated on an issue-basis, why couldn’t fear of economic consequences like being fired or fear of physical consequences like being assaulted also be a reasonably anticipated psychological variable *depending upon the issue at hand?* [emphasis mine].

The interviews have indeed revealed a deeper richness of complexity and interactivity between variables than the existing quantitative research into the spiral of silence theory has shown. This chapter will discuss the significance and relevance of this research for scholarship on self-censorship and as it relates to the potential for future research pathways and specific variables and concepts to use in qualitative or quantitative studies. It will also analyze the existing literature for concepts related to the spiral of silence that should be re-considered so that the theory can be re-assessed into a broader, more comprehensive theory of self-censorship, assess how self-censorship is impacted by other mechanisms like censorship and media framing and bias, and how self-censorship could be a key contributing factor to the failure of cultural change movements and mechanisms. If indeed culture is reproduced and advanced through communication, then any mechanism preventing this communication is an important issue to address.

Summary of Findings

My three primary findings are structured based on significance with the most significant findings provided first and finding with lesser significance provided subsequently. These findings include the following:

1. Additional Sanction Types—A confirmation of a priori expectations regarding the identity and relevance of additional sanction types.

2. Additional Opinion Expression Avoidance (OEA) Types—Identification of additional methods of opinion expression avoidance strategies;
3. The Vocal Citizen—The motivations and circumstances surrounding those who did speak out contributes to the characterization of the activist or vocal citizen in the public sphere.

I dedicate a section of this chapter to each set of findings and provide a link back to the introduction and the literature.

Additional Sanction Types

Based on analysis of the data, I would propose that there are five valid sanction types that, individually or in tandem, are significant motivations to self-censor. These include social sanctions, economic sanctions, professional sanctions, legal/political sanctions, and physical sanctions. Table 5-1 below provides examples of each sanction type.

Social/Psychological Sanctions

As the spiral of silence theory is anchored in a social control framework, it is useful to note that the origin of scholarship regarding the social sanction in this context originated with Edward A. Ross, the pioneer of social control as a specialized sociological field. The roots of the social sanction emerge from how public opinion and other social forces influence the individual to embrace and internalize the proper moral and ethical standards (Ross, 1901). This internalization into a belief system is the psychological acceptance of a social pressure externally presented. Ross (1974) developed typologies for formal (e.g. legal) and informal (socially applied) sanctions.

Table 5-1: Example Sanction Taxonomy

| SANCTION TYPE | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Social (Psychological) | Economic | Professional | Legal/Political | Physical |
| Frown | Job loss, firing, termination | Not invited to meetings | Civil lawsuit/SLAPP | Verbal threats to commit violence |
| Sneer | | | Arrest | Property sabotage |
| Loss of reputation* | Blacklisting or graylisting | Not invited on business trips | Subpoena | Killing pets |
| Derision | Loss of or failure to secure contract | Kept out of communications loop | Incarceration | Trespassing |
| Expulsion from group | Boycott | Moved off career track | Trial/Verdict/Sentence | Excess noise or other noxious acts |
| Shunning | | Lose access to management | Harassment | Assault/Battery |
| Reproach | | Physically moved to inferior location in office | Civil violation | Rape |
| Unresponsiveness | | Prevented from engaging in professional activities | Surveillance | Attempted murder or murder |
| Shaming or embarrassment | | Social sanctions in a professional setting | Infiltration | |
| Being labeled a loser or some other derogatory term | | Losing effectiveness in professional setting | Public deprecation | |
| Isolation | | | Breach of confidentiality | |
| Banishment | | | Loss of group cohesion* | |
| Loss of group cohesion* | | | | |

* Could fall into more than one category

LaPiere (1954) defined sanctions designed to socially isolate as psychological sanctions. He believed (and Noelle-Neumann subsequently concurred) that sanctions resulting in social disapproval and distancing were the most important, LaPiere conceptualized the psychological sanction as much the same as Ross (1901) before him but referred to the sanction type as psychological since he suggested (p. 239) that the punishment was psychological. Such sanctions are responses to deviant behavior and

include a range of actions, including those as modest as a frown or not laughing at a friend's joke. They are intended to bring the deviant back in line to normative behavior patterns. If unsuccessful, they could be augmented to include harsher penalties such as expulsion from the group and shunning. LaPiere notes that psychological sanctions are applied symbolically and their effectiveness depends on the value placed on the symbols by group members.

While LaPiere utilized the term "psychological," a more apt term would be social or social psychological since the sanction is being administered by another member of the deviant's peer or reference group. Gibbs (1966) notes that sociologists with a psychological orientation like LaPiere are more apt to focus on the internalization of norms as a means to avoid socially imposed sanctions (p. 159). Numerous scholars in multiple disciplines (e.g. Beattie, 1964; Hu, 1944; Kerr, 1999; Petrič and Pinter, 2002; Salmon and Oshagan, 1990 and many others) have both previously and subsequently spoke of a social sanction to refer to social punishments for norm violation. Harisson (1940) speaks of the (positive) social sanction of respectability while the converse, lack of respect is a negative social sanction on the continuum. Social sanctions can include a range of acts described by LaPiere (1954) including frown, reproach, derision, taunt, jeer, reserve, repressed lips, critical glance, being angrily challenged, teasing, loss of status in a peer group, or expulsion. Noelle-Neumann (1993) spoke of "honor penalties" like public ridicule or disparagement, disrespect, disrepute, unpopularity, character assassination, being an outcast, being labeled a loser or a pariah, turning a deaf ear, a cool reception, reproach, intolerance of error, and ultimately she spoke of isolation. It can also include unresponsiveness (Turner, 1973), shaming (Bechtel, 1991), losing face (Hu,

1944), ostracism (Svendsen & Svendsen, 2002), loss of reputation (Quercia & Galster, 2000), negative evaluation (Hayes, 2005), socially shunned (Neuwirth, Frederick, and Mayo, 2004), isolation from a primary group (Moy, Domke, & Stamm, 2001) or any other social act towards another that expresses disapproval. Finally, Prietula & Conway refer to social norms bringing “extra-legal” sanctions, which is inferred to mean “social” sanctions such as those listed in Table 8-1 (2007; also see: Gibbs, 1966; Horne, 2001 as cited in Prietula & Conway, 2007). However, the primary descriptive term associated with the social sanction is social isolation; including the fear of, the threat of, or the actual experience of isolation.

Spiral of silence scholarship has not specifically operationalized the definition of a social sanction nor developed an exhaustive list of what a social sanction might consist other than the variations provided above. Either they rely on definitions developed in sociology or, as Gibbs suggested, consider the term to be “primitive” leaving the concept undefined. Social sanction primarily defined as social isolation had, prior to this research, seemed simplistic and unidimensional.

In both the interviews and the preliminary questionnaire, informants noted that they feared many different types of penalties for speaking out including restricted access to services in the community, loss of group cohesion, family tension, reduction of social effectiveness, and concern over sanctions against others. These responses indicate the domain of social sanctions as it relates to self-censorship is more complex and multidimensional than the research would otherwise suggest. Spiral of silence theory is not a social control theory but is a theory of public opinion conceptualized from a social control perspective rather than from a rational perspective. In this sense, it may be

unrealistic to expect sociological definitions to emerge from a theory of public opinion. In the end, the range of informant responses suggests that further refinements to the definition and a fleshing out the range of what a social sanction could consist of would be a fruitful research project. This could include distinguishing between the social and psychological aspects of the sanction, distinguishing how the social sanction interacts with other sanction types (e.g. how economic and social sanctions are connected), and connect with the taxonomy of sanctions as developed by Gibbs (1966).

Economic Sanctions

Economic sanctions, according to LaPiere (1954), are an interruption to the flow of goods and services that people enjoy to meet their wants and needs. People are dependant for their survival upon the goodwill of others, and behaving in a manner not in keeping with the standards of society and one's peer groups, will often result in an economic sanction (p. 229-230). I suggest that the economic sanction therefore should be considered separate and distinct from a professional sanction as it directly impacts one's ability to acquire the means to live and thrive. This distinction may be difficult to parse but a clear example in regard to self-censorship might be that an employee could be fired for speaking out, which is an economic sanction given the general dependence by most on income to meet basic needs. On the other hand, if the employee was no longer invited to board meetings or taken off an executive track by a supervisor, while these acts might impact the future ability to earn or the maximization of income and benefits, they are not directly an economic sanction. Both LaPiere (1954) and Noelle-Neumann (1993) refer to the economic sanction in their texts yet Noelle-Neumann does not refer to this type of social control mechanism as a significant influence on self-censorship behavior.

Professional Sanctions

Evidence in the data from informants in this project supports the claim that a professional sanction is relevant as an impact on self-censorship and that it differs qualitatively from an economic sanction. Referred to by scholars like Hayes, Glynn, & Shanahan (2005a), the professional sanction has been untested and appears to be co-mingled with the economic sanction as defined by LaPiere (1954). Professional sanctions are differentiated from economic sanctions in that they do not have a direct economic cost applied as part of the penalty meted out. They refer to actions in the professional workplace or in a professional educational setting where one's access to peers, supervisors, or clients; presence at meetings or conferences; invitations to speak; assignment to projects; or even the workspace one is provided or the work schedule one is assigned, is impacted by one's behavior.

Legal/Political Sanctions

The data revealed the existence of and relevance to this research of a sanction type not explicitly mentioned in spiral of silence or other self-censorship scholarship. The *legal/political sanction* includes a range of penalties assessed for either breaking an explicit law or violating a group or social norm. While not considered within LaPiere's (1954) sanction types, the legal sanction has long been a mechanism of formal social control (e.g. Gibbs, 1966; Ross, 1901) and is the institutionalized domain of moral-practical rationality (Deflem, 1994). Used by authorities to arrest, detain, try, convict, incarcerate, and any other action in the legal process, the legal sanction is a culturally approved form of securing obedience to social norms. But legal sanctions can also include civil litigation brought by public and private parties to address alleged wrongs

using systemic resources. This relates to the process of *juridification*¹⁶ that Habermas observes allows formal legal tools to address problems previously dealt with as private social matters (Habermas, 1989).

Political sanctions are the use of legal and other means to defeat or marginalize a political opponent. As Boykoff (2007) and Soley (2000) illustrate, this can include strategic litigation including SLAPP suits, harassment, and other mechanisms intended to stifle political expression. Several study informants experienced or were threatened with sanctions such as arrest, incarceration, public deprecation, breach of confidentiality, and other techniques. Some informants observed these techniques applied to other people and some noted that the sanction affected their willingness to speak out after the fact. These results suggest that the legal/political sanction is a usable typology and appears to serve as an effective mechanism of social control. As such and by extension, it would then be useful to operationalize the variable and test it empirically.

Physical Sanctions

Physical sanctions are considered simple, direct, and the method least employed in the social control toolbox (LaPiere, 1954). They consist of threats, suggestions of threats, and actual physical violence meted out to a violator of norms and to criminals for significant crimes. LaPiere believed that applying physical sanctions can be highly effective but may make the recipient less responsive to other means of control (p. 220). Helvarg (2004) described numerous case studies of individuals who were victims of physical sanctions for their speaking out. Individuals who spoke at public meetings or hearings, contacted the press, complained to public authorities, organized citizens groups,

¹⁶ Braaten (1991) defines juridification (*Verrechtlichung*) as a macroscopic tendency in modern societies to make ever more of the decisions about lifeworld affairs as though they concerned legal technicalities only (p. 91).

or merely identified themselves as an environmentalist received physical punishment that ranged from subtle threats to rape and attempted murder (Ibid).

Several study informants either experienced violence or the threat of violence or witnessed people who were victims of violence. The data indicates that the physical sanction is also a usable typology and is an effective mechanism of social control. It would also be useful to operationalize and test empirically.

Additional Opinion Expression Avoidance (OEA) Types

One unanticipated but interesting finding relates to Hayes (2005) opinion expression avoidance (OEA) strategies. Hayes recognized that much of spiral of silence research was conducted using a dichotomous speech or silence construct which is not a practical option that the “principles of pragmatics” (e.g. Brown & Levinson, 1987 and others cited in Hayes, 2005) regarding social interaction. Most people would not respond to a query for their opinion with stone-faced silence in a conversational setting. Such social rules are predicated on allowing others to “save face” during a social interaction (Goffman, 1967 cited in Hayes, 2005). Since saying nothing is generally an unviable option, Hayes tested a series of more realistic alternatives gleaned from an open-ended questionnaire given to students for how they would react to a hypothetical situation. Aside from the typical concerns over hypotheticals in spiral of silence research, which Hayes himself raises in regard to this study, his survey resulted in a core of seven response options that he referred to as opinion expression avoidance strategies. While the complete list of techniques as conceived of by students in their responses is not available, Hayes did note that the spiral of silence is devoid of any mention of alternative opinion expression avoidance strategies other than silence and the derivatives noted in Chapter 2.

This is one of many simplifications that critics of the spiral of silence theory have identified (e.g., Glynn 1997, Glynn et al. 1997 and others). He also noted that participants of the second study where the seven options were presented were not provided an opportunity to devise their own strategies for avoiding expression (Hayes, pre-publication manuscript, p. 30). He admitted that it is possible that there are other means of opinion expression avoidance that people placed in a real situation might actually use that were not in the list provided to the participants in this study.”

Indeed, informants in my research did in fact relate actual experiences with additional OEA strategies. These included limiting speech to a safe community, hiding one’s identity or status (as this might reveal likely associated opinions), using a preface or buffer statement, and using various other forms of deception or deceit. These results further buttress the use of qualitative methods as a means to conduct exploratory research to find additional variables, connections, and other detail regarding the concept. Additional research into opinion expression avoidance strategies could delve into the reasons why people chose a particular strategy. For example, one strategy may be used to negotiate a social situation without creating discomfort or revealing one’s opinion at all while another strategy might be a means to share part of one’s opinion but not all of it. Thus different strategic purposes might be employed based on the individual, the situation, or the issue.

The Vocal Citizen

Noelle-Neumann (1974, 1993) conceptualizes the *avant garde* as heretics or deviants who don’t abide by the norms and either “know no fear of isolation or have overcome it” (1993, p. 139). Then she speaks of the hard core (p. 170) who possess

characteristics of the avant garde in that they are not afraid to speak up but they go further in that they do not care at all about public opinion and turn their back to it completely. The avant garde or hard core may equate to the activist or other similar personality type generally not afraid to speak out (although there are situations that even lead them to self-censor).

While the activist is an important archetype to lead the dissemination of information to the public, equally important is the everyday citizen that may not normally be involved in politics or not any more than most people, but might find themselves with something important or revelatory to say. Perhaps what such a citizen might want to say would be completely out of character with the persona and lifestyle they've crafted for themselves so that they are risking a great deal for their expression. Yet because what they want to say has hit such a strong moral note with them, has resonated so deeply as an important issue and perspective, they feel compelled to say it against what one might perceive as against their long term self-interest.

This research included interviews with several people who have been outspoken most of their lives and some who were reticent for a part of their life but became outspoken later in life based on an issue or circumstance. I call this person "the vocal citizen." Another aspect of inquiry related to self-censorship is the motivations or influences regarding what make people become activists or to speak out even when sanctions await them. If we learn what makes ordinarily reticent people speak out, perhaps we can develop motivational frameworks to empower others to speak out. If we understand what resonates with people, we can develop outreach tools using those mechanisms. And if we understand what people fear related to speaking up, we might be

better able to understand how to soften the impact of the sanction that might be directed at them, protect them from those who would sanction them, or contribute to a dialogue where sanctions would no longer be a reasonable response to free expression of even the most sensitive and charged public issue.

Critical Theory Outcomes

Two outcomes of this research are relevant to critical social theory, which relate to the primary focus of the philosophical genre, explanation and revelation on one hand and critique and transformation on the other. Thus, the first outcome hopefully is to have provided the reader with evidence of some mechanisms that cultures possess to perpetuate behavioral norms and methods of social and political domination. First we must determine if a culture possesses ethics and norms that results in pathological behavioral patterns. Next we need to determine if such behaviors individually and collectively manifest in consequences that threaten the viability of social and/or natural systems. One could then logically conclude that such a culture should be replaced or transformed so that the pathological behavioral patterns could be curtailed and sustainable patterns of behavior instituted in their place. Such an argument, if properly formed, should serve as a means to reveal and disseminate these social and cultural relationships and the behaviors that lead to such destructive ends into a new narrative of society—the development of an alternative worldview that addresses the inequities and pathologies of the dominant culture.

But revelation and delegitimization of the culture requires a subsequent set of mechanisms in which to actually disseminate this information. This is where the second outcome comes into play. In order to effectuate critique and transformation, tools are

required in order to effectively communicate the information regarding the unhealthy culture to citizens of the culture. Such tools could include the communicative action framework as devised by Habermas (1984). Political conversation as recommended by Kim, Wyatt, & Katz (1999) and others, or other methods of information dissemination intended to spread ideas and values.

Communicative Action

Habermas social theory appears to be a useful model to apply to addressing conflict between what he terms the system and the lifeworld. This broad theory includes a model of social interaction that establishes what Brulle (2000) terms “a coherent worldview to serve as the basis for public deliberation about what actions need to be taken” (p. 23) and these worldviews serve as the basis for social organization of society. People in the lifeworld coordinate their actions by talking to each other (Habermas, 1987a cited in Brulle, 2000) thereby developing a shared notion of reality (Brown, 1983 cited in Brulle, 2000). This shared reality defines the situation requiring joint action (Brulle, 2000; p. 24). This process occurs through pursuit of the ideal speech situation with the functionally necessary resources (Habermas, 1996 cited in Brulle, 2000) for communication to exist (Brulle, 2000; p. 24).

Communicative action could be used in a number of different ways to facilitate more democratically responsive communication:

1. It could be employed by institutional actors to shape attention, reformulate problems, developing processes that question possibilities, or fostering meaningful political participation (Forester, 1993);

2. It could exemplify the role of the lifeworld as social capital in action (Bolton, 2005);
3. It could clearly identify and articulate peoples interests and needs (Sager, 1994 or Taylor, 1998);
4. It could allow people the ability to discriminate among communication practices that either facilitate public communication or reduce public discourse to institutional steering strategies (Goodnight, 1992);
5. It could be used to develop and institutionalize more adequate procedures to allow for the integration of ecological values into the decision making process (Brulle, 2002); and
6. It could reconceptualize the first amendment as the freedom of communicative action (Solum, 1989).

But the challenges inherent in the communicative action model relate to how such competences can be democratically and omnipresently applied without creating a new technocratic elite as Fraser (1992) warns that the public sphere is just another means to exclude those who cannot compete. Next concerns how such competences and frameworks for discourse can be devised and employed quickly enough and efficiently enough to address problems that are growing exponentially and outstripping our current administrative capacity to address even in a technocratic manner. To train a sufficient number of citizens to participate effectively by acquiring a minimum level of communicative competence seems a daunting exercise.

Conversation

Kim, Wyatt, & Katz (1999) tested the validity of a model of deliberative democracy along the lines of Barber (1984), Habermas (1996), Page (1996) and others by examining the interrelationships among four components of Bryce's (1888) "four stages" of the public opinion formation process: news consumption, political conversation, opinion formation, and political participation. Defining deliberative democracy as "a process where citizens voluntarily and freely participate in discussions on public issues...a discursive system where citizens share information about public affairs, talk politics, form opinions, and participate in political processes (p. 361). They suggest that such a process is discursive because each category of deliberation has characteristics of discourse" and "communicative action" (Habermas, 1984). Kim et al. (1999) claim that political conversation (defined as "all types of political talk, discussion, or argument, as long as they are carried out by free citizens without any specific purpose or predetermined agenda) is at the core of deliberative democracy (p. 362). Other scholars have pointed to the important role that conversation plays in a democratic society (e.g. Barber, 1984; Bennett et al., 2000; Carey, 1995; Dewey, 1927; Habermas, 1984 and others). Therefore, Kim et al. distinguish political conversation, spontaneous and casual conversations among private citizens, from more formal discussions with specific agendas and purposes. Both Tarde (1899) and Habermas (1984) make the distinction between strategic and informal talk. Kim et al. assert that, through interpersonal conversation, people "bridge their personal experiences with the worlds out there" (p. 362). They note that, while political conversation generally occurs in private, its inputs

are generated externally and its outputs are fed back into the public sphere (p. 362).

While some (Shudson (1997; Scheufele, 2000) believe that conversation and political talk are different concepts whereby informal conversation has little value for democracy, I take the position that both kinds of communication have value in disseminating important information and opinions about political subjects. Whether strategic or not, each method may have the opportunity to reach individuals and have an impact on retention and attitude change. Given this, each has a role to play in a toolbox of dissemination mechanisms.

Other Mechanisms

Other mechanisms that could contribute to culture change through communicating sustainable ideas and values are as numerous as forms of communication. However, several stand out as particularly promising including the use of innovative forms of communication informed by the behavioral sciences that make mental connections in a world dominated by corporate and cultural propaganda. Such forms include the use of video and caricatures, the employment of humor and satire, the use of shock and new symbolism, and other methods employed by organizations like Culture Jam, Smart Meme, and 350.org. The idea that many such organizations are advancing is the idea of using “meme theory” as a means to culturally disseminate in a viral or infectious spreading of the idea of cultural pathology and to also circulate alternative values and norms to replace the culture in parallel with its dissemblage. Gardner & Stern (1996) speak of using social networks to diffuse information about the environment. In this sense, social network theory may be another path to travel regarding a research and action program (p. 91).

Summary

The findings of this research confirmed the a priori presumption that additional sanction types are relevant in a self-censorship construct in certain circumstances and related to certain issues. While social sanctions are more of an individual difference variable, the other sanction types appear to be related to issues, settings, and circumstances that resonate to the individual. Each of these findings would be suitable for further exploratory research and would also be interesting to test empirically in a quantitative study.

Findings also identified additional forms of opinion expression avoidance strategies which will be useful variables to include in a broader conceptualization of self-censorship. Since self-censorship is not merely keeping quiet but involves varying degrees of withholding one's true opinion, this suggests that self-censorship acts likely fall on a linear continuum between complete expression suppression and complete forthrightness. Further exploratory or survey-based research into these strategies is also a research area that could be pursued.

A second a priori assumption coming into this project is that a qualitative method using in-depth interviews would reveal additional complexity in the informant experiences of self-censorship. This expectation was also confirmed through the findings as in addition to more detailed information regarding sanctions and OEA mechanisms, informants revealed information related to strategic speech and strategic silence, facets of their activism, external suppression of speech, and other concerns about speaking out. These categories included multiple responses that were each novel related to spiral of silence and self-censorship research as far as I have been able to determine.

The aforementioned complexity combined with perceived shortcomings or less than ideal applicability of the spiral of silence theory for developing a comprehensive model of self-censorship suggests that a very fruitful line of inquiry would be to independently develop such a model using selective variables from SoS and other disciplinary domains. Since I assert that self-censorship is an important and underdeveloped research area that has strong implications related to democratic discourse and participation and thus impacts political outcomes, pursuit of this project has implications for the democratic process and social and cultural change.

Assumed throughout this summary of findings is the usefulness and applicability of qualitative methods as a productive method for exploratory research and suggests that using these methods for many of the suggested paths for future research would be successful. In addition, these and subsequent findings using a qualitative method could also be used in subsequent quantitative research to conduct statistical testing and further isolate and validate specific variables. The stories that emerged from informants provided a richness of detail and nuance that quantitative research cannot capture and thus serves as a means to look more deeply into a process as complex as self-censorship has demonstrated that it is.

The idea of the vocal citizen was another interesting product of this research whereby many of the motivations and influences that informants experienced transitioned them from a reticent individual to an outspoken citizen. Whether these instances of expression are singular or result in the conversion into an activist is an interesting line of inquiry. Looking at the specific issues or circumstances that motivate speech is also a potentially interesting line of inquiry.

Finally, since this research was framed and grounded in critical social theory, it is important to identify how structures of power and inequality are maintained by barriers to communication like self-censorship. Not only is it important to identify the operation of self-censorship and to develop its typology, it is also important to reveal this information to a public that largely isn't aware of this mechanism and how it restricts their communicative competences or how it impacts the democratic process. Another purpose of critical theory is to effectuate change regarding the revelations uncovered and this could be addressed through communicative techniques like communicative action and through everyday conversation.

CHAPTER 6 - CONCLUSIONS

This research was focused on exploring the concept of self-censorship by learning from the experiences of informants who actually practiced self-censorship and others who were outspoken and paid the price with sanctions. As a professional land use planner and environmental activist, I observed first hand acts of self-censorship in regard to environmental issues and even contributed to the problem with my own self-censorship. I formed a conclusion that this dynamic could be a major factor influencing why people do not speak up more in favor of environmental protection, particularly related to very sensitive and culturally challenging aspects of the problem. Therefore, I decided to pursue this research program.

The spiral of silence (SoS) theory describes a dynamic of self-censorship, where individual behavior contributes to the marginalization of opinions. The theory hypothesizes that people scan public opinion and, when they perceived that their own opinion is in the minority or trending downward, that they self-censor themselves. Self-censorship is based on a fear of social isolation that might occur if they were to voice an unpopular opinion. The accumulated result of each individual act of self-censorship is a strengthening of the perceived majority opinion. It is possible that this opinion is unpopular with a “silent majority.”

Since self-censorship is a central facet of the SoS theory, I initially expected that the theory could be expanded or enhanced to include variables that appeared to be missing, such as sanctions other than fear of social isolation. The literature indicated that this theory was limited in being able to explain self-censorship. It was also limited in terms of the types of situations that it could explain.

I suggested two specific reasons why the spiral of silence theory did not serve as a comprehensive model of self-censorship. First, self-censorship was only one element in what is described by Noelle-Neumann and Petersen as a comprehensive theory of public opinion. The self-censorship facet of the theory was never fully developed. Instead, the theory postulated that people self-censored or “silenced” themselves due to a fear of social isolation. This broad assumption was based on a textual analysis conducted of literature since the ancient Greek philosophers through the Enlightenment and up to the modern day, where Noelle-Neumann (1993) found numerous quotes such as the following from John Locke to provide a scholarly foundation to her emerging theory. Speaking of public opinion, Locke states:

“But no man escapes the punishment of their censure and dislike who offends against the fashion and opinion of the company he keeps, and would recommend himself to” (1994).

Noelle-Neumann then sought to confirm the assumptions she developed through public opinion polling, which gave her the idea of a spiral of silence.,. Interestingly, no actual behavior was observed to build the spiral of silence theory, only hypothetical responses by people to constructed scenarios. The singular focus on social isolation appeared too limiting and too homogenous in these studies and that concerns over speaking out were very likely much more complex and multidimensional.

Second, Noelle-Neumann and Petersen provide a detailed set of criteria that narrowly delimit the circumstances in which the SoS theory is applicable (see p. 36 above). Since self-censorship clearly occurs outside of this narrow delimitation, the Spiral of Silence theory cannot serve as a foundation for a comprehensive theory of self-censorship.

Spiral of silence research has been overwhelmingly conducted using quantitative methods. The variables used in SoS research are generally the original dependent and independent variables conceptualized by Noelle-Neumann but tested in a variety of settings or contexts (e.g. Mexico, Taiwan, cross-cultural studies, regarding affirmative action). Sometimes they are modified based on presumptions made by subsequent researchers (e.g. correlation with the theory of planned behavior, considering peer groups rather than generalized public opinion). As far as I have been able to determine, no researcher before me has sought to use qualitative methods to conduct exploratory research into the dynamics of self-censorship. I expected that using this method would reveal additional complexity, nuance, and detail related to self-censorship.

By conducting in-depth interviews with informants whose opinions would be likely to reflect the population at large, my expectation was that I would find a wider range of concerns related to political and social expression than existing research has demonstrated. Furthermore, I expected that people are likely to be afraid of a wider range of sanctions than only social isolation. Such concerns are likely related to the issue and the situation in which the potential speaker finds him or herself. I also expected that using qualitative research would more generally reveal aspects of self-censorship that the literature did not report. Finally, I anticipated that I would also learn about people who did speak out and what motivated them to do so.

Each of these expectations was realized as the data revealed concerns over sanctions such as economic, professional, legal/political, and physical in addition to the social sanctions that Noelle-Neumann (1974, 1993) focused on. In fact, each of these sanctions expressed by informants was related to the situation the informant found

themselves in. These situations related to a specific issue and its sensitivity in the public sphere or the private realm of the informant and their peer group. Earlier I described communication apprehension (CA), where issues, traits, and states each are factors within a particular type of communication (McCroskey, 1984). My data suggests that self-censorship would be enhanced by using the communication apprehension model. Additional insight into these specific aspects of self-censorship could be fleshed out with the use of more focused qualitative research into sanction types.

The data also revealed that self-censorship is certainly more complex and multidimensional than previous research in this field has tended to characterize it. I found additional techniques of opinion expression avoidance (OEA) as Hayes (2005) suggested would be the case. This line of inquiry could be further enhanced by qualitative methods.

My informants also provided insight into the motivations and influences of activists or individuals that overcame self-censorship to speak out about issues important to them. These disclosures could contribute to scholarship about how social movements attracts new members. They could also provide information related to communicative techniques and the environment in which communication is nurtured and where, when, and how it occurs.

These findings could facilitate further qualitative research into a number of the specific key findings of this research or the recommendations for other research paths as noted below. Findings could also contribute to quantitative research by using the variables revealed herein in surveys.

Beyond a theoretical research agenda, information regarding self-censorship should be strategically disseminated into the public sphere. This would reveal the structure and dynamics of a large set of barriers and obstacles to the free circulation of information. It would also reveal an accurate depiction of the forces and flows of cultural defense and of power relationships, inequality, and oppression resulting from this systemic structure with its norms and practices. If more people were aware of the repercussions and consequences of their own self-censorship, as well as the compound effects of numerous people self-censoring on the same subject, perhaps they would reconsider their actions or find some means to distribute their opinions.

My specific purpose in this research was to reveal these aspects of self-censorship in relation to how the dominant culture facilitates the continuing environmental degradation of the planet by establishing a strong barrier to the circulation of information and ideas related to this circumstance. I assert that the global capitalist society including industrial scale extraction, production, waste, distribution, and use is a direct threat to the viability of the biosphere. Unless this information can be discussed in the public sphere, these problems will certainly persevere to no good end.

Finally, the popular revelation of this system and its practices is not quite enough. New methods of political communication need to be established to allow for a more inclusive democratic conversation in the public sphere to take place. Self-censorship prevents the full flowering of democracy and new communication practices. Perhaps the concept of communicative action developed by Habermas (1984a, 1987) could serve as that new set of practices. Or it could involve simple conversation as Kim et al. (1999) recommend since studies indicate (e.g. Bennett, Flickinger, and Rhine, 2000) that

engaging in political conversation even sporadically has beneficial impacts on the democratic process.

In the end, people who care about the state of the environment or any other social dilemma must consider the consequences of withholding their opinions about their concerns. I argue that it is critically important that all people communicate their concerns to others. Perhaps a critical mass of this public conversation will lessen the likelihood that sanctions will be a reactionary response from a newly marginalized opposition.

Specific Recommendations For Future Research

I believe that this exploratory research has identified a number of research projects and pathways that scholars can pursue in order to continue developing the concept of self-censorship. Based on my findings, I can recommend six specific research pathways that should be followed:

Depth Research Into Sanction Types

Qualitative research should flesh out the individual sanction types in a manner that facilitates their operationalization in quantitative surveys. For example, this could include a specific focus on one sanction type, such as physical sanctions, and develop how physical sanctions are employed, where they fall into the sanction application progression, who employs them and what their strategy for doing so specifically is (e.g. to motivate speakers from complete political disengagement related to an issue), and other facets of sanction types.

Depth Research Into Specific Groups

Qualitative research could be conducted into more specific groups or more generalized random samples of the population. Specific groups could seek more

effective means to reach the original intended population of this research, environmentalists, and focus on their self-censorship. It could also take a random sample and see if similar responses emanated from that sample as was collected in this research. Or it could see if the data were different and how. This might provide insight into a broader cross-section of the general population to determine the issue, situational, or trait-based factors effecting self-censorship in this broader sample;

Continue Researching Activist Motivations, Resources, and Methods

Qualitative research should be conducted into activists and others who were less reticent and a more detailed investigation into what makes them speak out. This research provided hints at the range of motivations that drove both activists to be outspoken and others who may have self-censored or been less outspoken to overcome their reluctance to speak. In addition to motivations, respondents provided other data that revealed more about activists and other outspoken citizens such as their support system or network. While other disciplines such as social movement research must have assembled information on activists, perhaps the findings in this study and future detailed research on these questions can offer an interdisciplinary perspective on activism;

Comprehensive Theory of Self-Censorship

Due to a large gap in scholarship, I recommend interdisciplinary research into the development of a comprehensive theory of self-censorship. Such a program should consider the more formal definition of the term developed for this research as a point of departure since the plethora of terms employed by researchers to refer to self-censorship (e.g. silence) indicates a lack of a cohesive conceptual framework. It should also develop more specifically what self-censorship is in terms of behavioral patterns, variables like

traits, situations in which it occurs, issues that facilitate it, and circumstances that produce these factors such as vested interests, the need for social acceptance, and other criteria. A theory of self-censorship should include systemic and dynamic representation to graphically depict how self-censorship is structured and how it fits within the attitude-behavior continuum since it clearly falls within this territory. In addition to the specific findings in this study, prior research that could inform such a theory could at minimum include Krassa's concept of opinion threshold, the Neuwirth et al. (2007) identification that people employ a cost/benefit calculation when considering speaking out, the distinction between sanction fears and threats that to date has only been employed regarding social isolation, and the communication apprehension literature.

Testing Sanction Variables

Variables that are absent from existing research into the spiral of silence and self-censorship inquiry such as physical, legal/political, economic, or professional sanctions should be tested in a manner similar to how the validity of fear of isolation (FOI) has been tested. Adding these to a survey would be as simple as including, for example, fear of being fired, as one of the hypothetical concerns asked on a survey form. Even if weak correlations are indicated by such testing, methods and assumptions used by researchers can be critically analyzed for alternative ways to test such variables. Since this has not yet been done to my knowledge, such critical analysis cannot yet be conducted.

Research on Culture and Cultural Guardians

As noted in Chapter 2, all cultures have mechanisms that help to disseminate and propagate the norms, values, and practices that make them what they are. Yet even cultures that have pathological practices possess self-protective mechanisms. I suggest

additional connective research between culture and its structure and operation and the facilitation of information dissemination, including but not limited to barriers such as self-censorship. This recommendation relates to more of a critical theory perspective regarding revealing power structures, inequities, and structural mechanisms and flows that maintain status quo. Power cannot be assailed unless the challenger is familiar with the geography, the weapons, and the forces and their tactics.

Many of these potential research programs would be assisted by a interdisciplinary approach, because topics such as self-censorship involve many disciplines, including sociology, psychology, social-psychology, management science, anthropology, political science, mass communication, public opinion research, and philosophy. To approach these questions collaboratively rather than independently could effectuate economies of scale and establish common terms and concepts that could simplify or make more efficient these efforts. At stake beyond the academic realm is a real world set of problems that prevent the promise of democracy from manifesting. This threatens to accelerate environmental decline.

Working within the existing culture to effect meaningful and timely change on a multitude of problems, such as the degradation of natural environment, has proven ineffective as metrics such as population growth, resource consumption, land conversion, pollution, ecosystem damage, global climate change and a host of other environmental woes indicates that growth and development continues to significantly outpace the feeble attempts to control or reverse these actions. Working within a system to effect necessary change that would be fundamentally contradictory to the system and its components is doomed to failure. Therefore, the logical alternative is to conceptualize and communicate

systemic alternatives to the existing culture. To do so requires people be able to express their unfettered opinions on such issues. Research into self-censorship, one such barrier to free communication, is intended to help assist this process.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Questionnaire Form

General Survey on Self-Censorship

1. Letter of Introduction to Participants

Dear Participant:

The purpose of this page is to welcome participants and to explain the purpose of the research.

I am a graduate student at Antioch University New England and am studying self-censorship in political discussions and conversation. I want to understand when people self-censor and for what reasons. To investigate these questions, I need to find people who have been interested in a sensitive public issue and who have self-censored.

By self-censorship I mean choosing not to speak up (staying silent) about an issue that you feel strongly about. The kind of issue you were interested in does not matter. I am interested in topics such as politics, race, religion, war and peace, the environment, etc.

If you have self-censored your speech or political expression in any way, I would very much appreciate your filling out this brief survey. To explore the issue in more depth than is possible with a survey, I plan to conduct interviews with a few individuals. If you are interested in being interviewed, please indicate this at the end of the survey. While I will not be able to interview everyone, I will select participants based on their experiences. Note that I will do all that I can to make sure that interview locations fit your convenience, anonymity, and comfort.

In all aspects of my study, I will preserve the anonymity of all participants. Nothing you say will be at all associated with anything that could identify you. Nobody will know that you participated or will know anything that you said. If you have any concerns about this, please do not hesitate to contact me by e-mail at cryan [at] antioch.edu

It is my belief that this research will help to assist people in becoming more free to speak and to design more effective democratic processes. Please consider helping me with this important research project.

Sincerely,

Christopher Ryan
Doctoral Student
Antioch University New England
christopher_ryan [at] antiochne.edu or
cryan [at] antioch.edu

General Survey on Self-Censorship

2. Instructions to Survey on Self-Censorship

The purpose of this confidential survey is to find people who have self-censored themselves in regard to a sensitive political or social issue. I am interested in learning about self-censorship and what people's specific concerns were that influenced the self-censorship behavior.

SELF-CENSORSHIP is choosing not to speak up or staying silent about an issue that you feel strongly about. Note that "speech" can be broadly defined to include verbal conversation or discourse, signs such as bumper stickers or yard signs, letter writing, attending a protest, wearing certain types of clothing, or any other act of communication that signifies to others how you feel, believe, or understand in an observable manner.

Please take a few minutes to share any experiences you may have had and what your motivations and reasons were to keep silent by filling out this survey. The second phase of this research consists of in-depth interviews with selected respondents of this survey who agree to participate in a second phase.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Please note that this survey is intended to be completely confidential and that your identity is not required to participate. If you choose to provide contact information, your identity will remain protected and when this phase of the research is completed, all information about participants will be destroyed.

LEARN MORE

Please visit <http://www.relocalizations.net/ANE/cjrdocdishome.html> (paste URL in browser) to read a detailed description of the research, learn more about privacy and confidentiality, and find contact information to reach researcher.

Start the survey by clicking NEXT button below...

General Survey on Self-Censorship

3. Default Section

*** 1. Can you recall a specific experience with self-censorship that is particularly memorable when you wanted to speak out about a sensitive or important issue?**

- Yes
 No
 Not Sure

2. How long ago (in years) did this experience take place?

Number of Years

3. What was the topic or type of issue? For this survey, please pick the issue that was of greatest interest and sensitivity to you if more than one.

- Religion (abortion, fundamentalism, evolution versus creationism, etc.)
 Politics and public policy (Iraq War, bailout, climate change policy, etc.)
 Social (welfare, socialized medicine, charity, etc.)
 Economics (growth, market economy, regulation, taxes, bailouts, etc.)
 Science (climate change, endangered species, energy, etc.)

Other (please specify)

4. OPTIONAL: Can you provide detail about the specific issue in which you chose to self-censor and, if you wish, your position or perspective?

5. What was the situation or circumstance and what was your role?

- Professional or work-related situation (business, government, activist, other)
 Social situation or setting with family, friends, colleagues, neighbors, etc. (citizen)
 Academic or school situation (scholar or academic)

Other (please specify)

6. At that time, how important was the issue to you that was at the center of your decision to self-censor in comparison with other issues.

- Most Important Very Important Somewhat Important Not Very Important Least Important

General Survey on Self-Censorship

7. All in all, when you look back on it, how important was this self-censorship experience to you?

- Extremely Important
 Important
 Somewhat Important
 Not Very Important
 Not Important at All

8. If you self-censored yourself, please briefly explain how this made you feel? How does it make you feel right now in recalling this episode? Choose whether you agree with each feeling or emotion.

| | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neither Agree or Disagree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Comfortable and at ease with yourself | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Feeling that you did the right thing | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Regretful, worried that you did the wrong thing | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Safe and self-preserving | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Embarrassed or ashamed | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Angry at yourself | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Angry at someone or something else | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Feeling that you had disappointed or let one or more people down | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Wise or smart | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Weak or impotent | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I don't think what I would have said would have made any difference anyway | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I had difficulty eating, sleeping, thinking, or functioning generally | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I felt physically sick | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Other (please specify below) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Other

9. When you chose to self-censor, did you believe your opinion in regard to this issue was in the minority?

- Yes
 No
 Not Sure

General Survey on Self-Censorship

10. Why did you feel that your opinion was in the minority? Please choose all that apply.

- Mass media (e.g. newspapers, television, internet, etc.) appeared to report that majority of people held opposing opinion
- Mass media expressed opposing opinion in editorials
- Family or friends often expressed opposing opinion
- Colleagues, co-workers, others, expressed opposing opinion
- Did not hear your opinion repeated often
- Other (please specify)

11. How would you characterize your outspokenness on this issue before you chose to self-censor?

- Very Outspoken
- Moderately Outspoken
- Occasionally Outspoken
- Reticent and Reluctant to Speak Out Much
- Never Share Opinion

12. When you chose to self-censor, did you feel that discussing your opinion(s) openly would be risky and that you might be punished or sanctioned?

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure

General Survey on Self-Censorship

13. If answer to #12 above is Yes, please convey why you felt speaking up was risky and that self-censorship was necessary. In other words, please determine how important each of the following types of sanctions was to your concerns over speaking up.

| | Extremely Important | Very Important | Important | Not Very Important | Not Important at All |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Social isolation (e.g., appear foolish or odd, annoy or lose friends; create distance between family, neighbors, colleagues; be subject to teasing or taunting) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Economic Sanction (e.g., lose job or lesser work penalty, lose consulting contract, lose customers, etc.) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Legal/Political Sanction (e.g., lawsuit, lose election, served warrant or subpoena, arrest, etc.) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Physical Sanction (e.g., threat against personal property or pets, personal threat against person, more serious threat of violence against self such as death) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Other (Please Specify Below) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Other

General Survey on Self-Censorship

14. What other reasons might have motivated you to stay silent? Please note how important each of the following types of reasons might have influenced your self-censorship.

| | Extremely Important | Very Important | Important | Not Very Important | Not Important at All |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Concern over sanctions (see previous question) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Inappropriate setting or situation (e.g., wedding) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Expressing your opinion would not have led to a useful outcome, that it wouldn't matter anyway (referred to as response efficacy) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Desire to keep the peace or avoid social conflict | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Lack of knowledge about the topic | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Shyness | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Lack of confidence in communication skills (e.g., can't "think on your feet", stuttering, speaking skills generally poor, etc.) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| No appropriate audience to discuss it with | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Other (please specify)

15. When you chose to self-censor, what was involved in the act? What did you actually do?

Please choose all that apply...

- You stated the opposite of your true belief so as to agree with the speaker
- Change the subject or steer topic in a different direction
- Nod your head in agreement
- State that you had no opinion on the matter
- Choose to ignore question or prompt
- You modified your opinion to be closer to the group's opinion norms
- Walk away
- Other (please specify)

General Survey on Self-Censorship

16. At the time that this happened, please recall your thoughts or feelings:

| | AGREE | DISAGREE |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| At ease | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Worried | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Angry | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Ashamed | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Have difficulty sleeping | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Have difficulty eating | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Affected relationships | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

17. Did you, on the other hand, ever chose to speak up in a similar situation? What was the result? Were you punished? How? Did this experience or the experience of others influence your willingness to speak out?

18. Please provide some demographic information:

Gender (male/female)

Age (years)

Level of Education (in years where High School Degree = 12)

Location (City, State, Country)

Vocation (Type of Position)

Industry (Government, Private Sector, Non-Profit, etc.)

Referring Organization (Optional)

19. Would you be interested in participating in an in-depth interview to discuss this experience in more detail? If Yes, please provide your contact information in the optional section below.

- Yes
- No

CONFIDENTIALITY

Please again note that this survey is intended to be completely confidential and that your identity is not required to participate. If you choose to provide contact information, your identity will remain protected and when this phase of the research is completed, all information about participants will be destroyed.

Please visit <http://www.relocalizations.net/ANE/cjrdood/home.html> (paste URL in browser) to read a detailed description of the research, learn more about privacy and confidentiality, and find contact information to reach researcher.

General Survey on Self-Censorship

20. CONTACT INFORMATION

You can provide optional contact information so that I may get in touch with you if you indicate an interest in a follow up discussion regarding a possible in-depth interview.

You do not have to provide this information if you do not want to participate in Phase 2.

Name: NA

Affiliation (optional):

City/Town:

State:

Email Address:

Phone Number:

21. Please provide any suggestions to make this survey better.

General Survey on Self-Censorship

4. Thank You

Thank you for participating in this survey. If you have been directed to this page by a No answer, please note that a Yes was required for the survey to continue.

Appendix B: Complete List of Participants

| No. | Alias | Date of Interview | Time of Interview | Location |
|-----|----------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| 1 | Allison | April 14, 2009 | 1:00 p.m. | Town Hall |
| 2 | Ron | April 27, 2009 | 11:00 a.m. | Town Hall |
| 3 | Cheryl | April 27, 2009 | 1:00 p.m. | Coffee Shop |
| 4 | Mike | June 16, 2009 | 4:30 p.m. | Planning Office |
| 5 | Gretchen | July 9, 2009 | 11:00 a.m. | Barnes & Noble |
| 6 | John | July 18, 2009 | 9:00 a.m. | Denny's |
| 7 | Marie | August 1, 2009 | 10:00 a.m. | Home |
| 8 | Marcia | August 1, 2009 | 3:00 p.m. | Greenfield, MA Co-op |
| 9 | Mitch | August 23, 2009 | 4:00 p.m. | Coffee Shop |
| 10 | Jenny | August 24, 2009 | 10:30 a.m. | Office |
| 11 | Leslie | August 24, 2009 | 12:30 a.m. | Office |
| 12 | Jarrett | August 31, 2009 | 1:00 p.m. | Via Telephone |
| 13 | Cathy | November 24, 2009 | 5:00 p.m. | My Office; Concord, MA |
| 14 | Rachel | June 19, 2010 | 2:00 p.m. | Concord, MA Home |
| 15 | Gary | August 22, 2010 | 4:00 p.m. | Via Telephone |
| 16 | Jim | October 19, 2010 | 5:00 p.m. | Via Telephone |
| 17 | Scarlett | October 20, 2010 | 5:00 p.m. | Via Telephone |
| 18 | Elin | November 4, 2010 November 12, 2010 | 10:30 a.m. 11:00 a.m. | Home |
| 19 | Chris | December 3, 2010 | 3:00 p.m. | College |
| 20 | Diane | December 18, 2010 | 11:00 a.m. | Via Telephone |
| 21 | Lark | January 5, 2011 | 2:00 p.m. | Via Telephone |
| 22 | Kendra | February 2, 2011 | 3:00 p.m. | Via Telephone |
| 23 | Kristen | February 12, 2011 | 5:00 p.m. | Via Telephone |

Appendix C: Interview Guide

Project Interview Guide

Name _____

Introduction

With this study I am seeking the experiences and perceptions of people like yourself. In particular, I'm interested in narratives of personal experience with situations within your present or past local community in which you felt reluctant or constrained from speaking your opinion about a political or social issue.

Additionally, I am going to ask you to describe whether you feel or have ever felt that in general, the social environment of the community was or was not conducive to expressing yourself freely about issues of concern to you. Further, I'll ask you to describe the specifics of any such situations including who, if anyone in particular, made you feel uncomfortable or wary of expressing yourself; what the issue was, what your primary concerns about expressing yourself were, and if you felt that by expressing yourself, any negative consequences might result.

I will first ask you an open-ended question and I want you to feel free to answer the question as you might tell a story, in as much detail as you can. As I need to, I will ask follow up questions when you have completed your story.

Let me remind you that this research is completely confidential and that at any time, you may choose to refrain from participation. Do you have any questions before we begin?

Introductory Statement: See footnote.¹⁷

2. In the first phase of this research, you responded to a questionnaire where you noted that you experienced one or more situations in which you held a strong opinion that you wanted to express related to an issue important to you, but felt reluctant to do so, otherwise referred to as self-censorship. Could you describe: your experience in as much detail as you can?
 - a. Explain the situation and any other such situations that come to mind?
 - b. What the issue was that created this dilemma? Discuss your personal experience and interest with this issue.
 - c. Provide detail about how you were feeling at the time, what your decision was (either to express yourself or not), what your reasons were for this decision, and how you felt after this experience?
 - d. Do you wish to discuss what your opinion was regarding the issue?
- 2a. If you chose to self-censor, what was your reason for doing so. You may consider the following as possible reasons for choosing to self-censor:

¹⁷ Most people hold a number of opinions and perspectives. Some are closely held and important while others are of only modest importance. Furthermore, some of these opinions might be fairly common while others might be held by only a few people. Finally, some opinions might be non-controversial while others are morally-charged and sensitive. People often want to express their opinion for a number of reasons including wanting to have others validate their opinion, to reveal a little bit about themselves, to seek further information about the issue, and so on. Expressing an opinion can involve a variety of behaviors such as holding a conversation, displaying a bumper sticker, giving a speech, writing a letter to the editor, etc.

Please also note that self-censorship behavior (i.e. withholding your valued opinion) can also take many forms in addition to staying completely silent. These could include any number of opinion expression avoidance strategies such as changing the subject, moving away, saying nothing, expressing feigned indifference, nodding, lying about your opinion, and changing the subject.

- j. Fear of social isolation
- k. Lack of knowledge about the subject
- l. Desire to keep the peace, avoid conflict
- m. Lack of communicative confidence or dispositional shyness
- n. Perception of opinion climate, current and anticipated future (determine how perceived)
- o. Opinion strength
- p. Lack of opportunity to discuss (why?)
- q. Moral tenor and emotional loading of the issue
- r. Fear of other sanction (e.g. economic, physical, legal, or political). Was there a concern over job? Friendships or acquaintances? Personal safety?

2b. [for people who spoke up] Were there situations surrounding this issue in which you considered self-censorship but went ahead and spoke out anyhow? What were your feelings about that? Were any of your concerns actualized? Does that experience make you more or less likely to make the same decision?

- 5. I am particularly interested in whether you had misgivings or concerns about speaking out. If so, what were your specific concerns were about expressing yourself (why you were reluctant). Could you elaborate about the concerns you had? Who or what you were most worried about?
- 6. What were the potential consequences in your mind that could result from expressing that particular opinion, at that time, and in that situation? Could you elaborate about what the potential consequences were in your mind that could result from expressing that particular opinion, at that time, and in that situation? Please provide as much detail as you can including the source of discomfort (e.g. situation, people, etc.)
- 7. Please describe whether you feel or if you have felt that in general, the social environment of the community was or was not conducive to you expressing yourself freely about issues of concern to you.
- 8. If you chose to self-censor, please discuss what strategy you used:
 - a. Staying completely silent
 - b. Changing the subject
 - c. Moving away from the proximity of the conversation
 - d. Expressing feigned indifference
 - e. Nodding
 - f. Lying about your opinion
 - g. Changing the subject.
 - h. Other

I will conclude the interview by asking for demographic information such as age, gender, ethnicity, profession, personal and community political affiliation, and social and fraternal affiliations.

Gender _____
 Age _____
 Ethnicity _____
 Profession _____
 Political Affiliation _____
 Social/Fraternal Affiliations _____
 Work Community _____
 Home Community _____

Appendix D: Complete Coding Scheme

| | I-Count | P-Count |
|--|---------|---------|
| Opinion Expression Inhibition (OEI) Mechanisms 1 | | |
| Self-Censorship 1.1 | 0 | 0 |
| Proactive or reactive situation (initiation mechanism) 1.1.1 | 0 | 0 |
| Proactive 1.1.1.1 | 0 | 0 |
| Reactive (incl. surprise situation) 1.1.1.2 3(2) | 3 | 2 |
| Self-censorship strategy (from Hayes (2005)) 1.1.2 1(1) | 1 | 1 |
| Change the subject/topic 1.1.2.1 | 2 | 2 |
| Walk away or leave the situation 1.1.2.2 | 1 | 1 |
| Say nothing, silence, avoiding communication 1.1.2.3 | 22 | 11 |
| Expressing uncertainty or ambivalence 1.1.2.4 | 0 | 0 |
| Express feigned indifference 1.1.2.5 | 0 | 0 |
| Talking about someone else's opinion 1.1.2.6 | 0 | 0 |
| Reflecting the question back 1.1.2.7 | 0 | 0 |
| Pretending to agree with the majority 1.1.2.8 | 0 | 0 |
| Other form of deception or deceit 1.1.2.9 | 7 | 6 |
| Holding back full force of opinion 1.1.2.10 | 20 | 10 |
| Using preface or buffer statement 1.1.2.11 | 2 | 2 |
| Hide identity or status 1.1.2.12 | 2 | 1 |
| Limits speech to safe community 1.1.2.13 | 3 | 1 |
| Other OEI mechanism 1.2 | 0 | 0 |
| Strategic Speech (can be hybrid self-censorship and expression but in this case primary purpose is to soften or divert attention) 1.2.1 | 4 | 3 |
| Speaking technically versus of values 1.2.1.1 | 6 | 3 |
| Speaking privately to source of issue/problem 1.2.1.2 | 1 | 1 |
| Aware that others are pursuing/addressing the issue 1.2.1.3 | 1 | 1 |
| Strategic Silence 1.2.2 | 3 | 3 |
| Avoidance of Association 1.2.3 | 1 | 1 |
| Non-Verbal Communication 1.2.4 | 3 | 1 |
| Impact of Silence and/or External Censorship 1.3 | 0 | 0 |
| Physical Reaction 1.3.1 | 1 | 1 |
| Psychological Reaction 1.3.2 | 2 | 2 |
| Hopeless or Demoralization 1.3.2.1 | 5 | 3 |
| Stress or Shame 1.3.2.2 | 2 | 2 |
| Social or Other Impact 1.3.3 | 1 | 1 |
| Social distancing or marginalization 1.3.3.1 | 1 | 1 |
| Activism/Speaking Out/Expression 2 | | |
| Motivation/Predication/Motivation 2.1 | | |
| Life Experience 2.1.1 | 10 | 7 |
| Education 2.1.2 | 2 | 2 |
| Event, Issue, Identity 2.1.3 | 30 | 12 |
| Observing Others Speaking Out 2.1.4 | 0 | 0 |

| | | |
|---|----|---|
| Noting Weakness of Opponent 2.1.5 | 1 | 1 |
| Status (incl. marginalization, edgewalking) 2.1.6 | 3 | 3 |
| Pressure 2.1.7 | 1 | 1 |
| Noting others silence, self-censorship 2.1.8 | 1 | 1 |
| Comfort 2.2 | 1 | 1 |
| Supporting Community 2.2.1 | 9 | 5 |
| Developing a Voice or Speaking Comfort 2.2.2 | 5 | 3 |
| Developing Core Competency or Knowledge Base 2.2.3 | 9 | 4 |
| Sense of Security or Safety 2.2.4 | 5 | 3 |
| Experience at Speaking Out 2.2.5 | 3 | 2 |
| Preparedness (not surprised) 2.2.6 | 2 | 2 |
| Misjudged openness of speaking environment 2.2.7 | 3 | 2 |
| Willing to take more risks with expression 2.2.8 | 1 | 1 |
| Identifying safe people and circumstances 2.2.9 | 3 | 1 |
| Assuming/expecting conflict and willingness to work through it 2.2.10 | 1 | 1 |
| Strategy 2.3 | 0 | 0 |
| Effectiveness Strategy 2.3.1 | 9 | 3 |
| Serving as a Way Paver/Groundbreaker 2.3.2 | 6 | 2 |
| Seeking Media Voice 2.3.3 | 2 | 1 |
| Anonymous Outlet or Proxy 2.3.4 | 7 | 5 |
| Strategy Success 2.3.5 | 3 | 2 |
| Develop relationships prior to sharing values 2.3.6 | 2 | 1 |
| Type of Expression 2.4 | 1 | 1 |
| Verbal or non-verbal 2.4.1 | 2 | 2 |
| Verbal 2.4.1.1 | 5 | 4 |
| Non-Verbal 2.4.1.2 | 7 | 5 |
| Direct or indirect (incl. proxy) 2.4.2 | 0 | 0 |
| Direct 2.4.2.1 | 5 | 4 |
| Indirect 2.4.2.2 | 4 | 3 |
| Ultimate Impact of Speech 2.5 | 3 | 2 |
| Positive 2.5.1 | 7 | 7 |
| Negative (see 3.6b) | 0 | 0 |
| Unresolved 2.5.2 | 2 | 2 |
| Dissent Suppression or Response to Expression (varies based on level of visibility/influence) 3 | | |
| External Censorship 3.1 | 8 | 3 |
| Media Deprecation 3.2 | 0 | 0 |
| Black Propaganda 3.3 | 0 | 0 |
| Mass Media Manipulation 3.4 | 0 | 0 |
| Mass Media Underestimation, False Balance, Disregard 3.5 | 1 | 1 |
| Sanctions (expected (a) or experienced (b)) 3.6 | 2 | 2 |
| (Fear of) Economic or Professional Consequence (FEC) 3.6.1 | 20 | 9 |
| Firing or Layoff 3.6.1.1 | 10 | 8 |
| Employment Deprivation 3.6.1.2 | 1 | 1 |

| | | |
|---|----|---|
| Restriction on Employment Mobility or Advancement 3.6.1.3 | 3 | 3 |
| Lose or Fail to Obtain Contracts, Sales, or Jobs 3.6.1.4 | 5 | 3 |
| Boycotting or Access Restriction 3.6.1.5 | 3 | 2 |
| Property Damage 3.6.1.6 | 1 | 1 |
| Professional Marginalization 3.6.1.7 | 3 | 2 |
| Harassment, False Accusation, and Testing 3.6.1.8 | 2 | 2 |
| Harder to Function Professionally 3.6.1.9 | 6 | 3 |
| Protect the Professional Interest of Others 3.6.1.10 | 4 | 4 |
| (Fear of) Legal or Political Sanction (FLS) 3.6.2 | 7 | 4 |
| Arrest or Physical Detaining 3.6.2.1 | 4 | 4 |
| Threat of Arrest or Harassment 3.6.2.2 | 2 | 2 |
| Litigation 3.6.2.3 | 5 | 3 |
| Subpoena or Call to Hearing or Deposition 3.6.2.4 | 0 | 0 |
| Prosecution, Public or Otherwise 3.6.2.5 | 1 | 1 |
| Surveillance 3.6.2.6 | 0 | 0 |
| Break-In's 3.6.2.7 | 0 | 0 |
| Infiltration, Badjacketing, Agent Provocateur Assignment 3.6.2.8 | 0 | 0 |
| Extraordinary Rules and Laws 3.6.2.9 | 0 | 0 |
| Confidentiality Breach 3.6.2.10 | 1 | 1 |
| Public Humiliation, Embarrassment, Deprecation 3.6.2.11 | 4 | 2 |
| Restriction in Public Participation or Input 3.6.2.12 | 0 | 0 |
| Framing or False Charges 3.6.2.13 | 0 | 0 |
| Loss of Custody 3.6.2.14 | 1 | 1 |
| (Fear of) Physical Sanction (FPS) 3.6.3 | 0 | 0 |
| Direct Violence 3.6.3.1 | 6 | 5 |
| Threat of Violence 3.6.3.2 | 12 | 8 |
| Property Damage 3.6.3.3 | 7 | 4 |
| Verbal Assault 3.6.3.4 | 3 | 3 |
| Place in Physical Danger 3.6.3.5 | 2 | 1 |
| Protect Others From Harm 3.6.3.6 | 5 | 2 |
| Physiological and Psychological Stress 3.6.3.7 | 1 | 1 |
| (Fear of) Psychological Sanction 3.6.4 | 5 | 3 |
| Social Isolation 3.6.4.1 | 10 | 7 |
| Basis 3.6.4.1.1 | 0 | 0 |
| Personality-oriented 3.6.4.1.1.1 | 1 | 1 |
| Issue-oriented 3.6.4.1.1.2 | 3 | 2 |
| Situational 3.6.4.1.1.3 | 3 | 2 |
| Type 3.6.4.1.2 | 2 | 2 |
| Membership Loss 3.6.4.1.2.1 | 2 | 1 |
| Loss of Friends 3.6.4.1.2.2 | 0 | 0 |
| Lessened Contacts 3.6.4.1.2.3 | 1 | 1 |
| Hostility, Harassment, or Ridicule 3.6.4.1.2.4 | 8 | 5 |
| Restricted Community Access to Services 3.6.4.1.2.5 | 1 | 1 |
| Fractured Alliances, Loss of Group Cohesion 3.6.4.1.2.6 | 4 | 3 |
| Family and Social Tension 3.6.4.1.2.7 | 4 | 3 |

| | | |
|--|----|---|
| Reduction of Social Effectiveness 3.6.4.1.2.8 | 1 | 1 |
| Fear of Learning of Social Differences 3.6.4.1.2.9 | 1 | 1 |
| Indirect Social Impact (against others) 3.6.4.2 | 5 | 4 |
| Observe Sanctions Against Others 3.6.5 | 15 | 7 |
| Knows Others Who Remain Silent 3.6.6 | 8 | 5 |
| Protect Others From Social Costs 3.6.7 | 4 | 2 |
| Bribery or Purchase of Voice/Silence 3.7 | 2 | 1 |
| Other Concern (unpredicted) 4 | | |
| Other Concern (standard) 5 | | |
| Inappropriate setting, situation, or audience 5.1 | 5 | 5 |
| Response efficacy or seeing no useful outcome through speaking out 5.2 | 13 | 7 |
| Peace keeping motivation or desire to avoid social conflict 5.3 | 7 | 6 |
| Amount of knowledge on topic 5.4 | 4 | 3 |
| Too Little 5.4.1 | 3 | 1 |
| Too Much 5.4.2 | 1 | 1 |
| Expert Syndrome 5.4.3 | 1 | 1 |
| Level of Interest in political affairs 5.5 | 0 | 0 |
| Importance or salience of topic to individual 5.6 | 1 | 1 |
| Communication apprehension and dispositional shyness 5.7 | 0 | 0 |
| Lack of communication skills, confidence in 5.8 | 1 | 1 |
| Confidence in the correctness of one's opinion (opinion strength) 5.9 | 1 | 1 |
| Extremity of one's opinion on the topic 5.10 | 1 | 1 |
| Extent to which one's opinion has a moral basis 5.11 | 0 | 0 |
| Has other goals and interests to pursue 5.12 | 3 | 1 |
| Do not want to test or threaten authority 5.13 | 1 | 1 |
| Do not want to expose identity or beliefs 5.14 | 1 | 1 |
| Do not want to use time and energy in this way (Diversion Principle) 5.15 | 1 | 1 |
| Other SoS Variable 6 | | |
| Willingness to express an opinion (dependent) 6.1 | 0 | 0 |
| Current climate of opinion (independent) 6.2 | 2 | 2 |
| Perception of future climate opinion (independent) 6.3 | 0 | 0 |
| Perceived congruence between one's opinion and perceived public opinion 6.4 | 0 | 0 |
| Moral salience or emotional loading of issue (independent) 6.5 | 0 | 0 |
| Media tenor or position on issue (independent) 6.6 | 0 | 0 |
| Fear of social isolation (independent via Neuwirth et. al 2004) 6.7 | 0 | 0 |
| Communication Apprehension 7 | | |
| CA-trait (personality) 7.1 | 0 | 0 |

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| CA-generalized context (trait modifier) 7.2 | 0 | 0 |
| CA-person/group (state+trait) 7.3 | 0 | 0 |
| CA-state (situational) 7.4 | 0 | 0 |
| | | |
| Level of Outspokenness 8 | | |
| Very 8.1 | 7 | 5 |
| Moderate 8.2 | 0 | 0 |
| Not Very 8.3 | 1 | 1 |
| Not at All 8.4 | 2 | 2 |

Appendix E: Data Set from Questionnaire

General Survey on Self-Censorship








1. Can you recall a specific experience with self-censorship that is particularly memorable when you wanted to speak out about a sensitive or important issue?

| | | Response Percent | Response Count |
|--------------------------|--|------------------|----------------|
| Yes | | 90.8% | 148 |
| No | | 4.3% | 7 |
| Not Sure | | 4.9% | 8 |
| answered question | | | 163 |
| skipped question | | | 0 |





2. How long ago (in years) did this experience take place?

| | Response Average | Response Total | Response Count |
|--------------------------|------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Number of Years | 2.52 | 386 | 153 |
| answered question | | | 153 |
| skipped question | | | 10 |

| 3. What was the topic or type of issue? For this survey, please pick the issue that was of greatest interest and sensitivity to you if more than one. | | | |
|---|---|------------------|----------------|
| | | Response Percent | Response Count |
| Politics and public policy (Iraq War, bailout, climate change policy, etc.) |  | 30.1% | 40 |
| Religion (abortion, fundamentalism, evolution versus creationism, etc.) |  | 14.3% | 19 |
| Science (climate change, endangered species, energy, etc.) |  | 32.3% | 43 |
| Economics (growth, market economy, regulation, taxes, bailouts, etc.) |  | 9.0% | 12 |
| Social (welfare, socialized medicine, charity, etc.) |  | 14.3% | 19 |
| | Other (please specify) | | 36 |
| answered question | | | 133 |
| skipped question | | | 30 |
| 4. OPTIONAL: Can you provide detail about the specific issue in which you chose to self-censor and, if you wish, your position or perspective? | | | |
| | | | Response Count |
| | | | 15 |
| answered question | | | 15 |
| skipped question | | | 148 |

| 5. What was the situation or circumstance and what was your role? | | | |
|---|------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| | | Response Percent | Response Count |
| Professional or work-related situation (business, government, activist, other) | | 41.0% | 59 |
| Social situation or setting with family, friends, colleagues, neighbors, etc. (citizen) | | 45.8% | 66 |
| Academic or school situation (scholar or academic) | | 13.2% | 19 |
| | Other (please specify) | | 17 |
| answered question | | | 144 |
| skipped question | | | 19 |







| 6. At that time, how important was the issue to you that was at the center of your decision to self-censor in comparison with other issues. | | | |
|---|--|------------------|----------------|
| | | Response Percent | Response Count |
| Most Important | | 20.1% | 31 |
| Very Important | | 56.5% | 87 |
| Somewhat Important | | 22.1% | 34 |
| Not Very Important | | 1.3% | 2 |
| Least Important | | 0.0% | 0 |
| answered question | | | 154 |
| skipped question | | | 9 |

| 7. All in all, when you look back on it, how important was this self-censorship experience to you? | | | |
|--|---|---------------------|-------------------|
| | | Response Percent | Response Count |
| Extremely Important |  | 11.0% | 17 |
| Important |  | 54.5% | 84 |
| Somewhat Important |  | 24.7% | 38 |
| Not Very Important |  | 9.7% | 15 |
| Not Important at All | | 0.0% | 0 |
| answered question | | | 154 |
| skipped question | | | 9 |

8. If you self-censored yourself, please briefly explain how this made you feel? How does it make you feel right now in recalling this episode? Choose whether you agree with each feeling or emotion.

| | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neither Agree or Disagree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Response Count |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| Comfortable and at ease with yourself | 3.9% (6) | 15.5% (24) | 16.1% (25) | 47.1% (73) | 17.4% (27) | 155 |
| Feeling that you did the right thing | 4.5% (7) | 30.3% (47) | 24.5% (38) | 26.5% (41) | 14.2% (22) | 155 |
| Regretful, worried that you did the wrong thing | 6.5% (10) | 34.6% (53) | 24.8% (38) | 25.5% (39) | 8.5% (13) | 153 |
| Safe and self-preserving | 8.4% (13) | 50.6% (78) | 21.4% (33) | 14.9% (23) | 4.5% (7) | 154 |
| Embarrassed or ashamed | 5.2% (8) | 29.9% (46) | 30.5% (47) | 20.1% (31) | 14.3% (22) | 154 |
| Angry at yourself | 5.2% (8) | 29.9% (46) | 29.2% (45) | 19.5% (30) | 16.2% (25) | 154 |
| Angry at someone or something else | 20.8% (32) | 39.0% (60) | 16.9% (26) | 13.0% (20) | 10.4% (16) | 154 |
| Feeling that you had disappointed or let one or more people down | 6.5% (10) | 26.5% (41) | 27.1% (42) | 30.3% (47) | 9.7% (15) | 155 |
| Wise or smart | 3.9% (6) | 27.9% (43) | 36.4% (56) | 24.0% (37) | 7.8% (12) | 154 |
| Weak or impotent | 8.5% (13) | 29.4% (45) | 24.2% (37) | 22.9% (35) | 15.0% (23) | 153 |
| I don't think what I would have said would have made any difference anyway | 22.9% (35) | 30.1% (46) | 16.3% (25) | 22.9% (35) | 7.8% (12) | 153 |
| I had difficulty eating, sleeping, thinking, or functioning generally | 1.3% (2) | 11.0% (17) | 17.4% (27) | 37.4% (58) | 32.9% (51) | 155 |
| I felt physically sick | 1.3% (2) | 9.2% (14) | 17.1% (26) | 34.2% (52) | 38.2% (58) | 152 |
| Other (please specify below) | 45.5% (10) | 9.1% (2) | 40.9% (9) | 4.5% (1) | 0.0% (0) | 22 |
| | | | | | Other | 28 |
| answered question | | | | | | 155 |
| skipped question | | | | | | 8 |

| 9. When you chose to self-censor, did you believe your opinion in regard to this issue was in the minority? | | | |
|---|---|------------------|----------------|
| | | Response Percent | Response Count |
| Yes |  | 65.8% | 102 |
| No |  | 16.8% | 26 |
| Not Sure |  | 17.4% | 27 |
| answered question | | | 155 |
| skipped question | | | 8 |

| 10. Why did you feel that your opinion was in the minority? Please choose all that apply. | | | |
|---|---|------------------|----------------|
| | | Response Percent | Response Count |
| Mass media (e.g. newspapers, television, internet, etc.) appeared to report that majority of people held opposing opinion |  | 35.7% | 45 |
| Mass media expressed opposing opinion in editorials |  | 29.4% | 37 |
| Family or friends often expressed opposing opinion |  | 39.7% | 50 |
| Colleagues, co-workers, others, expressed opposing opinion |  | 53.2% | 67 |
| Did not hear your opinion repeated often |  | 40.5% | 51 |
| Other (please specify) |  | 27.0% | 34 |
| answered question | | | 126 |
| skipped question | | | 37 |









| 11. How would you characterize your outspokenness on this issue before you chose to self-censor? | | | |
|--|--|------------------|----------------|
| | | Response Percent | Response Count |
| Very Outspoken | | 14.2% | 22 |
| Moderately Outspoken | | 40.6% | 63 |
| Occasionally Outspoken | | 33.5% | 52 |
| Reticent and Reluctant to Speak Out Much | | 10.3% | 16 |
| Never Share Opinion | | 1.3% | 2 |
| answered question | | | 155 |
| skipped question | | | 0 |

| 12. When you chose to self-censor, did you feel that discussing your opinion(s) openly would be risky and that you might be punished or sanctioned? | | | |
|---|--|------------------|----------------|
| | | Response Percent | Response Count |
| Yes | | 64.3% | 99 |
| No | | 22.7% | 35 |
| Not Sure | | 13.0% | 20 |
| answered question | | | 154 |
| skipped question | | | 9 |

13. If answer to #12 above is Yes, please convey why you felt speaking up was risky and that self-censorship was necessary. In other words, please determine how important each of the following types of sanctions was to your concerns over speaking up.








| | Extremely Important | Very Important | Important | Not Very Important | Not Important at All | Response Count |
|---|---------------------|-------------------|------------|--------------------|--------------------------|----------------|
| Social Isolation (e.g., appear foolish or odd, annoy or lose friends; create distance between family, neighbors, colleagues; be subject to teasing or taunting) | 18.9% (21) | 31.5% (35) | 21.6% (24) | 18.9% (21) | 9.0% (10) | 111 |
| Economic Sanction (e.g., lose job or lesser work penalty, lose consulting contract, lose customers, etc.) | 11.6% (13) | 17.9% (20) | 20.5% (23) | 13.4% (15) | 36.6% (41) | 112 |
| Legal/Political Sanction (e.g., lawsuit, lose election, served warrant or subpoena, arrest, etc.) | 3.6% (4) | 9.0% (10) | 6.3% (7) | 23.4% (26) | 57.7% (64) | 111 |
| Physical Sanction (e.g., threat against personal property or pets, personal threat against person, more serious threat of violence against self such as death) | 4.5% (5) | 4.5% (5) | 17.1% (19) | 20.7% (23) | 53.2% (59) | 111 |
| Other (Please Specify Below) | 40.0% (12) | 16.7% (5) | 13.3% (4) | 3.3% (1) | 26.7% (8) | 30 |
| | | | | | Other | 21 |
| | | | | | answered question | 113 |
| | | | | | skipped question | 50 |



| 14. What other reasons might have motivated you to stay silent? Please note how important each of the following types of reasons might have influenced your self-censorship. | | | | | | |
|--|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|----------------|
| | Extremely Important | Very Important | Important | Not Very Important | Not Important at All | Response Count |
| Concern over sanctions (see previous question) | 13.6% (20) | 21.1% (31) | 32.0% (47) | 18.4% (27) | 15.0% (22) | 147 |
| Inappropriate setting or situation (e.g., wedding) | 6.6% (10) | 21.2% (32) | 31.1% (47) | 21.2% (32) | 19.9% (30) | 151 |
| Expressing your opinion would not have led to a useful outcome, that it wouldn't matter anyway (referred to as response efficacy) | 21.7% (33) | 28.9% (44) | 31.6% (48) | 15.1% (23) | 2.6% (4) | 152 |
| Desire to keep the peace or avoid social conflict | 17.1% (26) | 35.5% (54) | 31.6% (48) | 11.2% (17) | 4.6% (7) | 152 |
| Lack of knowledge about the topic | 0.7% (1) | 6.7% (10) | 20.7% (31) | 26.7% (40) | 45.3% (68) | 150 |
| Shyness | 0.0% (0) | 8.7% (13) | 20.8% (31) | 31.5% (47) | 38.9% (58) | 149 |
| Lack of confidence in communication skills (e.g., can't "think on your feet", stuttering, speaking skills generally poor, etc.) | 5.3% (8) | 9.3% (14) | 16.6% (25) | 26.5% (40) | 42.4% (64) | 151 |
| No appropriate audience to discuss it with | 14.4% (21) | 17.1% (25) | 28.0% (42) | 20.5% (30) | 19.2% (28) | 146 |
| | | | | Other (please specify) | | 10 |
| | | | | answered question | | 153 |
| | | | | skipped question | | 10 |

| 15. When you chose to self-censor, what was involved in the act? What did you actually do? Please choose all that apply... | | | |
|--|---|------------------|----------------|
| | | Response Percent | Response Count |
| Change the subject or steer topic in a different direction |  | 37.3% | 57 |
| State that you had no opinion on the matter |  | 7.2% | 11 |
| Walk away |  | 23.5% | 36 |
| Choose to ignore question or prompt |  | 37.3% | 57 |
| Nod your head in agreement |  | 9.2% | 14 |
| You modified your opinion to be closer to the group's opinion norms |  | 17.6% | 27 |
| You stated the opposite of your true belief so as to agree with the speaker |  | 1.3% | 2 |
| Other (please specify) |  | 35.3% | 54 |
| answered question | | | 153 |
| skipped question | | | 10 |







| 16. At the time that this happened, please recall your thoughts or feelings: | | | |
|--|------------|-------------|----------------|
| | AGREE | DISAGREE | Response Count |
| At ease | 22.5% (34) | 77.5% (117) | 151 |
| Worried | 52.0% (77) | 48.0% (71) | 148 |
| Angry | 63.3% (95) | 36.7% (55) | 150 |
| Ashamed | 33.3% (49) | 66.7% (98) | 147 |
| Have difficulty sleeping | 15.0% (22) | 85.0% (125) | 147 |
| Have difficulty eating | 4.8% (7) | 95.2% (139) | 146 |
| Affected relationships | 31.5% (46) | 68.5% (100) | 146 |
| answered question | | | 153 |
| skipped question | | | 10 |

| 17. Did you, on the other hand, ever chose to speak up In a similar situation? What was the result? Were you punished? How? Did this experience or the experience of others influence your willingness to speak out? | |
|--|----------------|
| | Response Count |
| | 100 |
| answered question | 100 |
| skipped question | 63 |

| 18. Please provide some demographic information: | | | |
|---|--|------------------|----------------|
| | | Response Percent | Response Count |
| Gender (male/female) |  | 99.4% | 156 |
| Age (years) |  | 100.0% | 157 |
| Level of Education (in years where High School Degree = 12) |  | 99.4% | 156 |
| Location (City, State, Country) |  | 97.5% | 153 |
| Vocation (Type of Position) |  | 96.8% | 152 |
| Industry (Government, Private Sector, Non-Profit, etc.) |  | 89.8% | 141 |
| Referring Organization (Optional) |  | 30.6% | 48 |
| answered question | | | 157 |
| skipped question | | | 6 |

| 19. Would you be interested in participating in an in-depth interview to discuss this experience in more detail? If Yes, please provide your contact information in the optional section below. | | | |
|---|---|------------------|----------------|
| | | Response Percent | Response Count |
| Yes |  | 30.1% | 46 |
| No |  | 69.9% | 107 |
| answered question | | | 153 |
| skipped question | | | 10 |

20. CONTACT INFORMATION You can provide optional contact information so that I may get in touch with you if you indicate an interest in a follow up discussion regarding a possible in-depth interview. You do not have to provide this information if you do not want to participate in Phase 2.

| | | Response Percent | Response Count |
|--------------------------|--|------------------|----------------|
| Name: NA |  | 89.8% | 44 |
| Affiliation (optional): |  | 30.6% | 15 |
| City/Town: |  | 85.7% | 42 |
| State: |  | 79.6% | 39 |
| Email Address: |  | 100.0% | 49 |
| Phone Number: |  | 71.4% | 35 |
| answered question | | | 49 |
| skipped question | | | 114 |

21. Please provide any suggestions to make this survey better.

| | Response Count |
|--------------------------|----------------|
| | 36 |
| answered question | 36 |
| skipped question | 127 |