

ANTHROPOLOGY AND MIDDLE CLASS

WORKING FAMILIES:

A RESEARCH AGENDA

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PREFACE

Anthropology and Middle Class Working Families: A Research Agenda serves as a guide to assist anthropologists in undertaking research on middle class working families. The Research Agenda marks the final step of a project spearheaded by the American Anthropological Association (AAA) to stimulate interest and inquiry among anthropologists in middle class working families and to strengthen this area of research within anthropology. The ending of the project we see as a new beginning and resurgence of anthropological studies on the conditions and concerns of middle class working families.

Kathleen Christensen, program director of the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation's "Family and Workplace: Understanding Working Families," first approached us in 1998 to discuss ways to enhance anthropology's presence among research disciplines engaged in studying middle class working families. After meeting with Kathleen and Stuart Plattner, director of the cultural anthropology program at the National Science Foundation (NSF), we developed a proposal, "Anthropological Approaches to Middle Class Working Families," for a multi-phase project. With funding from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation and NSF, a series of activities were carried out.

An initial conference, convening anthropologists to determine current and future contributions of anthropology to the study of middle class working families, was held May 31-June 2, 1998 at the Morrison House in Alexandria, Virginia. Twelve anthropologists who study middle class working families met to define the parameters for anthropology, identify significant gaps in knowledge, identify anthropologists working in this area, and to assist in developing an outline for the Research Agenda.

Anthropologists identified by the conference participants were asked to write articles for the AAA's *Anthropology Newsletter*. From September 1998 through September 1999, 10 commentaries on middle class working families were commissioned and published. An additional 32 articles on issues related to middle class working families were received and published in the *Anthropology Newsletter*.

A public policy forum, "Anthropology and Middle Class Working Families: Knowledge and Policy," was held on December 4 at AAA's 1998 Annual Meeting in Philadelphia. Approximately 200 people attended the forum. Attendance and enthusiastic discussion at the forum indicated that the level of interest and reported activity in issues related to middle class working families was high among anthropologists.

The Research Agenda is intended as a manual to identify areas of potential research, existing literature, resources for data and funding, and anthropologists who are studying middle class working families. It by no means represents a complete picture of anthropology's past, current, and future research directions on middle class working families. The volume editors, Mary Margaret Overbey and Kathryn Marie Dudley, have relied on the knowledge and contributions of many others in the course of its production.

We thank our many contributors for the time and expertise that they have donated to the project. We recognize our conference participants: Garrick Bailey, Charles Darrah, Kathryn Marie Dudley, Thomas Fricke, Eleanor Gerber, Dorothy Holland, Emily Martin, Katherine Newman, Alicia Shoua-Glusberg, Nicholas Townsend, Thomas Weisner, and Melvin Williams. We recognize our public policy forum participants: Judith Auerbach, Kathryn Marie Dudley, Jan English-Lueck, Thomas Fricke, David Goldston, Judith Goode, Louise Lamphere, and Sherry Ortner. We recognize our *Anthropology Newsletter* commentators and authors, among them: Steven Albert, Eric Arnould, Carolyn Curasi, Charles Darrah, Kathryn Marie Dudley, Paul Durrenberger, Jan English-Lueck, James Freeman, Thomas Fricke, Walter Goldschmidt, Lisa Groger, Sara Harkness, Dorothy Holland, Madelyn Iris, Michael Jindra, Louise Lamphere, Catherine Lutz, Emily Martin, Don Nonini, Linda Price, Karen Fog Olwig, Joel Savishinsky, John Sherry, Kendall Thu, Nicholas Townsend, Thomas Weisner, and Richard Wilk. We thank our program assistant Mara Greengrass for, among other things, compiling the infrastructure and resources and appendices of the Research Agenda. We thank Kathryn Marie Dudley for her many contributions to project, and particularly, for helping to edit the Research Agenda, writing the history, tradition and methods section, and preparing the extensive bibliography.

Finally, we gratefully acknowledge the financial support of the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation and NSF. Kathleen Christensen has been instrumental in encouraging and guiding anthropologists in the study middle class working families. Stuart Plattner has contributed additionally to the project by identifying the funding sources for research on middle class working families in the Research Agenda.

Limited print copies of the Research Agenda are available through the AAA, 4350 N. Fairfax Drive, Suite 640, Arlington, VA 22203-1620. The Research Agenda is posted online at AAA's website: <http://www.aaanet.org>.

Mary Margaret Overbey, Co-Principal Investigator
Susan Skomal, Co-Principal Investigator

INTRODUCTION

Over the last thirty years, American society has changed rapidly. Since 1969, women have entered the workforce in unprecedented numbers, changing the workplace and home place in the process. At the same time, industrial restructuring, stagnant household incomes, labor market uncertainty, and the desire for economic security have resulted in dual income households, where both men and women must balance the needs of work with those of home and family. Meanwhile, technological innovation has transformed the relationship between the workplace and the domestic sphere, placing new demands on workers and families. Computers, Internet access, and e-mail have revolutionized sources of information and entertainment, altering the nature and speed of communication at work and at home. “Information overload” and a “harried pace of life” have come to define American life at the beginning of the 21st century.

While all Americans have been affected by these changes, the impact is especially pronounced in middle class working families. Over the past 20 years, working hours have increased for women of all ages, and for both men and women during their prime working years. Parents put in longer hours on the job just to “stay in place” economically, leaving little time to be with their children and each other (Schor 1991). The resulting “time bind” (Hochschild 1997) creates potential conflicts between work and home responsibilities, and the distinction between home and work has become increasingly blurred. Importantly, the “main victims” of “time famine” are “married couple families and single parents who combine full-time jobs with childrearing” (Burtless 1999: 22). Indeed, observing that the “time crunch” falls most heavily on working women, the White House Council of Economic Advisers (1999) has recently concluded that there is a pressing need for public policies to help working families.

Yet, as policy makers, government analysts, and journalists attempt to address the challenges facing middle class working families, they do so without a clear conception of the social bounds and cultural reach of this amorphous population. While social scientists have always taken an interest in Americans of “middling conditions,” only rarely have they been encouraged to grapple directly with the problems and dilemmas that beset those who claim to constitute the “moral center” of U.S. society, the middle class. For instance, American anthropologists’ long tradition of studies focused on U.S. society has been overshadowed by an interest in geographically distant and culturally “exotic” peoples. Although influential historically and currently, anthropologists working on the near and “ordinary”

have been outnumbered by sociologists, psychologists, economists, and political scientists. As a result, policy makers, journalists, and disciplines other than anthropology have largely shaped the national conversation about work and family issues.

The contributors to this Research Agenda believe that anthropology has much to offer - and much to gain from - the study of middle class working families in the contemporary United States. However the “middle class” is defined - as an income category, demographic group, or set of cultural values - it is a force to be reckoned with by any student of American society. Anthropology’s strengths in long-term ethnographic study, combined with qualitative and quantitative approaches, and its comparative and cross-cultural perspective make it particularly well suited to understanding the content, character, and contours of the middle class today. For anthropologists who seek to understand American life, affect public policy, shape national debate, and educate the public on what anthropology is all about, the study of middle class working families offers a perfect point of entry.

HISTORY, TRADITION, AND METHODS

Interest in Americans of “middling conditions” can be dated to the dawn of the republic, when French observers J. Hector St. John de Crevecoeur (1792) and Alexis de Tocqueville (1835, 1840) took stock of the new democracy’s cultural character, documenting such definitive traits as “individualism” and the “entrepreneurial spirit.” As impressionistic as these early sketches of national life were, they embodied what would become the hallmark of qualitative social science in the United States: the effort to understand critical issues of the day through participant observation and the analysis of representative people, places, and everyday practices.

With the pioneering work of sociologists Robert and Helen Lynd (1929, 1937) and anthropologist W. Lloyd Warner (1941, 1942, 1949), the ethnographic tradition of domestic “community studies” was born. This research was based on the idea that the experiences of “average” families living in “ordinary” cities or towns could reveal larger truths about American society as a whole. Thus, the Lynds’ depression-era studies of “Middletown” (Muncie, Indiana) took the country’s pulse in the Midwest, while Warner searched for its underlying social structure in “Yankee City” (Newburyport, Massachusetts). Anthropologists, including several African-American anthropologists, were particularly important in studying communities in the South (Davis, Gardner and Gardner 1941, Hurston 1935, and Powdermaker 1939), and pioneered research on urban African-American populations, including the middle class (Drake and Clayton 1945). An important corrective to the assumption that communities were self-contained

microcosms of the nation-state came with Walter Goldschmidt's (1947, 1978, 1999, see p. 61, this volume) comparative study of three towns in rural California, each of which intersected with the agricultural industry in different ways.

The period after World War II brought renewed focus on the American character, particularly as it appeared to be changing among the presumptive standard-bearers of democracy: the newly emergent white collar middle class. Influential sociologists such as David Riesman (1950), C. Wright Mills (1951), and William H. White (1956) gave voice to cold war concerns about the increasingly regimented, "conformist" nature of work and family life. A decade later, through a community study of a "Levittown" built for returning GI's and their families, sociologist Herbert Gans (1967) challenged the conformity thesis by demonstrating that a range of beliefs and practices could exist under a veneer of outward similarity. Along related lines, anthropologists of the period sought to articulate cultural principles that structured social differences. Important contributions to structural anthropology were made by David Schneider's (1968) analysis of American kinship and Herve Varenne's (1977) study of the tension between individualism and community in a Midwestern town.

A growing generational divide during the Vietnam War attracted the attention of no less a figure than Margaret Mead (1978). Mead had turned her gaze homeward before (see, for example, Mead 1942), but her commentary on the 1970's signaled a new awareness of potential conflict in the intergenerational transmission of cultural values. Sociologists were also alert to the contradictions inherent in a culture that encourages each generation to do better than the one before (see Sennett and Cobb 1972). However, it was not until anthropologist Barbara Myerhoff's (1978) now classic study of elderly Jewish immigrants that the ethnographic method and the community studies tradition came together with particular force. Through the methods of participant observation and in-depth life history interviews, Myerhoff bore witness to the strength of a cultural heritage that had survived the Holocaust, yet appeared to be fading in the lives of her informants' American-born children.

Questions of intergenerational culture change gave rise to several ethnographic studies in the 1980's, particularly among anthropologists interested in exploring their own ethnic roots. Micaela di Leonardo's (1984) study of Italian-Americans and Sylvia Yanagisako's (1985) study of Japanese-Americans made it clear that gender and class differences significantly affect the transmission of ethnic identities, while Virginia Dominguez's (1986) study of Creole groups in Louisiana offered compelling evidence of the socially-constructed nature of racial identities. Combining archival and ethnographic

research, Louise Lamphere (1987) traced the history of industrial work among successive generations of immigrant women in the New England textile industry. And, in an effort to account for ethnic and class-based variation in family forms, David Schneider (1984) revised and extended his earlier study of American kinship.

At the same time, the political climate of the 1980's raised new questions about the situation of the "average" American. How was the average American faring? In an influential study of national values, sociologists Robert Bellah, Richard Madsen, William Sullivan, Ann Swidler, and Stephen Tipton (1985) argued that the prevailing language of individualism made it difficult for middle class Americans to conceive of, let alone participate in, meaningful forms of community or civic engagement. It required the insights of innovative community studies to reveal the socioeconomic anxieties underlying the conservative shift in U.S. politics. Sociologist Jonathan Reider's (1985) study of white resistance to racial integration in Brooklyn, New York, showed how economic insecurity translated into white ethnic protest against the political agenda of liberal elites. Likewise, anthropologist Faye Ginsburg's (1989) study of pro-choice and pro-life abortion activists in Fargo, North Dakota, showed how women's increased participation in the labor force turned the abortion debate into a referendum on changing gender roles.

Indeed, by the late 1980's, social scientists were well aware that America's middle class working families were in trouble. Sociologist Arlie Hochschild (1989) drew attention to the toll taken on women in dual-career couples who put in a "second shift" of housework and childcare after a full day on the job. Anthropologists Katherine Newman (1988) and June Nash (1989) documented the devastating impact of de-industrialization and corporate downsizing on workers, families, and communities. Anthropologists Peggy Barlett (1993) and Caroline Tauxe (1993) found that the social consequences of the farm crisis in rural America were no less severe (see also Salamon 1992 and Adams 1994).

Significantly, anthropologists who study economic dislocation in the middle class draw upon the quantitative methods of economists and demographers to frame their analysis of sociocultural issues. Newman's (1993) ethnography of downward or "blocked" mobility in suburban American serves as a prime example. Here, she documents the struggle to maintain a middle class standard of living against the backdrop of declining incomes and rising property values that lead to generational conflicts over such matters as home ownership, the use of day care, and the government's role in ensuring social security.

The economic insecurity of the middle class has been accompanied by an upheaval in the nature and definition of the family itself. Although sociologist Alan Wolfe's (1998) recent survey of mainstream values suggests that most Americans remain largely antagonistic toward non-traditional family forms, the normative contours of the family are changing nonetheless (Stacey 1990, 1996; Coontz 1992, 1997). Stepfamilies, blended families, and single-parent families have become familiar forms of family in the U.S. Inter-racial marriage and adoption are more common, and same-sex partnerships are more visible as evident in a growing body of ethnographic research on lesbian and gay kinship (Weston 1991), community (Newton 1993), and marriage (Lewin 1998). Providing a model for scholarship on gender, sexuality, and reproduction in middle class families, Emily Martin's studies of childbirth (1987) and the AIDS epidemic (1994) combine anthropology's long-standing interest in the symbolic power of the body with a new emphasis on how biological metaphors are ritually enacted and embodied.

Anthropologists who conduct fieldwork in America today have become especially sensitive to their discipline's less than admirable history here "at home," particularly where the scientific treatment of the foreign and domestic "Other" was concerned (Di Leonardo 1998). One important component of overcoming this legacy has been the effort to counter moves to "exoticize" ethnic and minority groups in the U.S. Thus, Steven Gregory's (1998) study of political activism in an African American community focuses on the culture of the black middle class in a deliberate effort to go beyond the stereotype of "disorganized" urban black life (see also Williams 1992, Mullings 1997, and Sanjek 1996). A second strategy has been to train a critical eye on a principal "gate-keeping" institution of membership in the middle class, the network of public and private schools that comprise the nation's educational system (Moffatt 1989, Foley 1990, Holland and Eisenhart 1990). In contrast to earlier research on the "average" American character or community, contemporary studies of the middle class seek to identify the normative values and expectations in terms of which - and against which - citizens in all walks of life give meaning to their experience.

As history demonstrates, anthropologists' interest in middle class working families in the US is not new. From early contributions to community studies, to portrayals of racial and ethnic neighborhoods, to studies of national character, to recent concerns about the representational practices of anthropologists themselves, anthropology has always had one foot, so to speak, in its own backyard. Today, the Society for the Anthropology of North America, a section of the American Anthropological Association, includes many anthropologists whose main research interests are in the study of the U.S. and Canada.

Methodologically, anthropological fieldwork in the U.S. is no different than fieldwork elsewhere in the world: participant observation, life history interviews, and the community study remain the foundation of the ethnographic imagination. However, working in close proximity with scholars of other disciplines on similar problems and populations has given anthropologists of the domestic scene a vested interest in making their findings accessible to a broad audience. This interdisciplinary vocabulary has been indispensable to anthropology's tradition of "engagement" (Forman 1994) here in the U.S., as we strive, through the study of the culturally familiar, to address current issues, educate the general public, and inform the policy making process.

CURRENT RESEARCH

While not necessarily cast as such, a significant amount of anthropological research deals with middle class working families. For example, William Dressler's (1998) work among African-Americans in the American South has focused on factors that contribute to hypertension (or high blood pressure). Dressler has identified a direct association between "cultural consonance in lifestyle" and hypertension. African-Americans whose lifestyles accord most closely with the core set of values defined by community members as making up a "valued lifestyle" - home ownership and church leadership, among others - have lower hypertension rates than those with inconsonant lifestyles. Dressler observes that the community's common values, and the better health associated with them, reflect a middle class lifestyle.

Given adequate preparation, there are many ways in which anthropologists may be able to recast current research projects to focus directly on middle class working families. As recent work in this area attests, the range of possible topics and approaches is wide and continues to expand.

WORK

Among middle class working families, work is an important and primary activity. Many Americans define themselves by the work they do. Not surprisingly, many anthropologists who study the middle class focus on work. Louise Lamphere's (1993, 1994) examination of the relationship between work and home life is a case in point. Looking at the experience of dual income families in New Mexico and Rhode Island, she has studied the impact of women's participation in the labor force on the household division of labor, childcare strategies, and the importance of support networks. In New Mexico, in particular, she has looked at the structure of the workplace and how management policies such as flextime, job sharing, health benefits, and

maternity leave affect women's commitment to their jobs. With an explicit focus on African-American, Spanish surnamed, and Asian-American families, Lamphere's work underscores the importance of a comparative framework and attention to racial and ethnic differences within the middle class (1999, see p. 82, this volume).

Kathryn Dudley's (1994, 2000) research among Midwestern autoworkers and farmers examines economic dislocation within the middle class due to job or farm loss. In both cases, dislocation was the result of larger economic forces. For the autoworkers, it was the shutdown of an automobile manufacturing plant. For the farmers, it was the impact of the agricultural crisis in the 1980's. Following Newman (1999), Dudley studies "tribes of the downwardly mobile," those "refugees from a downsizing, de-industrializing, credit-dependent middle class who nonetheless continue to identify with its values and expectations" (1999, see p. 44, this volume). Importantly, she has found that the values of the middle class are as strong, if not stronger than economic realities of class identity. Membership in the middle class, she argues, "requires the unremitting performance of a distinctive moral character - one which, in every community, is as much culturally-defined as it is economically-based" (ibid.). As a result, middle class notions of merit and personal accountability lead many dislocated workers to blame themselves or to be blamed by others for their economic failure.

FAMILY

Some anthropologists are looking at parenting issues. Sara Harkness' (1996, 1998) work among families in the U.S. and the Netherlands is an example. Harkness observes the daily activities of families and reviews how they structure their day. This "organization of life" reflects cultural belief systems, or "parental ethnotheories," (1998, see p. 67, this volume) and the differences between Dutch and American families are marked. For example, in the case of infant sleep, American parents make "tough calls" on whether or when to take the baby into the parents' bed when upset, while among Swedish and Dutch parents such decisions are taken in stride. Similarly, in the effort to "spend quality time" with children, American parents tend to over stimulate babies and keep young children up late at night. These actions, she believes, result in stress, sleep problems for babies, and not enough sleep for young children. Dutch parents, on the other hand, follow a child-rearing philosophy that emphasizes a quiet flow of activities and plenty of rest and sleep, resulting in fewer sleep problems and less stress for both children and parents.

Thomas Weisner and colleagues (1994, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999) have conducted research over 24 years following the life course of middle class youth of the 1960's and early 1970's. The sample includes 50 "conventional,"

two-parent married couples and 150 “nonconventional, counterculture families” and their children. Weisner’s work points out that many of the values and behaviors that were “nonconventional” in the 1960’s and 1970’s are now “normative” for middle class families today (1999, see p. 101, this volume). He has identified two characteristics that conventional and nonconventional parents share: a “pedagogical developmental model” that focuses on developing the child’s literacy, verbal, and social skills; and an emphasis on cultural values such as individualism, autonomy, self-reliance, self expression, self esteem, trust, attachment, and security. While the lifestyle and values orientation of conventional and nonconventional families may have been different, Weisner has found that the children of nonconventional parents, who are now entering college, do as well or better in school than the children of conventional parents. What matters most, he concludes, is adherence to a coherent set of values within the family.

MATERIAL CULTURE

Home ownership is one of the valued material characteristics of the middle class, and an important part of the American Dream. Nicholas Townsend’s study of home ownership has looked at this norm of membership in the middle class as a means of tying Americans to a “system of employment and consumption that has profound contradictions” (1999, see p. 97, this volume). In studies of fathers in California, he has found that men view home ownership as a sign of “safety, success and social standing” as well as a means of “tax benefits and financial saving.” Yet, buying a home is costly, and many families assume large debts to purchase one. Ironically, while home ownership is thought to epitomize the cultural values of independence and self-sufficiency, Townsend observes, the debt incurred to be a homeowner creates dependency on a stable job and a certain level of income.

The study of American consumption patterns and the cultural meaning of consumer goods is an emerging field of interest for anthropologists (Olsen 1995; Arnould, Price, and Curasi 1999, see p. 37, this volume). Richard Wilk, for example, has focused on the social history of consumer goods that define middle class material culture. Among the items he has looked at is the adoption and evolution of the reclining chair, and specifically the La-Z-Boy recliner, as the “symbol of working class domesticity and respectability” (1999, see p. 106, this volume).

The La-Z-Boy fits with Americans’ idea of “comfort” and “leisure.” The notion that the reclining chair provides a means of relaxing after a stressful day of work represents a cultural change from a work-centered life to a leisure-centered life. Following an initial association in the 1950’s with

father as a family breadwinner, where Dad's recliner was placed in the "best spot" in front the television - the "electronic hearth" - the recliner has now been adopted by Mom as well. With two working parents as the norm in the 1990's, La-Z-Boy advertisements have featured couples arguing over whom gets to sit in this place of honor. Wilk points out that the study of material culture can tell us much about middle class Americans, yet less is known to anthropologists about this area of American life than Trobriand jewelry.

TECHNOLOGY

Recent studies of the creation, adoption, and adaptation of computers have reinvigorated anthropology's traditional interest in technology and social change, and high-speed communication tools (Sherry 1999, see p. 95, this volume). Chuck Darrah, Jan English-Lueck, and James Freeman's long-term research on Silicon Valley is a prime example of current research on the development and use of new technologies (1998, see p. 40, this volume). Originally an agricultural area, Silicon Valley has evolved into a high-tech community whose residents are the well-educated, computer-literate employees of major technology firms.

Since 1991, through the Silicon Valley Cultures Project, Darrah, English-Lueck, and Freeman have been examining the interaction of families with information technologies. Although few families fit the stereotype of technical expert or computer-nerd, the research team has found that information technologies are an important part of everyday life in Silicon Valley. In these households, information devices constitute a "complex ecosystem" that is interwoven into family life.

Although most families are not aware of the number of technological devices they own and use, computers, cellular and digital phones, camcorders, VCRs, and television shape their lives in a variety of ways. For instance, technology often blurs the boundaries between work and home relationships, with the result that a parent may conduct a business transaction on the cell phone while attending a child's soccer game.

Technology may also assist in family management, allowing family members to coordinate daily, disparate schedules. And it may function to bind the family, as members watch television or play video games together. Importantly, Darrah, English-Lueck, and Freeman are finding that, contrary to popular belief, technology is not transforming family behaviors; families are adapting technologies by putting old behaviors into a new context.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

The future of research on middle class working families is bright. The Alfred P. Sloan Foundation has set aside \$20 million for research on middle class working families. An important part of the effort to increase understanding of middle class working families has been the Foundation's support of centers across the country to undertake such research. Among these is the Center for Ethnography of Everyday Life, directed by Tom Fricke, at the University of Michigan (1998, see p. 52, this volume). Fricke's Center is designed to provide training for students of anthropology and assist anthropologists in the study of middle class working families.

Fricke's own research among residents of rural community in North Dakota exemplifies the kind of research - the "ethnography of everyday life" - that the Center will support. In his study, Fricke is shadowing, or following, various residents as they go about the business of living. He "hangs out" with local farmers, business executives, and even monks at the nearby monastery in order to get a sense of residents' concerns within the community. He is documenting lifeways in a rural community that is experiencing a decline in young people who leave for better employment opportunities. Fricke sees his work as an "elegy for a way of life," and views the Center as a base from which social scientists will be able to conduct similar studies in the workplace, home, school, and other sectors of social life across the Midwest (Wheeler 1999: B2).

As this Research Agenda was being prepared, the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation approved a grant for a fifth center on middle class working families at Emory University. The Center for Myth and Ritual in American Life (the MARIAL Center), led by Bradd Shore, will focus research and training on the study of rituals and myths among middle class working families in the American South. Like the Center at Michigan, the MARIAL Center will fund research and provide postdoctoral and graduate fellowships. It will be first of the five centers to offer undergraduate fellowships.

As the foregoing illustrates, the opportunities for future research on middle class working families are extensive. In addition to the study of work, family, material culture, and technology, promising areas of future investigation include aging and the life course, concepts of personhood, and notions of public life and the common good.

THE LIFE COURSE

The predicament of the “sandwich generation” - baby boomers at mid-life who find themselves caught between financial obligations to aging parents and college-age children, even as they must plan for their own retirement - poses significant questions and research possibilities for anthropologists. Moreover, the rise of dual-career families has altered roles and responsibilities within the family, especially those structured by age. Understanding how these new relationships are negotiated, and how potential conflicts of interest within the family are handled, requires the kind of sociocultural analysis at which anthropologists are particularly adept.

Along similar lines, there is need for ethnographic study of the changing nature of childhood in America. In many families, children are given more responsibility as they become school-aged. Latchkey children are increasingly common in many middle class working families, and, in some cases children are watching children at home while both parents work. An ethnographic approach to the life course can tell us much about the impact of dual income households on the young.

Focused research by anthropologists on elderly, retired middle class working families is important, also. Whether the project involves the study of a particular institution such as a nursing home (Savishinsky 1999, see p. 92, this volume; Groger 1999, see p. 65, this volume), a community like that of elderly retirees who travel the country in their RVs (Counts and Counts 1996), the physical challenges of aging (Albert 1998, see p. 34, this volume), or the role of the elderly in child care (Slorah 1998), the study of aging middle class working families presents an opportunity for growth.

PUBLIC LIFE

The lives of middle class working families crosscut many sectors, including work, schools, church, voluntary organizations, and children’s sporting activities, among others. When the demands of the workplace leave little time for family life, or when family networks span more than one country or locale (Olwig 1998, see p. 90, this volume), what constitutes “public life” for middle class working families and how do these families create “community?” To what extent are Americans today able to act upon values typically associated with middle class notions of the “good citizen,” such as volunteerism, political activity, and other civic virtues?

In contrast to the perception that these values have declined in recent years, anthropologists Dorothy Holland, Catherine Lutz, and Don Nonini

(1999, see p. 72, this volume) have found a strong public life among middle class families in North Carolina. Middle class residents have been successful in halting changes that would adversely affect the environment and have helped to economically revitalize their communities.

Whether this level of civic engagement is true of other middle class communities or extended to other political issues remains an open question. For example, anthropologists who have looked at industrial restructuring in rural America raise doubts about the organizing capacities of middle class working families in these communities (Durrenberger and Thu 1992, 1998, see p. 48, this volume; Fink 1998). In addition, as Madelyn Iris's (1999, see p. 76, this volume) fieldwork among elderly African-American residents of Chicago suggests, certain segments of a community - in this case, the elderly - may be more important than others in maintaining its middle class character. Far more anthropological research will need to be conducted before generalizations can be made about middle class public life.

PERSONHOOD

Current changes experienced by middle class working families have far-reaching implications for cultural conceptions of mental health and the "ideal" person. Anthropologists have always had a special interest in exploring cross-cultural notions of personhood, and the requirements of work in contemporary America have altered the nature of the demands placed upon the individual. Workers are now expected to adapt to frequent job and occupational changes, endure high levels of uncertainty, and pull themselves out of the economic free fall that follows periods of unemployment. Evolutionary metaphors such as the "survival of the fittest" are increasingly used to express the idea that some individuals are constitutionally suited to this brave new world, whereas others are not.

Interrogating notions of adaptation and survival opens up a wide range of research possibilities. As Emily Martin (1999, see p. 86, this volume) observes, "an anthropological approach to changes in the kind of person one must become to survive ... promises to shed light on changes in the valuation of mental conditions and even rationality itself," and may well advance "our understanding of ideals being sought in many cultural domains, such as models of childhood development, education, work, personality and intelligence." Thus, Martin's study of manic-depression and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder has called attention to the increasing acceptance and even celebration of the "manic style" in corporate America. Likewise, Michael Jinda's (1998, see p. 79, this volume) study of Star Trek fans points to the increasingly influential role of popular culture in shaping moral narratives and a middle class sense of self. In these and other ways,

anthropology is poised to make a unique contribution to study of mainstream American culture and its significance in the lives of middle class working families.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND RESOURCES

The methods used by anthropologists in studies of middle class working families will vary. Ethnography, however, will continue to be a significant methodology. Yet, Eleanor Gerber (1998, 1999) notes that the power of the ethnographic method is best realized when anthropologists place the details of daily life within the broader context of quantitative data provided by national surveys (see p. 57, this volume). She argues that such an approach would help anthropologists influence policy makers, who rely on the results of surveys as part of the policy process. By framing their ethnographic research within existing national surveys, anthropologists would strengthen and make more useful those surveys for everyone and affect policy at the same time.

Existing infrastructure and resources that that may assist anthropologists in their research on middle class working families are the following.

Henry A. Murray Research Center

A Center for the Study of Lives

10 Garden Street

Cambridge, MA 02138

phone: 617-495-8140

fax: 617-496-3993

e-mail: mrc@radcliffe.edu

website: <http://www.radcliffe.edu/murray>

The “center’s primary purpose is to promote the use of existing social science data to explore human development and social change.” Search the *Guide to the Data Resources* online or purchase it. The *Guide* gives limited information about research projects, including a description of the project, whether the data is qualitative or quantitative, if follow-up with participants is possible and whether the data are available on computer.

Boston College Center for Work and Family

website: http://www.bc.edu/bc_org/avp/csom/cwf/center/overview.html

“The Boston College Center for Work and Family, located within the Wallace E. Carroll School of Management, is a research organization dedicated to increasing the quality of life of working families by promoting

the responsiveness of workplaces and communities to their needs. The Center uses three core strategies to pursue its mission: research, workplace partnerships, and communication & information services.” You may order policy papers and books from their website.

“The Center has created a resource library of practitioner and research literature on a wide range of work/life topics. The Center has also made tremendous progress in building its electronic database, tied initially to its Sloan Researchers Network. The Center is currently working to build on this capacity to house an in-depth practitioner benchmarking database.”

Sloan Electronic Network for Work/Family Researchers

website: http://www.bc.edu/bc_org/avp/csom/cwf/wfnetwork.html

This service is free, and requires that you register to gain access to some of its resources. The site includes a list of work-family resources, forums, syllabi, and a literature database. The database is “a collection of approximately 2000 entries providing bibliographic information with selected annotations for journal articles, books, chapters in books, reports, papers, and dissertations that present information about work and family research.”

Silicon Valley Cultures Project

Charles Darrah, Jan English-Lueck, and James Freeman

Department of Anthropology

San Jose State University

San Jose, CA 95192-0113

website: <http://www.sjsu.edu/depts/anthropology/svcp/>

“The Silicon Valley Cultures Project is the guiding theoretical framework which joins several ethnographic research projects studying diverse aspects of life in Silicon Valley. In addition to the in-depth interviews done by the Principal Investigators during the Work, Identity, and Community in Silicon Valley project, hundreds of San Jose State student researchers have been employed in earlier projects.” The website contains the text of several papers from the project, as well as references for other articles on related topics. It also includes general information on work conducted so far.

Center for the Ethnography of Everyday Life

Tom Fricke

426 Thompson Street

University of Michigan

P.O. Box 1248

Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1248

website: <http://www.ethno.isr.umich.edu/>

“CEEL's research and training focus takes off from the well documented changes in family and work life among Middle Class Americans. Dramatic increases in married women's labor force participation, the rising number of dual career and income families, steep increases in the percentage of children under 5 years old in day care... these are just some of the transformations in American life that survey research has documented.” The Center offers fellowships and internships and the website has links to related sites and working papers published by the project.

Center for Myth and Ritual in American Life

Contact person: Bradd Shore
Department of Anthropology
Emory University
1557 Pierce Drive
Atlanta, GA 30322
e-mail: antbs@emory.edu

Most recent of the five centers funded by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation to study middle class working families, the MARIAL Center will fund research and provide postdoctoral, graduate and undergraduate fellowships. The focus of the Center is the contemporary American South. At this writing, a website is under development.

Families and Work Institute

330 Seventh Avenue, 14th Floor
New York, NY 10001
phone: (212) 465-2044
fax: (212) 465-8637
e-mail: Afarber@familiesandwork.org
website: <http://www.familiesandwork.org/>

“Families and Work Institute is a non-profit organization that addresses the changing nature of work and family life... We identify emerging work-life issues, considering the entire life cycle, from prenatal and child care to elder care, and all levels of employees, from managers to assembly line workers, at all types of organizations, benchmark solutions to work-life problems across all sectors of society—business, education, community, and government—and serve as a broker to build connections among these sectors [and] evaluate the impact of solutions on employees, their families, their communities, and on the productivity of employers.”

Contextual Data Archive: A Data Resource for Contextual Research Sociometrics Corporation

170 State Street, Suite 260
Los Altos, CA 94022-2812
phone: (650) 949-3282 x 206
fax: (650) 949-3299
e-mail: shobana@socio.com
website: <http://www.socio.com>.

“The Contextual Data Archive brings together variables from more than 15 different data sets that contain contextual data at various geographic levels, such as Census tracts, counties, and school districts. The goal of the Contextual Data Archive is to organize the data into a series of data files each at a different level of geography, and to distribute the data to researchers and others for research, and program and policy analyses. The variables included cover a wide range of subjects relevant to the social sciences, including basic demographic and socioeconomic data, household data, education and labor statistics, family planning and health data, information on ethnic and religious characteristics, and policy variables (e.g., percent receiving various forms of public assistance, and expenditures on social services). The Archive is only contextual; no individual-level data are included.”

National Survey of Family Growth 1995

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention,
National Center for Health Statistics, Reproductive Statistics Branch
6525 Belcrest Road, Room 840
Hyattsville, MD 20782
phone: (301) 436-8731 ext. 122
fax: (301) 436-5830
e-mail: ljp2@cdc.gov
website: <http://www.cdc.gov/nchswww/nchshome.htm>.

“The National Survey of Family Growth, Cycle 5, is a comprehensive data set of women’s fertility in the United States, now publicly available. New features in Cycle 5 include event histories and an array of contextual data at three points in time. Computer-assisted personal interviews with 10,847 women ages 15-44 contain supplemental information collected using Audio-CASI technology.”

Multi-City Study of Urban Inequality (MCSUI)

Irene Browne
Department of Sociology
Emory University
Atlanta, GA 30322
phone: (404) 727-7508
fax: (404) 727-7532

e-mail: ibrown@soc.emory.edu.

“The Multi-City Study of Urban Inequality (MCSUI) is a data set consisting of household and employer surveys conducted between 1992 and 1994 in four cities: Atlanta, Boston, Detroit, and Los Angeles. A large area-probability-based sample of households, with over-sampling of racially segregated and poorer neighborhoods, was selected in each city. Randomly selected adults from each household were interviewed about their labor market experiences, residential preferences, and perceptions of their own and other racial groups. Respondents with recent labor force experience provided interviewers with information about their employer and work location, forming an employment-based sample of employers that was combined with an establishment-based sample. These employers were contacted and interviewed by telephone, supplying information on hiring and pay practices, skill requirements, and the racial and ethnic composition of the labor force. There are 8,916 households and 3,497 employers in the data set. Household and employer data sets are available through the ICPSR.”

General Social Survey

Tom W. Smith, National Opinion Research Center
University of Chicago
1155 East 60th Street
Chicago, IL 60637
phone: (773) 256-6288
fax: (773) 753-7886
e-mail: smitht@norcmail.uchicago.edu
website: <http://www.norc.uchicago.edu/>

“The Directorate for the General Social Survey (GSS) of the National Opinion Research Center, University of Chicago, monitors social change in the United States. Since 1972, the GSS has gathered data on contemporary American society in order to monitor and explain trends and constants in attitudes, behaviors, and attributes of the adult population. These high quality data are easily accessible to a broad-based user community, including researchers, teachers in colleges and universities, students at undergraduate and graduate levels, business and corporate planners, journalists, and public officials who need to understand the pulse of our country in their work. The 22 national probability samples include interviews of 32,380 respondents. Of the 3,400 items that have been asked, there are time trends for over 1,000 items.”

Wisconsin Longitudinal Study

Contact persons: Robert M. Hauser and Taissa S. Hauser
Center for Demography and Ecology

University of Wisconsin-Madison
1180 Observatory Drive
Madison, WI 53706
phone: (608) 262-2182
fax: (608) 262-8400
e-mail: wls@ssc.wisc.edu
website: <http://dpls.dacc.wisc.edu/wls/wlsarch.htm/>

“The Wisconsin Longitudinal Study (WLS) is a 35-year study of the social and economic life course among 10,000 men and women who graduated from Wisconsin high schools in 1957, and who have been followed up at ages 25, 36, and 53-54. Data from the original respondents or their parents from 1957 to 1975 cover social background, youthful and adult aspirations, schooling, military service, family formation, labor market experience, and social participation. The 1992-93 surveys cover occupational histories; income, assets, and economic transfers; social and economic characteristics of parents, siblings, and children; and mental and physical health and well being. Parallel interviews have been carried out with siblings in 1977 and 1993-94. WLS data and documentation are available on the World Wide Web.”

Panel Study of Income Dynamics

Contact persons: Sandra Hofferth and Bill Shay
Institute for Social Research
University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1248
phone: (734) 763-5131 or (734) 963-1773
fax: (734) 647-4575
e-mail: psid_staff@umich.edu
website: <http://www.umich.edu/~psid/>

“Now in its thirtieth year of data collection, the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID) is a longitudinal survey of a representative sample of U.S. men, women, and children and the families in which they reside. Data on employment, income, wealth, health, housing, and food expenditures, transfer income, and marital and fertility behavior have been collected annually since 1968. From 5,000 families in 1968, the study has grown to include over 10,000 families, including more than 2,000 families of Cuban, Puerto Rican, and Mexican descent, interviewed from 1990 through 1995. The study has collected high quality intergenerational data on economic capacity, income, and the transmission of wealth, as well as information on such issues as the long-term effects of life events (early childbearing, divorce, illness) on workers and their families, the relationship of business cycles to economic well-being, and the interaction of labor mobility and geographic mobility.”

National Longitudinal Surveys

Contact person: Julie Yates
U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
Suite 4945, 2 Massachusetts Avenue N.E.
Washington, DC 20212
phone: (202) 606-7388
fax: (202) 606-6425
e-mail: yates_j@bls.gov
website: <http://stats.bls.gov/nlshome.htm>

“The National Longitudinal Surveys (NLS) gather detailed information about labor market experiences and other aspects of the lives of six groups of American men and women. Many NLS survey members have been followed for many years, some for decades, allowing researchers to study large panels of men, women and children over significant segments of their lives. The surveys include data about a wide range of events such as schooling and career transitions, marriage and fertility, training investments, welfare reciprocity, child-care usage, and drug and alcohol use.”

National Survey of Families and Households

Contact person: James A. Sweet
Center for Demography
University of Wisconsin-Madison
4412 Social Science Building
Madison, WI 53706
phone: (608) 262-2182
fax: (608) 262-8400
e-mail: nsfhhelp@ssc.wisc.edu

“In 1987-88 a national sample of 13,002 respondents were interviewed about numerous aspects of family life. Members of the original sample, along with their current and ex-spouse/partners, were reinterviewed in 1992-94. In addition interviews were completed with a son or daughter age 10-23 and with a parent of the respondent. The resulting dataset, the National Survey of Families and Households (NSFH), includes information on family composition and history, relationship with spouse/partner, parenting practices, relationships with parents and kin, help given to and received from others, work and income, division of household labor, involvement with children living elsewhere, well-being, family attitudes and opinions, and a variety of other topics. Data are available from the Center for Demography at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. (The 1987-88 data are also available from ICPSR and other sources.)”

**National Center for Health Statistics,
Natality, Marriage, and Divorce Statistics Branch**

6525 Belcrest Road, Room 840

Hyattsville, MD 20782

phone: (301) 436-8954, ext. 131

fax: (301) 436-7066

e-mail: sjv1@nch08a.em.cdc.gov

“The National Center for Health Statistics collects and publishes information on a wide variety of demographic and health characteristics reported on the birth certificate for all births occurring in the United States. Demographic characteristics include age, race, Hispanic origin, education, birthplace, marital status, residence, live-birth order, sex, and month and day of birth. Health information includes month prenatal care began, number of prenatal visits, medical risk factors, tobacco use, alcohol use, obstetric procedures, attendant at birth, place of delivery, method of delivery, complications of labor and/or delivery, period of gestation, birthweight, Apgar score, abnormal conditions of the newborn, congenital anomalies, and plurality.”

Current Population Survey

Bureau of the Census

e-mail: cps-help@info.census.gov

website: <http://www.bls.census.gov/cps/cpsmain.htm>

This program is the primary source of information about the labor force characteristics of the U.S. population. It is a monthly survey of about 50,000 households, asking questions about employment, unemployment, earnings, hours of work and other indicators. Results are available sorted by factors including age, sex, race, marital status, educational attainment, occupation, industry, and class of worker. Data are available through web access.

Survey of Income and Program Participation

Bureau of the Census

e-mail: income_surveys_branch@ccmail.census.gov

website: <http://www.sipp.census.gov/sipp/>

This survey exists to “collect source and amount of income, labor force information, program participation and eligibility data, and general demographic characteristics to measure the effectiveness of existing federal, state, and local programs; to estimate future costs and coverage for government programs, such as food stamps; and to provide improved statistics

on the distribution of income in the country.” Data are available through web access.

Survey of Program Dynamics

Bureau of the Census

e-mail: income_surveys_branch@ccmail.census.gov

website: <http://www.sipp.census.gov/spd/spdmain.htm>

The Survey of Program Dynamics is a subset of the Survey of Income and Program Participation, and was instituted with the primary aim of providing data to evaluate the effects of welfare reform legislation. Data are available through the web.

American Housing Survey

Bureau of the Census

e-mail: hhes-info@census.gov

website: <http://blue.census.gov/hhes/www/ahs.html>

“The American Housing Survey (AHS) collects data on the Nation's housing, including apartments, single-family homes, mobile homes, vacant housing units, household characteristics, income, housing and neighborhood quality, housing costs, equipment and fuels, size of housing unit, and recent movers. National data are collected every other year, and data for each of 46 selected Metropolitan Areas are collected about every four years, with an average of 12 Metropolitan Areas included each year. The national sample covers on average 55,000 homes.”

National Health Interview Survey

Division of Health Interview Statistics

National Center for Health Statistics

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

6525 Belcrest Road, Room 850

Hyattsville, Maryland 20782-2003

phone: (301) 436-7089

website: <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nhis.htm>

This survey provides general health statistics, including information on doctor visits and hospitalization. It is “used widely to monitor trends in illness and disability and to track progress toward achieving national health objectives. The data are also used by the public health research community for epidemiological and policy analysis of such timely issues as characterizing those with various health problems, determining barriers to accessing and using appropriate health care, and evaluating Federal health programs.”

POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

Research on middle class working families is supported by many of the organizations that support anthropological research in general. In the new world of information, organizations rely on the World Wide Web as a main means of communication with interested applicants. Therefore, web addresses for each organization are provided, and researchers are encouraged to actively search these sites for programs for interest.

Before contacting potential funding sources, it may be useful to review some grant-getting basics, or “golden rules of grantsmanship”:

- First, last, and always, contact the program officer to discuss your project, to make sure that your specific interests fall within the purview of the program. This means that you should contact the program officer by email or telephone to discuss such issues as suitability, submission dates, review schedules, the appropriateness or desirability of pre-proposals, budget guidelines, including average and extreme grant sizes, and overhead or indirect costs.
- Match your proposal to the specific interest areas of the program. Some competitions, such as the National Science Foundation’s Cultural Anthropology program, support all areas of research that advance science in the field. Other competitions, such as National Institute of Health institutes - the National Institute on Aging (NIA), Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) - have special focused mandates. However these organizations support much basic research that has implications for or advances understanding of fundamental issues relating to their interest area. For example, the NIA supports basic research that may not at first glance appear to be relevant to aging, but because the appropriate connections are made to aging, it is.
- Maintain a positive and open attitude about possible funding sources and opportunities. Talk with the program officer to determine if your research interests coincide with the mission of the funding agency or organization. Remember that funding agencies and organizations need your research to justify their existence. It is in their interest to identify and support the best quality research. You do your part by informing them and asking if your research interests are congruent with their funding interests.
- Make sure your project has the necessary expertise. If you plan to study a sample of people, make sure your proposal is clear on the appropriateness

of the sample to the relevant population. While you don't have to be an expert statistician, your proposal should reflect your ability to get the best statistical and research design advice available. Involve appropriate consultants on your project and benefit from their advice for designing, carrying out, and analyzing the results of the project.

- First, last and always, contact the program officer to discuss your project.

The **Sloan Foundation** (<http://www.sloan.org>) has a program targeted to the support of research on middle class working families. The Program Director is Kathleen Christensen, telephone: (212) 649-1695, fax: (212) 757-5117, e-mail: christensen@sloan.org, address: Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, Suite 2550, 630 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10111-0242.

The **National Science Foundation** (<http://www.nsf.gov>) has a variety of disciplinary and multidisciplinary programs that could support research on this topic. The Cultural Anthropology Program (<http://www.nsf.gov/sbe/sber/anthro>) is the home base for anthropologists considering research on middle class working families. In addition to funding research, the Program has supported investigator-initiated short-term, training institutes in research design, methods and analysis for Ph.D. students, new and senior investigators. The Program Director is Stuart Plattner, telephone: (703) 306-1758, e-mail: splattne@nsf.gov, address: National Science Foundation, 4201 Wilson Boulevard, Arlington, VA 22230.

The **National Institutes of Health** website (<http://www.nih.gov/icd/>) has the full list of institutes to start you on your search in this Mother of all funding sources. For research on middle class working families, two institutes may be relevant, depending on your specific research questions. The National Institute of Aging (<http://www.nih.gov/nia/>) and the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (<http://www.nih.gov/nichd/>) support research on population, family and household issues. While one doesn't usually think of middle class working families and drug abuse in the same thought, the National Institute on Drug Abuse (<http://www.nida.nih.gov/>) supports ethnographic research. If your research question addresses NIDA's areas of interest, the agency should be contacted.

The **Social Science Research Council** (<http://www.ssrc.org/index.htm>) supports research on a diverse range of topics in a wide range of countries and research on middle class working families could fit into many of their programs.

The **John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur** Foundation (<http://www.macfdn.org/index.htm>) generally does not accept unsolicited

research proposals for small-scale studies or from individual investigators. However, it does accept proposals for large-scale, collaborative research projects that are closely related to the program goals. The staff welcomes communications that would help the Foundation become aware of areas of potentially fruitful work. The Foundation welcomes general questions on email to 4answers@macfdn.org. Probably the most appropriate program for research on middle class working families is on Child and Youth Development, Paul D. Goren, Director, telephone (Chicago): 312/726-8000, fax: 312/920-6258.

The **Spencer** Foundation (<http://www.spencer.org/index.html>) focuses on education, and has different rules depending on the size of the grant. Large grants (over \$35,000) require pre-proposals, and the staff must solicit full proposals. The contact person is John B. Williams, Vice-President, The Spencer Foundation, 900 North Michigan Avenue, Suite 2800, Chicago, Illinois 60611-1542. The Spencer Foundation also funds small grants (up to \$35,000), in which no overhead is allowed and unsolicited proposals are accepted. The address for information is: Small Research Grants Program, The Spencer Foundation, 900 North Michigan Avenue, Suite 2800, Chicago, Illinois 60611-1542.

The **Andrew W. Mellon** Foundation (<http://www.mellon.org/awmf.html>) at 140 East 62nd Street, New York, NY 10021, (212)838-8400 does not normally support individual investigator projects, but supports population research through its centers.

The **John Randolph Haynes and Dora Haynes Foundation** (<http://www.haynesfoundation.org/>) supports study and research in public policy and the social sciences, especially those in California and Los Angeles. All support is made directly to institutions; no grants are awarded to individuals. A searchable bibliography of publications resulting from Foundation projects is available at the website, along with detailed program information and application guidelines. Contact the Haynes Foundation at 888 West Sixth Street, Suite 1150, Los Angeles, California 90017-2737, telephone: (213) 623-9151; fax: (213) 623-3951; e-mail: info@haynesfoundation.org.

The **Foundation Center** (<http://fdncenter.org/>) provides an on-line database version of their book of foundations to search for other possible funding sources. You can search by name, keyword or category (i.e., private, corporate). The “Grantmaker Information directory comprises three broad categories: links, both direct and annotated, to nearly 900 grantmaker Web sites; highlights and excerpts from the Center’s research on foundation giving; and a range of informational materials produced by individual foundations and

hosted by the Center as part of its 'Foundation Folder' program." Contact the Center at 79 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10003; telephone: (212) 620-4230; fax: (212) 691-1828.

CONCLUSION

Over the past 30 years, American society has changed dramatically. Economic, social, and political forces have contributed to an increase in dual income households in the U.S., particularly among the middle class. Although often discussed by policy makers and the media as an important segment of the population, more is assumed and less is well known about middle class working families.

While anthropologists have studied the middle class and working families, much work remains to be done to fully understand the everyday life of middle class working families. As we have seen, the opportunities for anthropological study of middle class working families are extensive. The contributors to this Research Agenda have sought to encourage anthropologists in the study of middle class working families by identifying promising areas of study, existing sources of data, and potential sources of funding to prepare successful research proposals and projects.

In addition to research opportunities, studies of middle class working families present anthropologists with ready entrée to the public. Americans want to know more about themselves and the interest of the media in covering research that provides that knowledge is great. For example, over the course of AAA's project on middle class working families, media from *Scientific American*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Washington Post*, *Current Science*, *Pathfinder*, and *London Weekend Television* sought anthropological input on middle class working family issues from the AAA. During the same time, media coverage of the Darrah, English-Lueck, and Freeman's Silicon Valley Cultures Project and Fricke's work in North Dakota included *National Public Radio*, *USA Today*, *Newsweek*, *New Scientist*, and *Jim Lehrer NewsHour*, among others.

An engaged anthropology calls for the application of anthropological knowledge and expertise to understanding the human conditions at hand. As we enter the 21st century, the time is right to focus the eyes and expertise of anthropology on the issues, concerns, and life conditions facing middle class working families in the U.S. Anthropologists' study of middle class working families will enhance the understanding of this little-understood, majority population. Subsequently, with a substantive grasp of middle class working families, anthropologists will help shape the national conversations about work and family issues in the U.S.

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APPENDIX A:

Anthropology of Everyday Competence

*By Steven M Albert (Columbia U)
Anthropology Newsletter, December 1998 (p 10)*

Old age, with its greater prevalence of chronic disease, offers an interesting vantage for the anthropology of everyday competence. Because the aged--in particular, those over age 85--represent the fastest growing segment of the US population and because minority elders are the fastest growing segment within the aged population, there is an acute need to understand the ways daily competence is defined and executed in varying social contexts.

To assess a person's ability to perform the broad array of activities required for independent living, we must not only be able to measure ability, but to know something about the social and environmental contexts in which the individual uses these abilities. Some people, for example, are able to perform a task; others do so only by altering the task, reducing its frequency or receiving help. Still others are able to perform the task but do not, perhaps because they lack the opportunity. Finally, there are those who are simply unable to perform daily tasks due to a cognitive deficit or another health condition. These considerations form the basis of two research projects in which I am involved that examine issues of everyday competence experienced by middle-and lower-class families facing chronic health decline.

Ethnography of Function

Daily competence in older people involves both self-care (eating, bathing, dressing, using the toilet) and household management (using the telephone, handling money, preparing a meal, going outside, shopping). Loss of these competencies makes an elder dependent

on family and paraprofessionals for quality of life and, indeed, survival.

In a study conducted in Washington Heights, New York City, we used an ethnographic protocol to examine the ways elders interpret questions about their competence. To date, we have conducted over 50 interviews in a multicultural sample drawn from Medicare beneficiaries, with a mean age of 78 and a range of chronic disease conditions. Using a series of structured probes to elicit descriptions of the ways elders actually perform basic tasks, we have found that reports of "difficulty" are colored by a variety of considerations. Some responses relate to the complexity of tasks; for example, elders may be competent with "indoor" or "lobby" clothing (bathrobes, slippers, sweaters), but not with clothing used outside apartments. Those who are competent only with indoor clothing may overestimate their abilities and report no difficulty. The same tendency to overestimate applies to "getting outside"; many of these elders take elevators to lobbies but rarely leave their buildings.

Another factor involved in people's judgements of their own competence is perceived skill. Elders may report difficulty with a task when they are unsatisfied with how well they do it or how long it takes, as in the case of light housework. By underestimating their competence, they risk limiting their activities unnecessarily.

A further consideration is perceived control. An elder who admits she is no longer competent to write a check (perhaps because of tremor or low vision) may not report difficulty if she has another way to complete the task, such as

delegating this responsibility to another family member with whom she sits when it is time to pay bills.

Getting at Validity

Ethnography of function teaches a great deal about the way competencies match up against the tasks of daily life, and also how people evaluate and report on their own functional ability in health surveys. This is an especially important effort for anthropology, since survey researchers are increasingly concerned that survey items have appropriate content validity. Functional assessment items drawn from this ethnographic effort may allow us to better predict those more likely to decline over follow-up, and thus help us identify appropriate targets for intervention. For example, elders prone to overestimate functional ability are likely to be at greater risk for falls, injuries or other acute medical events and should be targeted for health promotion efforts.

To help identify targets for intervention, we have added an additional component to the study to examine factors involved in proxy reports: factors at work when family members under- or overestimate the competence of those in their care. We have found, for example, that the more protective family caregivers tend to describe their elders as less capable overall. Moreover, the fact that Spanish speakers report greater protectiveness than English speakers suggests that we consider cultural differences and context when evaluating elder competency.

"Fair" or "Poor" Health

To understand the effect of environmental and social contexts on perceived health, we are looking at the ways middle- and low-income minority men report their health. Interviews with a sample of 200 African-American men in Harlem, NYC (aged 50-74, ascertained through a random digit-dial telephone

survey, using survey items from the Behavioral Risk Factors Survey, Centers for Disease Control), found that nearly a quarter reported their current health to be "fair" or "poor", despite the fact that they experienced no days with symptoms ("bad health" days) during the past month. In national samples of men of similar age, only 10.6% fall into this category; and in national samples of African-American men, only 13% do so. These differences are striking and suggest that there is either greater prevalence of ill health in Harlem or that features of daily life in Harlem lead these men to report poor or fair health more frequently than men in other samples.

Our working hypothesis to explain this discrepancy, is that the Harlem men fall into a group that Patricia Draper, in a very different context, called "the obligatorily active" ("Work and aging in two African societies: !Kung and Herero," in B Bonder, *Occupational performance in the elderly*, 1994). If these men have medical conditions that affect perceived health without affecting the number of days they recognize as "bad," it may be because they are forced to be active. In a different social context—where healthcare is more accessible, for example—such health problems might lead them to limit activity and report bad health days. We suspect that this may be a particular feature of the middle- and low-income experience of health.

Future Directions

Anthropology has much to teach about the assessment of everyday competency and the effect of disease on such competency. As our experience shows, policy-makers and funders welcome this perspective, especially when it can be used to refine current approaches to measurement. This effort will be important for elder citizens and the families responsible for their care.

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(Sociomedical Sciences) at Columbia U. This research is supported by the National Institute of Aging and Centers for Disease Control.. Albert's recent publications address measurement of quality of life in people with dementia, medication competencies in people with HIV, and time use as an indicator of disability. He can be reached at sma10@columbia.edu.

Cherished Possessions

By Eric J Arnould, Linda L Price (U Neb - Lincoln) and Carolyn Folkman Curasi
(Berry C)

Anthropology Newsletter, February 1999 (pp 17-18)

"Tell you what, I go to estate sales all the time. And when I go, every time I go, I realize that I have to do something. I must get rid of what I have. It is so sad [stresses the word sad] and there are these beautiful items that are being sold...And I think of these people, and of how they must have felt. They had all of this, and it meant so much to them. So, every time I go, I think that's not going to happen to me." --Iris (78, married)

* * *

The wealthiest generation of older Americans ever, those now aged 60 and over, will pass on their great wealth within the next few decades. This wealth includes not only financial assets, but also the innumerable possessions older Americans have accumulated over their lifetimes. Many of these possessions have become dense with cultural, personal and familial meanings.

We have studied the emotions and decisions that surround the disposition or transfer of older middle class Americans' cherished possessions at life's end. We conducted semi-structured interviews with 80 older persons complemented by 7 individual depth interviews, and interviews with 28 paired dyads in 10 family units. We used photos to stimulate informant commentary, and conducted interviews in people's homes that were thus informed by their everyday life surroundings.

Our research asks what triggers stimulate older Americans' concern with disposition. We asked what they hope to accomplish with the transfer and what strategies they employ to accomplish their disposition goals.

Older persons display a narrative sense of identity bound up with their cherished possessions:

"Well, I have a lot of love for my family, I guess you can tell that. And to me, *everything* in this house has been here for years and years and years. And I can look at anything and remember special occasions. It's almost like a history of our life, you know." (Diane, 70, recently widowed)

Cherished possession transfers are fraught with powerful, ambivalent emotions associated with life review, thoughts of death, and desires to control the future:

"I want all this planned out before anything should happen because I would probably be devastated, devastated already and I wouldn't want to deal with both problems at the same time. When I start thinking about this I get some *sadness* and *emotional trauma*." (Valerie, 65, divorced)

To achieve symbolic immortality, extend the identities of previous generations and preserve the life of treasured objects, older Americans seek to transfer the meanings bundled with cherished objects. Informants experience concern about "whom," "when" and "how" to transfer their cherished possessions. The outcomes are co-determined. For example, Becky plans to give her china to the first granddaughter to get married—how determines whom and when. Aaron plans to transfer the antique family clock to his son who has a son "whenever he gets settled enough. When he has a good spot"—whom determines when and how. Grandpa Louie spontaneously gives his son a watch because they got to talking about it—how (stories about the watch) determines when and whom. Iris and Herbert try to load the kids up with things whenever they are

home for a visit—when determines who and how.

Story Telling

We identified specific tactics older Americans use to transfer possessions and their meanings. For example, how are meanings bundled with cherished possessions, rehearsed, and transferred? One way is to use story telling:

“With things like jewelry, things that belonged to my mom and dad, musical instruments, that sort of thing, I’ve made room for them and I’ve seen to it that they have proper storage, so that they will be passed on to my daughter... The stories have been passed on to my daughter. I have told her some of the stories. My mother told her some of the stories. Of course she knows about my wedding gown.” --Sharlene (56, married, working full-time, living in own home)

Reciprocity Generalized

Older consumer’s disposition tactics also provide examples of generalized reciprocity. Older givers hope, and recipients confirm that elements of the giver’s identity are bundled with the gift, and the gift is returned in the form of remembrances. For example,

“Many of the pieces have all sorts of memories attached to them from my childhood as they have been in the family since before I was born. But to me the best part of having antiques is being able to pass them down to your parents and your Uncle Derrick and his family and knowing that when I go to their houses that they are well taken care of and loved as much as I loved them.” --Debbie (70s, married)

Matching Meanings

How do older consumers determine to whom to give their cherished possessions? One way is to match the meanings of their gifts to the identities of recipients. They use gender, kinship

distance and lifestyle criteria to match recipients, objects, and meanings. For example,

“My mother had given me a lot of her linens before she died cause I was the only girl in the family, so she had given me those.” --Margit (77, married)

And, “I’m the last (*family name*), and then my sons, I finally had a son, and he now has a son. And that clock has to go through that family, because it has been in the family for about 150 years.”

Rituals of Giving

How do older persons decide when to transfer their special possessions? They sometimes use other ritual occasions like weddings, birthdays, and residence changes to transfer special possessions. The affective charge of these rituals helps to reinforce the unique qualities of cherished possessions for recipients. For example, a Hispanic woman uses a quinceañero celebration as a possession transfer occasion,

“I gave my granddaughter some jewelry for her 15th birthday last year. That was special for me. The jewelry that I gave to my granddaughter was something that my husband had given to me before he died. It was very close to me, but I really wanted my granddaughter to have it.” --Luisa (76, widowed)

Possession transfer timing is problematic. Holding possessions until the end because of the personal value of their singular meanings, the desire to control the meanings of these objects following death and, at the same time, to avoid family conflict presents many older Americans with a dilemma:

“I don’t know quite *when* to give up these items. If I wait, thinking that I should enjoy them for myself a while longer, then it might be too late someday. I want to have *control* over my own decisions.” --Gloria (72, widowed)

Insights

This research brought us face to face with life cycle challenges that confront many Baby Boomers and their Depression generation parents. Conducting it raises powerful emotions and sometimes provides catharsis for participants. From it, we have derived insights both theoretical and pragmatic. Our research:

- Shows the general theoretical relevance of anthropology to understanding the behavior not of the “other” but of “us.” To explain older Americans’ disposition behavior, we extended a number of classic anthropological theories. Our findings reaffirm the relevance of Mauss and Sahlins’ theories of generalized gift giving. Cherished possessions exhibit totemic properties consistent with Lévi-Strauss’ theories. Our work develops Mary Douglas’ theory of the communicative function of goods in a specific context. Our research also elaborates Igor Kopytoff’s ideas about the biography of things. Discovery of the generational and class-distributed meanings of cherished possessions contributes to Bourdieu’s ideas about cultural capital. Finally, elaborating on Annette Weiner’s theories, we explore how cherished possessions become inalienable as they are passed between generations.
- Has been well received by estate planners. Provision for cherished things is a frequent omission in estate planning that provokes family conflict. Special possessions are typically few and yet of immeasurable worth to givers and recipients. Yet equal distribution of tangible property is not possible. We counsel estate planners to encourage people to provide for the distribution of cherished possessions in advance of their deaths.
- Is of practical value to social workers who deal with the elderly. Often older Americans are geographically

distanced from kin and ambivalent about the transfer of special possessions. Consequently, disposition decisions are often left unmade or imposed prematurely. Older Americans feel threatened by loss, yet also fear that failing to dispose can result in the loss of meanings embodied in possessions. Sharing family stories embodied in possessions reassures the elderly and strengthens family ties. We encourage elder caregivers to facilitate greater inter-family communication about disposition.

- Is of interest to new product researchers. We have suggested that they may wish to develop what we call “ultra-durable” products, consumer goods with heirloom potential or software to enable people to combine photos and special possession narratives.

Eric Arnould is a social anthropologist who spent 10 years working on development in West Africa. Linda Price has a PhD in marketing. Her early work identified the “market maven” (a volunteer consumer advocate) and examined the role of imagery and creative agency in consumer behavior. Together, their recent research examines magical experiences in the context of white water river rafting and the emergence of commercial friendships in service businesses. Carolyn Curasi’s recent dissertation in marketing examines older Americans’ disposition of cherished possessions as a special form of gift giving.

Living With Technology

By C N Darrah, J A English-Lueck and J M Freeman (*San José State U*)
Anthropology Newsletter, December 1998 (pp 1, 4)

Consider Susan's day. She walks from the detached garage that she and James have converted into their bedroom, leaving behind his three computers. She walks through the house and enters the small bedroom that is now her office. The objects in it are carefully organized to reflect her separate careers as graphic designer and massage therapist. She is working at home today to avoid the constant interruptions at her employer's. To do so she must manually connect her computer to the local area network James created to connect the garage/bedroom computers with his son's computer in another bedroom. Susan and Scott try to schedule their Internet use so they do not conflict, but this morning there are sounds from her stepson's room and Susan needs to check his plans. "What if he's using it?" asks the anthropologist. "Then he's off it," replies Susan. "One rule is that if you're bringing in the money then you have priority."

Susan says her household is ordinary and uninteresting, although she suspects that its penetration by information technologies makes it exotic to some people. Yet Susan's family exemplifies one way that information technologies are being integrated into the daily lives of middle class working families. These patterns of technology use provide a window through which to examine both how changes in work and technology are affecting families, and how families use technology to manage hectic lives.

Silicon Ethnology

We have been exploring these interactions since 1991 through a series of studies conducted in California's "Silicon Valley." In one study, we focused on how families incorporate consumer electronics such as pagers, mobile telephones and

personal computers into daily life. We elicited histories of each device that extended from when someone first heard of it and discussed it with the family, to its acquisition and ultimate use by different family members. Our focus was on how the device affected and was affected by the family. Other studies have focused more on broader assumptions and values about living in a region characterized by high technology industry, and saturated by technological imagery and metaphor. For the past three years we have interviewed individuals drawn from both public and private sectors. The people we interview represent a variety of technical and non-technical jobs at all levels of their respective organizations.

We attempt to elicit the cultural domains salient to our informants, especially issues of work and its relationship to a person's "other" lives are paramount. This research provides a broader context for more narrowly focused studies of technology use. Like them, it reveals how people try use technology to solve the problems of daily living.

Technological Saturation

Few of the families we study are comprised of stereotypical "techie" or "nerds," but still they are saturated with information devices and services. Family members are often oblivious to these items, and tours of homes always reveal more items than are reported. "Yes, we have a VCR," may actually refer to four such devices in various states of disrepair that are placed in different rooms and closets. Such devices seldom disappear, but rather they are saved "Just in case" – for unspecified future purposes. Alternatively, they are given to children or members of other households.

Devices and services do not typically stand in isolation, but are embedded in complex ecosystems. Some families, for example, begin with a limited function answering machine, but due to the rhythm of their daily lives they soon seek a new machine with remote access. A mobile phone is later purchased so messages can be easily retrieved. The cost of access is born by the receiver of a call, however, and a large initial phone bill often provides a rude awakening. The mobile phone is soon used only to make calls, and the phone number is restricted for use by certain people for specific purposes. The answering machine retains its importance as a collector of messages, a pager may be added to the inventory, leading to deceptively profound discussions about what constitutes a crisis, an emergency or legitimate "access." Family members simultaneously encounter people who are part of different ecosystems, thereby increasing the complexity of their own communications.

We find ecosystems to be an appropriate metaphor for these networks of actions and devices since they grow incrementally, changing to reflect the work people do on specific issues. Telephones, for example, are not just single devices, but reflect a variety of features and communicative constraints tied to the availability of related devices such as fax, cell phone, pager, preferences of various actors and the power differences reflected in those preferences. Striking to us is the faith that solutions to these issues of daily life can be provided by assembling just the right inventory of devices.

Work and Home

Despite the idiosyncratic situations of different families, certain patterns of issues emerge. First, many interviewees speak of their relative lack of time due to the lengthy hours they work. The nature of that work, too, often places conflicting demands on them to be constantly available to other people and perform

tasks requiring concentration, reflection and planning. The quest for efficient time management relentlessly drives many to seek devices that buy just a few extra minutes, such as the car phone that can be used to respond to voicemails during the drive to work.

Maintaining the security of the individual and family is another recurring issue. With incompatible working hours, "keeping in touch" drives ecosystems. Car phones, for example, are often purchased for this reason: "I can't imagine her (or him) driving alone without one," is a common sentiment.

Establishing control is a closely related issue: Given the dispersion of family members, how can the behavior of others be controlled? Control is imposed in ways that range from using prized devices as rewards for good behavior, to remotely monitoring the actions of friends and relatives. The young daughter of a single parent, for example, is required to page her father the minute she returns from school to their empty house. Alternatively, one interviewee equipped his family members and employees with pagers so he could summon them at will.

Efficiency, security and control are, however, often chimerical and people are often betrayed by the systems they create. One marriage ended when a pager displayed the telephone number of a secret lover during a family vacation. Ironically, family members often discover that the same systems they construct to bind the family together are just as easily used to avoid one another.

Productive Families

Provisioning the family with devices provides the infrastructure for it to be a productive unit. Indeed, this is often quite intentional, as devices are selected to be compatible with those in the workplace. Often employers "loan" laptop computers, software and fax machines. Faced with heavy workloads, lengthy commutes and

ubiquitous interruptions, working at home becomes desirable. The goal is often to keep up with or get ahead of the burdens of work, but most interviewees report that these efforts are doomed since most of their coworkers are doing the same thing.

While provisioning the family with devices is undertaken to keep the demands of work at bay, it ironically configures family life around the demands of work. Parents and children may compete for scarce productive resources such as the PC, forcing discussions of the relative priorities of different activities. Many families articulate explicit rules about technology use, and the conditions under which work may intrude into family life.

The effects of this technological penetration are not limited to managing interruptions or deciding access to scarce equipment. As the home becomes more like the workplace, other facets of family life are subject to the logic of efficiency. Children are sometimes viewed as obstacles to efficiency. We often hear a tone of exasperation or frustration when people tell us how they work only after the children are in bed or when they are home alone or when their partners can entertain the kids. In other cases children are sources of unpaid labor who can collate handouts for presentations, send faxes or run errands. These duties are typically justified as teaching children valuable work skills.

Talk about technology becomes talk about work and broader techniques learned at work to manage the complexity of hectic lives. One interviewee commented that he anticipated a fight with his wife but was not worried: "Since I took the company's course in managing interpersonal conflict I can handle her." Another woman interviewed explicitly uses her skills as a software project manager to organize the lives of her preschoolers.

Consuming Devices and More

The families we study consume an array of devices and services ranging from PCs to karaoke machines. Some of this technology may be explicitly obtained to manage the flow of work; as such its purchase is justified as rational and responsible. Other technologies are explicitly obtained for entertainment. Yet a clear distinction here is misleading. Many personal computers that are bought for a child's education or to allow telecommuting are eventually used for games. Devices purchased for entertainment, such as videocameras and karaoke machines, are used to work on the family itself. Some families videotape activities and send weekly tapes to relatives elsewhere. One person commented that his family knows more about the activities of distant relatives than about those in their own household. The karaoke machine can be the magnet that draws together the dispersed family for regular weekend celebrations.

The way devices and services enter the family also differs. While users buy some, much is purchased as gifts to be presented to family members. Devices may be requested as gifts, but often it is the giver's needs that are being met. Palm pilots and laptops are given to parents as a way of explaining the adult child's work when words fail. Alternatively, they may be given to make the recipient conform to the giver's needs. Pagers and mobile phones often seem to fulfill the giver's needs. Regardless of reasons, the exchange of devices serves to bind families in networks of assistance. When instruction manuals are incomprehensible or devices fail the recipient usually turns to the giver for help.

Global Connections

Devices and services also allow global intrusions into the daily lives of families. We are not speaking of a wholesale transformation of family members into global citizens. The

connections we find are episodic and unexpected, but they are nonetheless important. Sometimes the connection is direct, such as phone calls that are driven by the realities of working across time zones. For adults, this is a logical extension of the work day, but children ask, "Who are these strangers and why are they calling us at home?"

Other times the connection occurs in the workplace, as when people work on teams that are globally dispersed. Our interviewees routinely encounter vastly different styles of communication, and expectations of males and females. They speak of an exotic world "out there," yet they also speak of basic similarities among people. Important here is that communications at work are often stripped of nuance, and occur among people who share middle class status, similar educations and even identical positions. Thus, the globalism our families encounter does not completely transform their lives, nor does it have uniform effects. Just as videotapes may link extended families, email can facilitate family connections from Silicon Valley to Taiwan and Japan in a seamless network. At the same time email can be vehemently rejected as inappropriate for family communications. The globalism we find may be exciting or just another unwanted intrusion into already stressed families. It may cause people to reexamine their own assumptions, or it may confirm that the global is just their own local writ large.

Changes Large and Small

Inasmuch as the nature of work that engages many middle class working families is changing, we may expect everyday lives to be affected in ways large and small. How such families are enmeshed in the technological ecosystems that we have discussed varies, but exploring such systems provides a way to understand the issues salient to families. We suggest a research agenda that explores the minutiae of daily life, for in our experience those details are

significant. Families are affected by very specific characteristics of work. Whether it is the number of hours worked, rhythms of project-based work, nature of tasks, need to work across time zones or prevalence of workplace crises, these are the conditions affecting the daily lives of families. The vast array of information devices and services only add to the complexity of the ecosystems within which families exist.

Such an agenda can also be applied cross-culturally, as work changes globally and technologies proliferate. Our own recent exploration of these issues in India and Taiwan suggest both familiar and unfamiliar themes. The anthropological gaze can contribute much to understanding the profound changes in the everyday lives of middle class working families, and their use of technology provides a fruitful entrée into the field.

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(Dis)locating the Middle Class

By Kathryn Marie Dudley (Yale U)
Anthropology Newsletter, April 1999 (pp 1, 4)

America is not the only nation to imagine itself a "middle class society," but it is arguably one of the few in which such imaginings persist even as the material infrastructure supporting that claim steadily erodes. No matter how persuasively economists may declare that the postwar middle class is now "dead," "declining" or "disappeared," ordinary citizens--many of significantly reduced means--continue to consider themselves and their lifestyles "middle class." For the anthropologist, this presents something of a conundrum: if the contours of the middle class are shifting and in flux, where do we locate the dislocated subjects of our analysis? Is the laid-off, unemployed worker still a member of the middle class? Is a lifestyle maintained by continual infusions of credit still middle class? If a critical marker of "middle-classness" is a central position in the national income distribution, what does it mean to know that this sign is free-floating, tied loosely and often fleetingly, to those whose fortunes it purports to measure?

It has become commonplace to attribute the current predicament of the middle class to structural changes in the labor market. Acute job insecurity, volatile incomes and the expansion of household debt are taken as symptoms of a social transformation that ultimately reflects the natural and inevitable "evolution" of an advanced capitalist economy. If Americans are anxious about the fact that this new "casino society" offers no guarantee of steady earnings, medical insurance or retirement savings, we are told, it is because we have yet to retrofit ourselves to meet the demands of a high-tech, high-risk, global economy. Darwinian rhetoric abounds, and as Emily Martin (*Flexible Bodies*, 1994) observes, vulnerability to the vagaries of the market

is perceived as a deficiency of the individual or corporate "immune system," a failure to evolve by dint of "flexible" adaptations. On this deployment of evolutionary discourse, anthropologists have largely remained silent. Yet it is imperative to ask how our tradition of holistic inquiry can contribute to a more satisfying, politically progressive understanding of contemporary social change.

Culture of the Mind

Over the past decade, I have been engaged in the study of what Katherine Newman (*Falling From Grace*, 1999 [1988]) has called the "tribe of the downwardly mobile," those refugees from a downsizing, deindustrializing, credit-dependent middle class who nonetheless continue to identify with its values and expectations. Most remarkable to me, as an anthropologist of economic dislocation in urban as well as rural communities, is the tenacity with which most working Americans hold to the belief that they, as sovereign individuals, are the masters of their own destiny. Regardless of the circumstances--industry-wide slumps, foreign competition or soaring interest rates--the loss of jobs and farms, homes and neighborhoods, dreams and opportunities is routinely chalked up, not to the vicissitudes of a late capitalist economy, but to the moral character of the victims themselves. Dislocated workers with only a high school diploma are blamed--and blame themselves--for failing to acquire the "good education" that would ostensibly qualify them for work in a new postindustrial society. Bankrupt farmers who took out loans to save the family legacy are blamed--and blame themselves--for failing to be "good business managers" in a newly competitive era of corporate agriculture.

Membership in the middle class is thus not just a matter of achieving a certain standard of material success and, once having done so, resting back on one's laurels: it requires the unremitting performance of a distinctive moral character--one which, in every community, is as much culturally-defined as it is economically-based.

I first became aware of the performative quality of class identities when I undertook my ethnography of a Chrysler assembly plant closing in a predominately blue-collar town (*The End of the Line*, 1994). To my dismay, I discovered that the ritual of the plant closing became an occasion for business managers and white-collar professionals to declare themselves the true--and only--representatives of "middle-classness" in a postindustrial society. In this social context, the fact that most autoworkers could not hope to recoup their middle class standard of living with new jobs in other factories or industries became evidence that they had never deserved to be paid middle-income wages in the first place. Union feather-bedding and graft, inflated wage rates, make-work labor contracts and a poor "business climate" were all cited as factors leading to the downfall of the American automobile industry in general, and to the demise of this plant in particular. But anti-union politics were not, as it happened, the crux of the matter. Of greater concern was the uncomfortable fact that autoworkers had been able to earn a middle class income right out of high school. Educators lamented the precedent this set for students who might otherwise be encouraged to take their studies seriously and join the college-bound. When the plant closed, teachers and administrators were unapologetic in their relief: at long last, the culture of the mind had triumphed over the old blue-collar culture of the hands.

Needless to say, dislocated autoworkers did not respond to the plant closing in the same way. For them, it was

a numbing example of corporate greed and government complicity in an elite international scheme to "make everyone a minority" by forcing unionized American workers to compete with--and accept the wages of--workers in Third World countries. Yet the culture of the mind eventually took its toll on every autoworker's self-esteem. Despite a show of solidarity in the union's effort to save the plant, workers were thrown back upon their own resources when that fight was lost. Many accepted their lot as lowly-paid operatives or service-sector employees in local factories and businesses; some pulled up roots and followed the siren song of employment at other plants in the Chrysler system; and some went back to school. But few escaped the community's searing judgment that they should have done something, much earlier in their lives to avoid this ignominious fate. The performance of moral worth and collective self-affirmation that sprang of cooperative labor on the assembly line simply could not be transferred to other jobs and places. What workers lost was not just a claim to be middle class, but an experience of community that supported and validated an alternative measure of success and vision of economic justice.

Cultural Credit

If the ability to claim a middle class identity does not rest on income or assets alone, then by what criteria are such claims evaluated? Has the acquisition of a college degree become a universal marker of middle-classness and the moral character required to sustain it? These are some of the questions I had in mind when I began my ethnographic fieldwork on the farm crisis of the mid-1980s (*Fragile Community*, in press). Unlike most urban professionals and industrial workers, farmers resolutely link the performance of a middle class identity to the experience of "being their own boss." In this social context, neither academic credentials nor workplace solidarity provide a gauge for who will be judged a good manager.

Rather, in the fashion of rural village lifeways, kinship and the luster of a “good family name” lay the groundwork for an agricultural credit system that endows second- and third-generation farmers with a decisive home-town advantage.

Native sons and daughters are the favored recipients of loans issued by relatives, neighbors and community banks, while “newcomers”--and less “collateralized” progeny--must apply for socially-distant forms of credit, such as that offered by insurance companies, national Farm Credit System, or the (erstwhile) federal Farmers Home Administration. In prosperous times, such as the 1970s “boom” triggered by the Russian grain deal, the distinction between these forms of credit mattered little. Farm incomes were up, interest rates were low and even family farmers of modest means could enjoy a laugh on their way to the bank. But the 1980s “bust”--ushered in by Carter's grain embargo and the new monetary policy adopted by the Federal Reserve Board--told a different story. As commodity prices fell, interest rates rose, property values crashed and farm loans were recalled, hard-pressed farmers who had a chance of survival could be distinguished from those who failed--not, I discovered, by the amount of debt they had incurred, but by the kind of credit they had received.

Pierre Bourdieu (1972) has drawn our attention to the multi-faceted nature of capital, arguing that “economic” resources are only one component of personal wealth and the accumulation process. Of equal, if not greater, importance are the social and cultural forms of capital that individuals acquire by virtue of their participation in social networks and their “schooling” in particular cultural orientations. Although Bourdieu rightly observes that social and cultural capital cannot be directly transformed into the “exchange” value of economic capital, he never systematically considers the role that credit can play in effecting this

transformation. Yet, as my study of the farm crisis made clear, there are two very different kinds of credit: the “economic credit” farmers receive for the market value of their assets, and the “cultural credit” they receive for being the offspring of respected farmers within the community, and as such, for having the moral character it takes to be successful.

Agricultural loans made by national and federal institutions were based almost entirely on the economic credit that farmers became eligible for as the value of their assets rose during the inflationary 1970s. Community banks and neighbors also took risks during this period, but the credit they extended was primarily cultural in nature, as their over-riding concern was with the long-term viability of the farming operation. When the farm crisis hit, national lenders were quick to foreclose, often with complete disregard for plight of individual farm families. By and large, only local forms of debt offered hope of compassion and financial restructuring, for in an uncertain economy, only they were based on the firmer stuff of shared cultural meanings.

Anthropological Economics

What, then, can anthropologists say about the middle class in the contemporary US and elsewhere? My own work leads me to suggest that we are at our best when we attend to, and analytically privilege, the voice of “lived experience”--in this case, the voices of Americans who claim to be middle class. Locating the middle class, in this sense, is less a matter of surveying paychecks and bank accounts than it is a question of community and moral character: who, in the judgment of the relevant social group, deserves to be middle class? When economic change puts traditional wisdom to the test and the old rules no longer apply, who--in the judgment of the community--is thought to be worthy of the good fortune that has come their way? And perhaps most importantly: when economic misfortune strikes, who, in the

end, is held accountable for their own fate?

Anthropologists interested in understanding the experience of the middle class(es) in America today must adopt a healthy suspicion toward the pronouncements of the so-called “experts” who are adept at telling us what “the economy” is and how it works. Economics, as Marshall Sahlins (1972) reminds us, is a “component of culture,” not a “need-satisfying process” of individual behavior. As such, it does not stand outside the cultural system that invents it, nor is it the private intellectual property of university-trained economists. Our nation now teems with the dissident voices of a diasporic middle class. To hear these voices, we must “dislocate” the middle class in mainstream economic discourse and “locate” it in the everyday lives of those who struggle to claim a place within it.

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Coming in from the Margins

By E Paul Durrenberger (Pennsylvania State U) and Kendall Thu (U Iowa)
Anthropology Newsletter, October 1998 (pp 60, 58)

Those anthropologists who question the relevance of anthropology to contemporary issues have not learned the principle lessons of anthropology: cultures are rooted in the material conditions of human adaptation, shaped by the social relations people develop to manage those conditions, and driven as much by the ways that those material and social systems don't work as by the ways that they do. The reason the question is salient is that by their topics and approaches many anthropologists have elected not to contribute to the development of these understandings. Many anthropologists have taken the leap from the little community of rural life to the transnational without stopping to figure out what is going on in between. The agonies and ambiguities of personal identity formation in an age of dissolving ethnicities, irrelevant nationalities and blurred genders and genres is nothing new even to the 20th Century. We should instead focus our attention on the relevant structures of the political economies that create the conditions to which individuals must adapt.

Challenges to Hegemonic Assumptions

We have learned much from our research on the peripheral in the borderlands of the world's nations, but we have much to learn about the centers. As long as we insist on holding fast to the margins, so long will our discipline be marginal. It will do us no good to bemoan the fact that we are not economists whose discourse enjoys hegemony. Like Moliere's character who discovers he is speaking in prose, economists discover anthropology as they recognize that social relations make a difference in patterns of economic behavior, a notion they help

popularize with inaccurate concepts such as social capital. It is up to anthropologists to demonstrate ethnographically and cross culturally that economics itself is a cultural form and to show its relationship to the material factors that underlie this ideology.

Ethnographic work has shown that while assumptions of the tragedy of the commons make sense to economists, fishers, herders and other food producers with their feet on the ground or the decks of their boats don't follow suit. Others have shown that assumptions of fisheries management models are as fallacious as any concept of witchcraft articulated by Evans-Pritchard. It is up to us to use ethnographic and crosscultural data to critically assess economists' assumptions about the existence and behavior of markets. Economists cannot suppose there are no markets any more than a devout Christian can suppose there is no god. Everything depends on the assumption. But we can be empirical and set ourselves the goal of finding whether markets exist.

Where's the Beef?

And when we don't find the market postulated by economists? This is not just a theoretical or utopian argument about economics and anthropology. Think of meat. There exists an entire government bureaucracy to identify meat markets. If markets existed, such an agency wouldn't have to define them. The very existence of this agency should be enough to raise suspicion.

"What is the alternative?" an economist once asked. What is the alternative to the assumption of methodological individualism, that second

pillar of economic thought? That one is easy for us: the alternative is some variety of Durkheimian social fact that transcends individuals, but remains rooted in the fundamentals of human adaptation and survival.

What choices face that unfortunate pair of prisoners who get nabbed in the famous dilemma? Do they have a choice not to be prisoners? No, that is the nature of the dilemma. They cannot elect not to play. The interesting questions, however, are: Who caught them? Why? What social and economic categories do the captors and prisoners represent? Who built the jail and why? Who paid for their capture and why? Who cares whether they defect and why? What kind of system has suspects, criminals, jails, cops and defectors? To advocate the study of individual choices without understanding the structures that bring the choices into being is to sidestep the important issues and at the same time insure irrelevance.

Ethnography of the Centers

A relevant anthropology takes seriously the questions and lessons of understanding cultural similarities and differences--not as things of themselves, or freefloating mysterious things given to different peoples as so many randomly assigned cups the gods handed out, to use Ruth Benedict's metaphor--but as consequences of the realities of human adaptation that we can understand by asking how material systems work and how they got that way. If we continue our retreat into the exotica of culture for its own sake--the kind of hyperrelativism that isolates people--we exclude ourselves from anything relevant to say.

Anthropology at the Center

A relevant anthropology asks where our food comes from; and how it gets from the fields to the factories to the tables. It asks about the consequences of these systems of production for other matters and brings our holistic,

ethnographic and comparative methods to bear on the center of contemporary states. Start anywhere. Why is your sodapop sweetened with corn sweetener? There's a high tariff on sugar. Does it have to do with ADM's domination of the corn sweetener market? Is there any relationship with anti-Cuba policies? Or trace the connections between the corn, fertilizers, fuel and bacon that urban people bring home. Where do those pigs come from? Specify the relationships among state governments and governors, land grant universities and industrial swine producers, throw in the Department of Agriculture and we're half way to making conspiracy theory a respectable alternative to the religion of the market and providing a ballast of political economic relevance for anthropology that is a welcome antidote to marginal discussions of identity.

How do we understand class? Shall we debate with sociologists whether there are 6, 9 or a dozen based on father's occupation, income, education, mother's proclivities and your own job? Or shall we recognize what anthropologists have learned about the evolution of political systems: that some people have access to resources through a social system they control and some do not. Two classes is so simplistic. What about the middle class--the managerial middle class, as some call it--those who do not control resources, but manage the resources of those who do? What have anthropologists had to say about it, aside from the trivialities of personal struggles of individual identity?

For some, the middle class are those who own sufficient means to produce their own livings, mom-and-pop operations exemplified by neighborhood grocery stores in towns and cities and family farms in rural areas. In the words of a family farmer from Iowa: "For generations, tens of thousands of us farmers relied on pork production to put food on our tables, pay for our land, and help pass our land on to our children. For

generations, we pork producers went to town to worship, to educate our children, to buy supplies, and to entertain ourselves. Rural communities thrived as farmers thrived. I worked to provide the same opportunities for my children that my parents and grandparents worked to provide for me.”

Like his father and grandfather before him, Jim Braun planned to stay home and take care of his business as bad times came and went, pouring himself into doing the best possible job of raising crops and hogs. He counted on the same success his forebears enjoyed by dint of his own knowledge, expertise and hard work, “But everything I was learning about the changes in the hog industry in Iowa and the nation led me to believe that good management, excellent genetics, and the use of current methods and technology alone would not lead to profitability for independent farmers such as myself. It was time to take action outside the confines of the combine, hog buildings, and computer printouts? (*Pigs, Profits and Rural Communities*, K Thu and E P Durrenberger, eds. 1998, p 44). Jim and Pam Braun began to understand the wider structural dimensions of the transformation of American agriculture, not because they are anthropologists, but because they were trying to survive as family farmers. Walter Goldschmidt had seen the writing on the wall in his studies of industrial and family farm agriculture in California in the early 1940s, studies so salient that his whole division within the Department of Agriculture was abolished because his findings struck at the core of social maladies and the associated political economic structure in the US. Touring Iowa with us, Goldschmidt was told by a farmer that farmers were 5 years too late in identifying the economic and political patterns that were putting them out of business. Goldschmidt responded that they were 50 years too late.

Back from the Margins

Some anthropologists do address these issues. Maritime anthropologists have explained why owner-operators have not disappeared from the fishing industry despite expectations of both Marxian and neoclassical economists. They have shown how and why the ideology of the tragedy of the commons, enacted as policy, results in tragedies of mismanagement. Others have worked on meat packing, low wage labor in industrial and service sectors, labor recruitment practices, labor unions and industrial practices. It is not that all relevant work needs to be applied. But most applied work, by its very nature, is relevant because it must consider causal factors. Otherwise individual responses, identities, texts, dramas and stories become musings of a scholastic elite that bandies textual critique back and forth like tennis players who share the gaze of an enraptured audience with no attention to material life beyond the court which makes their symbolic game possible.

It isn't just the locales of our work, but our approaches that marginalize us. If being anti-scientific removes us from relevance by making us undistinguished critics of a mediocre literature, pretend science makes us unconvincing claimants to scientific knowledge and gives the anti-science folks credibility. Counting things with all the gusto and no more reason than some caped crusader of quantification from Sesame Street is no means to scientific enlightenment. No more enlightening is the study of the individual choices of meat, crop or mate without understanding the structures that determine the choices and their dynamics. To anti-science and pretend science we can add political agendas as means to our own irrelevance.

The purpose of scientific research is to dispel prejudice and preconceptions by appeal to observable conditions. But to comprehend the economic and political systems of modern states we do have to

understand power and inequality--who gets what and how. That's no more political than understanding the relationships among the sacrificed and the sacrificors among Aztec. It is necessary to understand how the systems work. Shirking such issues in favor of marginal locales, marginal questions or inapposite approaches makes us irrelevant.

Other people don't make us irrelevant we do a good job of it ourselves. A relevant anthropology doesn't stay in the borderlands; it brings the lessons we have learned about human adaptation to bear on evolving human conditions. If we are comfortable with the periphery, then we should be comfortable with our irrelevance. If we are comfortable with anti-science, pretend-science and political agendas, we should be comfortable with irrelevance. If, however, we approach central material conditions and political economies of contemporary states with the same sense of adventure and ethnographic rigor that our predecessors applied in New Guinea, Africa, Asia and the Americas, then our understanding of the human condition will prosper and the relevance of our discipline will take care of itself.

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Home Work

By Thomas E Fricke (U Michigan, Ann Arbor)
Anthropology Newsletter, October 1998 (pp 1, 4-5)

It's time for anthropologists to get serious about Americanist research, to bring their tools back home, to go beyond the defensive postures of "studying up" or looking for the exotic to justify an interest in our own society. It's time for anthropology to bring the ethnography of everyday life to the US where it promises to add desperately needed concreteness to public debates around the changes in cultures of work and family.

Missed Opportunities

A peculiar feature of anthropology's status among the social sciences is its strangely two-tiered approach to social research. The first tier is that of the other--the foreign, exotic, marginal. The second tier is home--the unmarked, less regarded, category that implicitly defines what the other must be. As anthropologists, we conspire in a division of the world that excludes us from entering the conversation on transformations in our own backyard. A resulting gap is our scarce presence in the discussions of American work and family life that occupy so much of the literature in other social sciences. Where some, such as family historian John Gillis, see the late 20th century as one of those rare times when social practices lead to a shake-up and reconfiguration of cultural understandings of who we are as family members and workers, the ingredients of that shake-up appear too mundane for anthropological notice.

As an anthropologist whose interests converge on the connections among individual lives, family relations, work, and culture, I am struck by the scale of change in the US and by the rich possibilities my own discipline offers to its understanding. Because my interest is in exploring these transitions here, I am

further struck by anthropology's muffled voice in Americanist research. Scholarly work into family and work issues in this country has strong representation from sociology, economics, psychology, history and even political science. Anthropology, as a discipline, and ethnography, as the research approach of that discipline, are notably under-represented. Yet, these very same themes constitute large portions of the anthropological work in every other ethnographic landscape.

Big Changes

Even the briefest look at census statistics suggests the scope of change. We know, for example, that where only about a quarter of all women aged 16 and above were in the labor force in 1940, that percentage had increased to over 59% by 1996. Most of that increase in women's labor force participation was for married women, among whom only 14% were in the 1940 labor force compared to 61% in 1996. A good deal of that change was among married women with children under 6 years old in their households.

We might expect these increases in labor force participation by mothers of young children to have implications for child care and the statistics show this to be so. Family sociologist Andrew Cherlin reports that the percentage of children under 5 in day care centers has increased from 6% in 1965, to 30% today. Cherlin goes on to document the implications for attitudes of these changes in behavior: between 1977 and 1996, the percentage of adults agreeing that men should work as achievers outside the home while women take care of home and family fell from 66% to 38%. And where in 1977, 42% of working mothers with preschool-aged children agreed that young children were

likely to suffer if their mothers worked, that percentage fell to 23% in 1996.

It would be possible to go on with similar trends in cohabitation and marriage, the incidence of divorce and the many other factors attracting the attention of family researchers and demographers in the US. But these examples are enough to draw the conclusion of a watershed transformation in which the highly charged categories of "work" and "family" have begun to overlap and interpenetrate in ways that violate an earlier cultural imagery. They point, too, to the gendered nature of much of that transition, as well as to the tensions inherent in it (statistics in the last paragraph suggest that a fairly big chunk of mothers who themselves work do so even though they think it harms their children!).

My own research has until now been among people in Nepal undergoing precisely these general shifts. In Nepal, changes in the economic life of families have led to changes in the relationships within families, in relationships between families, and ultimately to emerging redefinitions of the family itself. Parents have increasingly less control over the choices of their children; old cooperation networks between families have become brittle; and the cultural models for the extended family are in flux. These changes are contoured by contemporary political economies, themselves rooted in the history of local and state relations. My concern has been to link changes in material conditions and behavior with the motivating ethos of this particular culture and history.

Granted the very different cultural, political and material worlds in Nepal and US, there is no reason that this general approach couldn't be turned toward research in this country. Instead, scarce work by anthropologists has led to a situation where we know a lot about changes in behavior, attitudes and organizational structures, but very little

about how individual lives tie into larger structures of meaning. If we think provisionally of culture as the underlying frameworks that define our world and motivate us to act in that world, and if we agree that those frameworks vary considerably throughout the world and can vary in one setting across time, then lack of attention to them in 20th century America is a serious oversight.

Resisting the Obvious

Of course, there are anthropologists working in America. And of course, they've been here for a long time. We easily tick off the names of those whose work has been in the US from the start or who have turned to American themes after first fieldwork elsewhere. Yet, it is in spite of these names that most current anthropological work consigns its efforts in North America to the eddies and margins where an identifiable "other" exists or can be manufactured. Anthropological study of the homeless, drug use culture--the outsider defined in terms of location away from the mainstream--is a growth industry. Arcane over-theorization grows like weeds. Each of these areas, including the theory, bears extraordinary importance for our understanding of social and cultural life in the US, but they are justifiable as an extension of anthropology's traditional concern with the exotic. What gets elided is attention to the everyday (maybe even mainstream?) that is a legitimate target of study in any other setting.

A colleague's response to my plans to encourage more research and training in American ethnography eerily recapitulates the more general prejudice. He objected that American ethnography is second rate, that its students wouldn't be taken seriously. I pressed on with my plans and he came around, but only this far: maybe this would be a good thing; students could gain some experience as fieldworkers before doing their "real" dissertation work elsewhere.

These comments are part of the larger orientation away from work at home. In 1989 Orvar Löfgren described the distinctly second class place of such work in American anthropology, the perception of its being fit only for student training or the amusement of aging scholars retired from the real thing. And Micaela di Leonardo suggests that not much has changed in the ensuing decade. Fascination with the exotic holds us in its grip with the outcome that our students are embarrassingly unprepared to consider American subjects and all too ready to make huge generalizations with the thinnest knowledge of American historical, sociological, political and economic literatures.

The paradox is that even partial borrowing of conceptual tools from anthropology has drastically transformed other disciplinary approaches to the culture of American family and work life. John Gillis's work is only one example. At the same time anthropologists have not shied away from examining these same themes with full attention to local history and politics in similarly complex settings. And others outside the US have been richly active in applying the ethnography of daily life to their own societies. Taken together, this work points to the possibilities for a wider research agenda at home. Ignoring it, we run the risk of ceding legitimate anthropological investigation to disciplines lacking our own unique history of engagement with daily life.

Entering the Debate

The promise of anthropology is best realized in its attention to culture, its focus on morally charged categories and practices, and the methodological orientation best designed to uncover these is found in the ethnography of everyday life. But this methodological focus on the concrete and local is both weakness and strength. Can we enter the general debate on work and family transitions without sounding parochial? At U Michigan, we

have begun to develop one of the many possible models for bringing anthropology into this discourse.

With the help of the Alfred P Sloan Foundation, my Michigan colleagues and I are collaborating on a research program designed to link ethnography to that bigger picture. Where too much of the discourse on family and work transitions is couched in the language of social survey and census, these same materials can anchor ethnography and help to initiate its inquiry. At Michigan, we have joined research and training within a single agenda that includes established anthropologists, post-doctoral fellows and new graduate students in a way that will produce a series of related, yet autonomous, ethnographies spanning a range of issues in American work and family transitions.

One aim is to encourage a new generation of scholars to take up American themes where the anthropological voice is least heard. Another is to go beyond the limitations of the isolated anthropologist. Each ethnography, although related to the others, takes a slightly different angle on the work-family connection by, for example, beginning with different dimensions of "family" such as kin beyond the nuclear unit, partner relations, parent and child obligations. Although no single anthropologist can do everything, several at work on related issues can make a larger contribution.

Our research problem has to do with the changing meanings of work and family in American life. In order to speak to a broad region without spreading ourselves too thin, we are locating our first ethnographic projects in communities and work settings throughout the American Midwest. Some will be located in rural communities deeply affected by geographic dislocations related to work. Others will begin in new suburban communities and urban neighborhoods. Others will start within various kinds of

workplace. Their common focus will be on the places where work and family life intersect. Rural communities losing their young people to distant jobs are ideal for studying the conflicting pulls of worklife and relations between generations, suburbs and urban neighborhoods for studying the problems of work and children or the negotiation of obligations between working partners. And the workplaces themselves allow a focus on the mutual accommodations arising in everyday company and family life.

As anchoring devices, we use national surveys and census materials to locate ethnographic sites that typify average conditions for urban, suburban and rural settings along broad categories of age structure, income and ethnic composition. But we go further still. Subsamples from representative surveys by sociologists and economists help frame opening research questions that use the very terms and data parlayed in the national discourse on work and family issues.

These locations and opening questions are orienting devices. They open up and situate our research rather than constrain it. The beauty of ethnography is that wherever it begins, the anthropologist follows people across domains. Research beginning in rural areas will inevitably link up with urban areas through the very family connections grounding the study. In the same way, workplace sites will quickly move to home sites, and questions grounded in the surveys we use for context will lead us to the wider themes left untouched by the original survey.

A Final Note

As social scientists go, cultural anthropologists justly hold the reputation of knowing more about the everyday lives of the people they study than practitioners of any other discipline. Who does the journalist under deadline call for the meaty anecdote to flesh out a story?

Whose lectures in undergraduate classes are renowned for the quality of story, reference to real people, real names, real events in concrete lives? Why do audiences at interdisciplinary professional meetings of demographers or development groups suddenly perk up from the dopey stupor created by endless statistical tables and causal models when the anthropologist takes the microphone? The anthropologist knows best because she was there.

But authority and concreteness derive from much more than the "being there." Anthropology contributes more than anecdote. Its contribution derives from hard preparation for those exotic fieldsites--learning language, reading history, reading literature. Refusal to close boundaries is more than a trick of fieldwork. It should animate our research and engage us in the wider social science and public communities. Anthropologists outside the US often lampoon the carpetbagging character of those social scientists who enter a setting without such preparation. Overseas we freely talk to economists and demographers. And few graduate committees in most departments would consider approving research in another setting without special coursework in area studies that exposes the student to this whole range. Americanist research requires no less preparation and no less engagement.

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Anthropological Demography: Toward a New Synthesis (*with David I Kertzer, 1997*) and "Marriage Change as Moral Change: Culture, Virtue, and Demographic Transition" (*in GW Jones, et al, The Continuing Demographic Transition, 1997*). For an elaboration of some of the themes addressed in his comment, Fricke recommends a look at: John Gillis, *A World of Their Own Making: Myth, Ritual, and the Quest for Family Values, 1996*; Micaela di Leonardo, *Exotics at Home: Anthropologies, Others, American Modernity, 1998*; Marianne Gullestad, *The Art of Social Relations, 1992*.

Relevance through Surveys

By Eleanor Gerber (*US Bureau of the Census*)
Anthropology News, December 1998 (pp 16-17)

At a holiday party several years ago, I had a chance to describe my research to a professor from graduate school, whom I had not seen since starting to work at the Census Bureau in 1992. I described my qualitative research on residence concepts and the revision of the race and Hispanic origin questions for the Year 2000 Census. The professor broke into my account and said, with great surprise, "What you do is actually interesting!" I was less surprised than he. In fact, it has been my experience that many anthropologists have little respect for surveys. Working on surveys, or with survey data, seems to some in our profession to be unanthropological or worse, hopelessly dull.

One does not have to search far for the origins of this attitude. Survey data clearly do not carry the richness of detail available though qualitative techniques. Standardized survey questions occur in a communicative context that does not allow for the negotiation of meaning. In addition, surveys with national samples may not reveal the specific situation of subgroups of particular interest to a researcher. These reasons are all quite valid. Survey researchers will generally agree with these points, although they do not see them as invalidating the usefulness of survey data.

Combining Techniques

These factors may explain the fact that surveys are used mainly in specialized contexts within anthropology. I recently did a literature review of journal articles to evaluate the extent to which ethnography and surveys are used in the same research. (It was necessary to define "survey" relatively broadly in this context. I counted any data collection which asked relatively standardized questions in pretty much the same order as a "survey.") 126

studies were identified which had used some mix of ethnographic and survey techniques between 1987-96. Of these, 99 were in medical or educational anthropology. This pattern was also true of the 77 studies conducted within the US, where 56 were concentrated in the two areas. Since the mixed technique studies are concentrated in medical and educational anthropology, the combination occurs mostly within anthropology. However, it is clearly associated primarily with the two well-established applied fields. It is arguable that surveys are accepted practice in medical and educational anthropology because education and medical research are interdisciplinary endeavors.

Survey researchers from other fields also make some use of ethnography. It serves best as background research, informing the development of survey questions which are understandable to respondents and (relatively) congruent with their concepts. It seems that much of the research done in this context, however, never finds publication in juried journals. My own agency has sponsored quite a bit of ethnographic research, particularly prior to the 1990 census. These ethnographies examined groups which were at risk of undercounting in the decennial census, such as migrant workers and residents of inner city ghettos. Another use to which ethnography is put is to identify and interview otherwise difficult to reach populations, such as illegal immigrants or intravenous drug users.

Most US studies included in the literature review were focused on minority groups (especially Hispanics) and populations considered difficult to reach or at risk in some way. Of the 77 identified studies conducted in the US, 34 were concerned with racial and ethnic

minorities, and an additional 22 were concentrated on the disabled, homeless or poor populations, immigrants and drug users. Thus, it seems clear that anthropologists concerned with mainstream American groups--such as middle class working families--seldom use survey techniques.

Why Use Survey Data

Anthropologists should make use of surveys or survey data in studying the core of American society, not only minority or disadvantaged populations. The underlying reason for this is that a vast amount of survey-derived data describing this society exists. Anthropological work on this society needs to be placed in the context of what is already known, or it will not receive the hearing it deserves.

Anthropologists are relatively used to arguments narrowly framed in terms of "my people"--our small pool of informants. But researchers from other disciplines may not know how to evaluate an anthropological study which focuses on only a small locality or specific group of informants. In my experience, such researchers do not know what to make of findings framed in this way. Their underlying question is whether or not to pay attention to a narrowly focused qualitative description. To decide this, they want to understand how representative a small segment of society is of the wider society or some group in it. Do the described phenomena only affect the people interviewed, or are there others? Is this phenomenon only one aspect of a wider set of events that affect varied people differently? Is it new or is it part of an established historical trend? I have found that the "problem" some practitioners of more statistically-oriented disciplines have with qualitative data is not that they are suspicious of the findings, but that they cannot assimilate data whose representativeness is unknown, and whose generality they cannot judge.

One way to frame the representativeness of anthropological research is to forge connections between the vast body of survey data which exists and the particular description the anthropologist wishes to make. Where anthropological findings are placed in context using survey data based on large national samples, statistically-minded readers can readily see how the qualitative data enhances their understanding. Causes become more clearly rooted in human behavior, and consequences take on a human face. Under these circumstances, anthropological work can get an enthusiastic reception. Kathryn Newman's work on the American middle class is a good example.

Mastering Stat-Speak

Anthropologists often say that they do not understand why their works are not more influential in public spheres. If influencing policy is the issue, then it is even more critical to be aware of existing statistical descriptions of the US. Public issues tend to be framed in terms of the existing body of survey-derived knowledge, and that is the language in which policy debates are often framed. To policy makers, anthropologists may seem to be using a foreign language if they use untranslated analytical categories and terms derived from their own field. If anthropologists want to be effective in communicating with the policy natives, their own methods advise learning the local dialect. It is probably a vain hope to expect native speakers of stat-speak to learn anthropologese.

There is another reason that surveys are important in policy making: the surveys themselves are part of the policy process. Our society is in many ways driven by numbers, and numbers are derived from large governmental data collections. The official unemployment and poverty rates, for example, are taken directly from the Current Population Survey. A researcher who wants to enter

the debate on these issues should know how they are derived, their history and the uses to which they are put. Researchers from other disciplines are sometimes able to take this one step further: they become part of the panels of experts and advisory groups which help to frame, revise and oversee the data collections themselves. They are therefore in a position to influence collection of data which may affect future policy making. Very few anthropologists seem to be included on these panels. This is probably a measure of how little anthropological research is framed in terms of these data or the debates that surround them.

Available Sources

American society may be uniquely self-studying. There are a vast number of surveys conducted by all levels of government, research firms, academic institutions and pollsters. There would not be enough space to review these thoroughly. Since I am familiar with Federal surveys, I will concentrate on those.

The federal government conducts a large number of surveys on a wide variety of topics. It would be impossible to mention all the surveys that the federal government conducts. The Current Population Survey (CPS) is the primary source of information about labor force characteristics of the US population. Additional surveys of potential interest to anthropologists studying American society include:

- Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) focuses on the economic situation of households, and provides data about income sources and participation in the social programs by these households.
- Survey of Program Dynamics (SPD) was recently instituted with the primary aim of providing data to evaluate the effects of welfare reform

legislation.

- American Housing Survey (AHS) provides data about housing characteristics, including housing and neighborhood quality.
- National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) provides data about the nature and prevalence of crime victimization.
- National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) provides general health statistics, including information on doctor visits and hospitalization.

These surveys are carried out by the Census Bureau, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Bureau of Justice Statistics and National Center for Health Statistics. These agencies, and others conducting research, have websites that provide more information about their surveys and describe the specific availability of the data.

Basic data available from the surveys are often supplemented by "topical modules." Topical modules are special surveys designed to be added to the main survey instrument, on topics considered to be of special interest. For example, CPS has fielded topical modules on such topics as displaced workers, job tenure and occupational mobility, school enrollment and work experience. SIPP has fielded topical modules on subjects such as work history, health characteristics (including disability), child care and child support agreements. NHIS has included "current health topics" such as AIDS knowledge and attitudes, health insurance and aging. The availability of these topical modules is usually also described in the survey's or sponsoring agency's website.

Using Survey Data

There are some basic points to be aware of when using these data. First, it is necessary to understand the nature of the sample. These surveys are designed to capture data to fit particular

legislative or program needs, and the sample may reflect that. For example, CPS is primarily an employment survey. As a result, the sample represents the “civilian non-institutional population.” Statistics derived from it therefore do not include anyone in the military or prison.

Second, it is important to be aware of the particular definitions which the survey is using. These definitions may not match other common sense uses of a concept. Good examples are the employment concepts derived from CPS. Employment is defined as having done any work at all for pay or profit, and even a single reported hour of work classifies the respondent as “employed.” To rate as “unemployed,” a respondent who has no job also has to report looking for work during the survey’s one week reference period. As a result the employment rate and unemployment rate are not reciprocal numbers. Data on “discouraged workers” and underemployment exist in the survey, but to find it, it is necessary to look at data derived from responses to other questions. This could be confusing, unless the particular definitions are known.

Third, be aware of the time frame of the data collection. The basic information necessary here is the “reference period” to which the survey directs respondents. Thus, NCVS asks questions about crimes committed against the respondent in the past 6 months. Many of the surveys also contain longitudinal data. They are designed as “panel” surveys, in which the same household or individual is revisited and asked similar questions over a period of months. SIPP households, for example, are visited at 4-month intervals over a period of three years. Thus, changes in circumstances for particular households may become evident over time. In addition, many of these surveys have a long history, and provide data on historical trends. CPS has been conducted for more than 50 years, for example.

It is also necessary to be aware of changes in the data over time. Surveys

are revised from time to time, and somewhat different questions will be asked to provide the same data or create the same measure. For example, questions about race have been asked in the decennial census since 1790, and the question was the same only in two consecutive censuses. Thus, a group in which a researcher is interested may not have been counted in earlier censuses, or may have been aggregated differently in the past. When modern surveys change questions, they sometimes provide what is called a “crosswalk.” That is, the new and old questions are fielded with similar samples at one time, so that statistical differences between them can be discovered.

This article represents the opinion of the author and should not be taken as official Census Bureau Policy. Eleanor Gerber has conducted research for the Census Bureau since 1992. She has conducted qualitative research on residence concepts, racial and ethnic identification, and enumeration of homeless persons in shelters and soup kitchens. In addition, she pretests questionnaires using cognitive interviewing techniques and serves as a trainer for cognitive interviewers.

Dynamics of Status In America

By Walter Goldschmidt (UC Los Angeles)
Anthropology Newsletter, May 1999 (pp 64, 62)

We are all “middle class” so there is no class system. Oh, there are a few patricians in the older parts of the country who make claim to being upper class but they are without power and the scions seem more embarrassed by their circumstance than reveling in it. The markers of a nobility have been erased by mass production. What can “carriage trade” mean in a society where the Rolls has become a symbol of the nouveau riche? There are also many poor, desperate, hopeless people who constitute an underclass. They are largely unseen until they commit some visible crime or rise phoenix-like into public prominence through special talent or sheer hard work and doggedness. Then they become part of the so-called middle class. Americans are probably as status-conscious as any people in the world, but social classes do not exist in America. This seeming paradox is no paradox; the lack of structure is disorienting.

American Dynamics

It is a mistake to examine our society in terms of the static concept of class and the equilibrium of social structure. The essence of the American scene has always been the dynamics of growth and change expressed as individual mobility.

I set forth a dynamic view of society in *The Human Career* (1990), giving process precedence over structure, dynamics over stasis. Culture and the social system are contexts for the growth and development of the individual, whose basic social motivation is for the affective response from others, out of which can be formulated a gratifying sense of self. In the process of enculturation--to use a term that has unfortunately grown out of favor--the infantile desire for love is translated

into the wish to conform to social norms and perform to community expectations.

These expectations, of course, differ from one culture to another. One way they differ is whether people are socialized to give primacy to their own self-interest or to the needs of the group. Our culture comes down heavily on the side of self-interest. Both our social institutions and our cultural attitudes are attuned to individuation and this mitigates against strong commitments to institutions like unions and classes--and even family.

Historical Perspectives

Prior to the French, American and Industrial Revolutions, there were social classes in Europe, often called “estates,” that defined each person’s social position. They were *cultural* categories, *emic* entities. They were units with clear boundaries, which--like all cultural boundaries--could be breached. Remnants of this old system remain in Europe, but not in America. Class was denied in the Declaration of Independence: “We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal . . .” We did have a caste system in the form of slavery, heavily enforced by law, remnants of which remain despite both the Civil War Proclamation and civil rights marches.

Holy writ was supported, as it must be, by ecological conditions. In this instance, by the vast frontier that offered great opportunity to all and made it difficult to keep people in servitude. Except, of course, for the slaves whose visibility, along with draconian measures, deprived most of such opportunity.

With the industrial revolution, class took on new meaning; it shifted from the *emics* of medieval tradition to the *etics* of

Marxian analysis. Classes changed from being cultural reality to being structures in social theory; categories in the conflict over power in the newly emerging technological economy. System follows theory as nature copies art and in Europe the estates became Marxian classes. As manufacturing grew in mid-19th century America, workers (largely recruited from Europe) began to form unions and see themselves as a laboring class. Owners also discovered their unity, and conflict between labor and capital became open and often bloody. Owners had the powerful tool of preventing and breaking strikes with imported immigrant workers--a pattern that has had deep consequences for the nature of American society. Abetted by socialist intellectuals from Eastern Europe, the labor movement (which had earlier been elitist trade unions) began to take on a class character culminating when the AFL and CIO merged during the Great Depression. The unity inspired by World War II and the era of great prosperity that followed dissipated this confrontation and it was then that everybody became "middle class" thereby making class irrelevant.

"Class" in Community Studies

This country's incipient class society existed when anthropology began to pay attention to American social life in the 1930s and a spate of community studies was made. I summarized this development in, "Social Class in America—A Critical Review," (*AA* 1950), complete with a relevant bibliography. In addition, a 1955 special issue of *AA* edited by Margaret Lantis was devoted to an anthropological examination of American culture, "The USA As Anthropologists See It." Impetus for this research program came from the Lynds' sociological study of Muncie, IN, from the "Chicago School" of sociology and from Elton Mayo's studies at the Hawthorne Plant of General Electric. W Lloyd Warner, returning from study of the Murngin, joined Mayo and later inaugurated the most detailed American

community study ever undertaken in Newburyport, MA.

The studies that followed--some under Warner's aegis, some sponsored by the USDA, and others independent of both--focused on values and social class. There are two interesting paradoxes in these studies: first, all describe social classes in the towns, but no two class systems were defined in the same way (the number of classes ranged from two to 9); and second, though all saw classes and most surely had read some Marx, none gave a Marxian spin to their studies. Towns were treated like tribes, self-contained entities representative of regional ("Yankee City") or American culture ("Middletown"), and not as structurally integrated elements of our national society.

I was part of that movement, studying the town of Wasco, CA, in 1940-41. I did not make the "tribal" assumptions--nor did I make a cute fictional name--but saw Wasco as integrated into (and subordinate to) the financial and industrial structure of California and the nation. Later, I compared two California towns to find how large scale operations affected the quality of rural life. An attack on this study from the California power elite gave me my 15 minutes of fame, and in the process validated my thesis of local subordination to the centers of power.

Wasco was a community with local expression of status like those described by others, but attached to it was a labor sector of "Okies," who remained outside Wasco culture and hardly partook of its institutions. This was a social distinction between labor and capital of Marxian class proportions that even had seen bloody strife between them a few years earlier. Yet, I did not see Marxian classes in Wasco because the people did not identify themselves in these terms. It may have been "social reality" but it was not "cultural reality." The Okies were treated as an ethnic minority, complete with "racial" epithets against these blond and

blue-eyed workers. They saw themselves, however poor and badly treated, as a people with their own cultural values. With war-borne prosperity, they successfully strove to advance themselves. Thirty years later, I returned to Bakersfield with Carey McWilliams-- whose *Factories in the Field* had first opened my eyes to the plight of farm labor in California—to an NEH-sponsored session on “Okie culture,” an affirmation of their status as a folk group and not a class.

Ethnic Layering

The “Okies” were re-enacting the central drama of American culture: the dynamics of status advancement. America is an immigrant land. Most of our ancestry came as impoverished workers seeking opportunity and entered the labor market at the bottom. A 1930s study of a New England town describes its ethnic make-up as a kind of layer cake built from the bottom, each group moving up the social ladder as a new impoverished cohort came to do the menial work. This has taken place everywhere throughout the US, including the fields of California.

This in-migration has not been left to chance. Factory owners advertise and induce migration to the US to keep wages low or break strikes. In California, a succession of such carefully nurtured immigrations has followed one another, starting with the Chinese brought in to build the railroads, followed by Japanese, Filipinos, Indians, Mexicans and Okies and back to Mexican *braceros*, Central Americans and now illegal immigrants. Each in succession has moved out of the low-pay, low-status work.

This upward flow, this expectation to rise, this sense of mobility, are all central to the American culture, following the Holy Writ of our origins. It appears in our ethics; in the assumption that “you can be what you want to be,” that “anybody can be president,” that hard work and a proper

attitude will take you to the top. It appeared early in our literature, exemplified by the Horatio Alger stories, eagerly read by immigrants not only for their optimistic uplift, but for their recipes for success.

Social mobility based on character and hard work is written into our institutions as well as our Constitution, our popular sayings and our myths. It lay in the laws favoring settlement on the land, culminating in the Homestead Act and the acreage-limitation law. Although the railroads took great swathes of frontier land, enough remained to set a pattern of small farms across the land--now sadly disappearing. Universal public education was a revolutionary concept that gave the poor newcomers a chance to get a start, while Land Grant Colleges democratized the professions. The highway to success ran through the schoolyards. Education is a ritual affirmation of American social mobility just as surely as Maasai initiations are ritual support for age-sets. Less known is the fact that Rural Free Delivery gave a boost to Sears and Montgomery Ward and began to bring the farmer and villager into the mainstream of our consumer society. The Agricultural Extension Service finished that job.

Any social scenario needs proper ecological conditions; for a society of achievers it needed available opportunity. This was originally provided by the vast frontier that could absorb millions of immigrants. The physical frontier--officially closed a century ago--has been replaced by a technological frontier with an ever-increasing productivity. This economic growth is so deeply ingrained in our culture that the high priests of our fiscal system manipulate the economy so as to preserve a 2-3% annual growth in productivity to preserve our social mobility. The current fear that the coming generation will have a lower standard of living than that of their parents is like the Hopi anxiety when the rains fail despite the Kachina Dances: Who sinned? Have the priests failed us?

Status Anxiety

We cannot understand the domestic ménage without seeing it in relation to the demands of status advancement. It is at base supported by a salary, and nowadays by two salaries. A salary is measure of standing, a finely calibrated status ladder. This income is less and less for the necessities of life and increasingly for the myriad of status markers defining both cultural taste and social standing. As every parent knows, avid merchandising has drawn our children into these expressions of belonging and prestige.

The absence of class evokes status anxiety and this anxiety is passed on to the children. The universal immigrants' hope for their children is that they will not have to suffer the same hardships; will have it better. This wish is often raised to the more specific desire for the child to become what the parent had dreamt to be. So the child is pressured to perform--academics, sports, looks, whatever--intensifying his anxiety over performance and feeling of rivalry with siblings and classmates. Schools are arenas for such performance and competition, handing out grades and honors to distinguish the (culturally defined) virtuous from the ordinary, making comparison a way of life. Children who have internalized these values find they have high status in school; those who have not often become disillusioned and alienated.

This is the motor that drives the American pattern of status dynamics. Some ethnic groups are pre-adapted to this competitive spirit and individuated behavior better than others and therefore are more "successful." The establishment often condemns the successful ones "for being too pushy" and the others "for just not trying!" But never mind, when their children succeed, they will make similar remarks about those who follow.

As anthropologists, however, we stay above such judgmental attitudes and so note that this competitiveness has its

down side. The conflict over the demand for success expressed in the novels of third-generation Jewish authors is reflected by the third-generation Chinese novelist Amy Tan. So also is the sense of loss of family solidarity that follows from emphasis on personal advancement.

Many sociological and psychological studies have shown the social costs of our vaunted achievement orientation, but I'll settle for a front page story in the *Los Angeles Times* (September 15, 1998) citing a report in the *Archives of General Psychiatry*. Newly-immigrated Mexicans have about half as many psychiatric disorders as US-born Mexican Americans, it reported, explaining the phenomenon as "clearly a social effect, not a biological one." One interviewee said that America "is the land of opportunity, but it's not good for children."

These remarks are intended to show how a dynamic view of social life--a view that considers growth, change, action and process--illuminates the nature of the American scene far better than one that places its emphasis on structure and stasis, especially when the structure is analytical and not in the culture. That is why I find it counter-productive to focus discussion the American "middle class."

Walter Goldschmidt is Professor Emeritus of Anthropology at UCLA. For background on his California studies, see the reissue of, As You Sow: Three Studies in the Social Consequences of Agribusiness, 1978.

Relinquishing Care

By Lisa Groger (Miami U)
Anthropology Newsletter, March 1999 (pp)

The good news is that more people live longer than ever before. The oldest-old are the fastest growing segment of the older population. And herein lies the less good news: the longer one lives, the more likely one is to experience physical impairments. In 1989, 58% of those age 85 and older had some difficulty with activities of daily living; 87% of them actually received help. Most of these elders live in the community, supported by unpaid family care.

What About Race?

Life expectancies, disability trends and caregiving patterns vary by gender, race and social class. Until recently, much of the gerontological literature devoted to disentangling the effects of these "independent variables" was based on large-scale quantitative racial comparisons that ignored intra-group variations. The result was a largely stereotypical depiction of *the* African American family as more nurturing, more willing to bear the burden of caregiving, and more reluctant to seek formal care than their white counterpart. The myth of African Americans' avoidance of nursing homes has persisted despite growing evidence that African American families are as heterogeneous in their ability to provide care as are other racial groups. African American working and middle class families face the same challenges as do white families. All are subject to the same demographic and economic realities which set limits to kin care, and eventually make nursing home placement an appropriate and acceptable option when the need for care exceeds the ability of families to provide adequate care at home.

Our examination of state-wide data reveals that in Ohio African American

elders are actually more likely than whites to use nursing homes.

Tell Us Your Story

I was Principal Investigator of a study that explored African Americans' ideas about filial obligations and their preferences and choices for long-term care. We conducted 8 focus groups with different age groups, and collected ethnographic interviews from 60 care recipients and caregivers, in three care settings (kin care, in-home-services and nursing home care) about their experiences receiving and providing care. Elders varied greatly in their availability of informal support, which ranged from unwavering and total support from many children, or no support whatsoever, to exploitation by their own children. The following story echoes the struggle of many of our participants to avoid or postpone nursing home placement, and their acceptance of it as a last resort.

Pain of Relinquishing Care

Sylvia, age 50, has worked for the IRS for 29 years and expects to retire in 5 years. She intends to go back to school, cashing in on a deal she made with her son who agreed that he would help her finish college because she helped him become an electrical engineer. In the meantime, Sylvia has a second full-time job which is much more taxing than her work for the IRS: she takes care of her 79-year old mother who suffers from Alzheimer's disease. Sylvia checks on her mother by phone several times during the day; runs by in the evening to do chores for her; takes her to stores, medical visits and visits with friends. To do all this, Sylvia gave up two part-time jobs she had taken to save money for a down-payment on a house.

Sylvia has taken care of her mother for three years. She has visited a number of nursing homes, interviewed staff and chosen two facilities where her mother is on a waiting list. She feels that a nursing home would be the only place her mother would be completely safe. But her mother refuses to sign the papers. Sylvia is torn about the decision: she has already turned down one opportunity, and she thinks that when the next bed becomes available, she may well turn it down again because she believes one should take care of one's elders. In the meantime she lives the nightmare of imagining what might happen to her mother.

Trajectories to the Nursing Home

Cultural preferences notwithstanding, nursing home residents in our study had reached "that place" where their needs exceeded the capacity of kin care or in-home services. Their realistic choices had narrowed to a point that preferences had become irrelevant or inoperable. Although nursing home residents as a group were older, more impaired and had thinner informal support than elders in the other two settings, and in that sense resembled each other, they differed in their reasons and pathways for reaching "that place" and in their reaction to living in a nursing home. Initially, most residents disliked being in the nursing home, but they eventually accepted and adapted to institutional living. For some residents and their families, the nursing home became a "partner in caring" and allowed family members to step up their efforts to provide care. After prolonged and escalating struggles to provide kin care, timely and appropriate institutionalization restored care givers' peace of mind. It improved elders' sense of security, competence and well-being; and for some, it was a refuge from unsatisfactory kin care.

Through ethnographic interviews we discovered processes not captured by surveys that are the mainstay of gerontological research: families'

struggle with--and adaptation to--the declining health of elders; their unrelenting care-giving efforts; their ultimate failure to continue as primary care givers; their feelings of guilt about having failed in their filial obligation; and their acceptance of institutionalization as a last resort.

The assumption that African Americans reject nursing homes is inaccurate and counterproductive to working and middle class families' search for appropriate care settings for elders whose care needs could best be met in a nursing home. African American families need not be reminded of their filial obligations; they need not be told that, as a group, they appear to reject nursing homes. What they need is assistance with exploring all possible options, guidance in anticipating scenarios that are likely to lead to nursing home placement, help with planning for increasing care needs and referral to such programs.

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Time for Families

By Sara Harkness (U Connecticut, Storrs)
Anthropology Newsletter, November 1998, (pp 1, 4)

It's 7:30 AM, and Jane, a three-year-old girl living with her family in a suburb of Boston, gets up to have breakfast with her mother and little brother. Daddy has already left for work, but her mother, a part-time social worker, has planned a special day to make the most of her time at home with the children. After breakfast, they pile in the car and drive into town, where, after dropping little brother at his babysitter's, they meet another mother and her three-year-old at a theater to watch a performance of *Pinocchio*. After the show, the two mothers and daughters go to McDonald's for lunch, they then part company and Jane goes with her mother to do some shopping at Sears. After picking up Jane's little brother, it's home again, where Jane plays by herself in the back yard while her mother does housework. Then it's time to leave again, this time for a swimming class at the town pool. After coming home at the end of the afternoon, Jane watches *Sesame Street* on TV, then eats supper in her parents' bedroom while watching her mother fold laundry. Daddy gets home at 7:30, in time to read Jane a story and tuck her into bed at 8:15.

On the other side of the Atlantic, in the Dutch town of "Bloemenheim," another three-year-old girl has also gotten up. Marja's day begins with a shower with Daddy at 7:00, followed by family breakfast with mother, father and her older sister (age 7) and brother (5). By 8:15, Marja's sister has left for school. It's just a 5-minute bicycle ride away, but today Mother will take the car rather than haul the two younger children along, as Marja's brother is staying home with a cold. Marja plays at counting pennies in her savings bank in the living-room and then goes out a bit to ride her bike in the child-safe streets of the neighborhood. The morning ends, and it's time to go

back to the school to pick up Marja's big sister, along with a neighbor child who will spend the afternoon at their home. After lunch with Mother, siblings and the neighbor child, Mother takes Marja at 1:00 to the "Children's Playroom," a nursery school where young children go for a couple hours twice a week to get used to being in a group outside home. Mother comes back at 3:00 to pick up Marja from her play school and her sister from school, then it's time for a snack together at home. By 4:00, Marja is outside riding her bike with other children in the neighborhood. At 5:30, Daddy arrives home on his bike from his job as a chemist at a nearby paint factory, and the children play together in the living room while the parents prepare dinner. At 6:00 the family sits down to eat together, then Daddy gets Marja ready for bed. By 6:50, Marja is tucked in and off to sleep.

Child's Developmental Niche

These chronicles of two middle-class children's days, taken from actual diaries kept by their parents, tell stories richly laden with cultural meanings. In each setting, the culturally structured "developmental niche" of the child is organized to help the child learn to be a competent member of her culture. In the theoretical approach learned as a graduate student from the Whittings, the child's environment is shaped primarily by the "maintenance systems" of the culture, including such things as parental employment, settlement patterns, and most immediately, mother's workload. Applying that approach to the analysis of Jane and Marja's days, however, would leave some questions unanswered. Why does Jane's mother take her to two special events away from home, while Marja's day is spent entirely in the familiar settings of home, neighborhood and pre-

school? Why does Marja's family eat three meals plus a snack together, whereas Jane's family has no meals together as a family? Why does Marja go to bed so much earlier than Jane? To address such questions, we need to consider not only the external constraints of the social and physical worlds that families inhabit, but also the culturally shared ideas that direct parents' interactions with their children and organize their daily lives. These cultural belief systems--or parental ethnotheories--are the focus of our cross-cultural research with middle-class families with young children in the US and 6 other Western societies: The Netherlands, Sweden, Poland, Spain, Italy and Australia. Funded by the Spencer Foundation, the research is a collaborative project with co-investigator Charles Super and an international team of researchers including Barbara Welles-Nyström, Andrzej Elias, Jesus Palacios, Giovanna Axia and the late Harry McGurk.

The Case Of Infant Sleep

As we have learned more about parents, their perceptions of their children, their hopes and concerns, it is becoming increasingly apparent that much of family life in any cultural setting can be understood with reference to a rather small number of cultural models. These cultural models are largely implicit representations of the nature of the child, and are related to more general cultural models of the family and the self. Their influence is pervasive across a wide range of issues that challenge parents of young children. Interpretation and management of infant sleep is a case in point. From our research with a sample of middle-class parents in the Boston area in the 1980s, we learned that getting babies and young children to go to sleep without difficulty and to match their sleep routines to the needs of their parents was a difficult issue - in fact, our interviews showed that it was the topic on which parents most frequently sought advice from pediatricians, relatives, friends and books. Parents would often describe problems

with their child's sleep in vivid terms, as in the following example taken from an interview with parents of a one-year-old boy:

Mother: He wakes up a couple times a night, did it right from the start. I kept waiting for him to start sleeping through the night. Ever since he was born, he was up most of the night as a brand new baby, and then he was up like 4 times a night, going to bed at 7:30 and he'd be up at 11:00 and he'd be up at 1:00, 3:00, 5:00. So the doctor said to let him cry. That was effective when we could stand it, but both of us - it drives us crazy. He could cry for 45 minutes. There were nights when he would not cry, but scream and shriek for 45 minutes.

Father: I know that you should just wait it out, but it's 3:00 in the morning and you know you've got to get up at 6:15.

Mother: And to know that he would go right back to sleep like that [snaps fingers] in our bed.

Father: It's a tough call.

Mother: Now usually he wakes up around 4:30 and he's hanging onto the headboard, jumping up and down. So finally at 5:00 I get up.

Interviewer: What do you do with him?

Father: We both have different strategies. She'll put him in the walker down here and I generally put him in the playpen and try to keep him somewhat entertained, either by the TV or he loves the stereo. He loves music. If he's crying and he sees me going for the stereo, he'll stop crying and start to laugh in anticipation of the music.

Even when he was a tiny baby, one night at 3:30 we discovered a particular song that would calm him down.

Mother: It was a psalm. We wondered if it was some divine intervention.

Several themes in these parents' talk about their child's sleep are ones that we heard frequently from American parents: the idea of innate characteristics as producers of sleep problems and the expectation that the child would outgrow it in the near future, the search for short-term solutions, problems with the standard advice given by the pediatrician, and the stress that the child's sleep patterns created in the parents' own lives. All these themes would probably seem natural to most American parents: after all, how could one think and respond otherwise?

For parents in some of our other cultural samples, however, these parents' problems would seem unnecessary, even puzzling. In our middle-class Swedish sample, for example, having the child sleep in the parents' bed was a normative practice that was carried on to much older ages than many American parents would be willing to consider. For these parents, it would not be "a tough call" what to do when a young child cried in the middle of the night. For the Dutch parents we studied, there also seemed to be few "tough calls" because the whole issue of infant sleep was managed quite differently. As the Bloemenheim parents explained to us, establishing a regular, restful daytime schedule and ensuring that the child got plenty of sleep was really at the core of good parenting. This philosophy, known as the "three R's" of child rearing (for Rust, Regelmaat and Reinheid, or Rest, Regularity and Cleanliness), was evident in parents' behavior with their children and development of sleep patterns from early infancy.

Diaries parents kept on their children's daily schedules show that at 6

months of age, Bloemenheim babies were sleeping on average 2 hours more during each 24-hour daily cycle, and their nighttime sleep was 1 hour longer than the American sample. Bedtime was also earlier and more consistent, both for individual children and across the sample. Differences between the samples became somewhat smaller with age, but were still statistically significant for children 4-5 years old.

When I presented these findings at the 1995 meeting of the American Association for Advancement of Science (in a session on "Ethnopediatrics"), the ensuing publicity made it immediately clear that sleep issues are a "hot topic" for parents in the US and worldwide. Suddenly, our research was being reported by newspapers, radio, TV and even in the comic strips. What seemed to generate the most interest was the cross-cultural insight that perhaps American middle-class parents contribute to this problem by creating over-stimulating, irregular daytime schedules that leave babies and young children so "jazzed up" that they have a hard time getting to sleep and sleeping through the night. Insight from our cross-cultural research resonated with an increasing chorus of testimony about the excessive demands of today's lifestyles in America, a problem that particularly affects middle-class working families because they are trying to carry out many agendas at the same time.

Cultural Models and Stress

So, what are these multiple agendas of American middle-class working families? From an anthropological perspective, they are cultural models relating to children and the family, the building blocks of parental ethnotheories. Such cultural models are not just representations of the way things are, but more importantly, what they ought to be. In other words, cultural models relating to the self--of which parental ethnotheories are a prime example--have strong motivating properties, both in instigating

one's own actions and in evaluating the results. For American families facing multiple demands from the external environment and attempting to fulfill a variety of culturally shared cultural ideals of child rearing and the family, parental ethnotheories play a central role in the generation of stress.

Our research suggests that this can happen in several ways. First, a cultural model may be difficult to instantiate satisfactorily because of conflicts with parents' other non-family obligations. The rise of the American concept of "special time," for example, represents an attempt to deal with the conflict between the cultural idea that parents should be available and responsive to the needs of their young children, and the reality of time constraints for working parents. Ironically, the idea of special time seems to have become so dominant that some parents seem to feel that all time with their children should be special, thus creating even more stress.

Secondly, families may experience stress when time constraints force a choice between two cultural models. For example, we have found American parents to be much more concerned with their children's intelligence and the development of individual potential than are the European and Australian parents.

American families are also concerned about the quality of family life together, however. Given the time constraints of working middle-class families, many activities designed to promote children's individual development and achievement now come into direct conflict with family time. The result, as we have seen from diaries kept by the parents in our US samples, is that family time must often take second place, while the parents organize themselves around taking their children to various.

In a third cause of stress, parents may also instantiate a cultural model but at the expense of the child's well-being, as when young children are kept up late for their

parents to have a chance to spend quality time with them after returning home from the day's activities. Finally, there may be an inherent conflict between the instantiation of various important cultural models, in the sense that their instantiation produces contradictory developmental effects. We suggest, for example, that American babies' sleep problems are caused in part by a conflict between parents' beliefs that children should be entertained with novelty and excitement during the day, and the expectation that they should be self-regulated and calm at night.

Transition To School

Parental ethnotheories play a key role not only in the organization of life at home, but also in such areas as school. In all samples of our international study, parental ethnotheories of children's behavior and development are instrumental in building parent-child routines that contribute to the child's successful transition to school. Our research also suggests that there is a high level of agreement between middle-class parents and teachers in each sample - higher, for example, than among teachers in the different cultural groups. This finding is interesting given the considerable cross-cultural variation in parental beliefs and practices. There are apparently various routes to successful development at home and school for children, although each has its trade-offs. The American focus on stimulation of intellectual development and individual achievement, for example, can generate a culturally valued sense of excitement and mastery, but it may also provide a reason for American parents and teachers to worry more about children's self-esteem than is the case in other cultural samples.

As the cultural core of American society today, middle-class working families are the leading creators of parental ethnotheories that motivate, shape and evaluate parenting practices. A cross-cultural anthropological approach,

including multiple methods for studying ideas and behavior, is essential for understanding these cultural models and in so doing, achieving one of anthropology's central missions: to understand ourselves better.

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Public Life, Public Good

By Dorothy Holland, Catherine Lutz and Don Nonini (UNC Chapel Hill)
Anthropology Newsletter, March 1999 (pp 1, 4)

For the past 30 years, the US has been undergoing considerable social change due to economic restructuring associated with the rise of globalization and post-Fordism. These changes have dislodged familiar material and symbolic conditions for American middle class life and have tested middle class commitments to the public good. With economic restructuring, middle class families have seen the wife and mother of the family enter the labor force in greater numbers; they have participated in new forms of work--especially contingency or "temp" work--that make underemployment and often unemployment an enduring reality for many; and they have become so suburbanized that long commutes are the rule. At the same time, divorce, changing forms of relationship (such as cohabitation) and structures of intimacy and authority have reshaped many families.

Downsizing government has resulted in the "rollback" of public services and privatization of government responsibilities, and led to a shrinking "social safety net" with widespread impact on members of the middle class with disabilities or without medical insurance. Changing models of how public and private institutions should "partner" have drastically changed health care institutions and even threaten to reshape public schools. The divide between the haves and have-nots is growing, leaving many middle class people anxious lest they or their children fall on the losing side of the divide. For some, increasing diversity has challenged the white middle class sense of entitlement to a certain set of race and ethnic groups.

We discovered some of the effects of this restructuring on the middle class and

its approach to the public sphere while working on a comparative, collaborative study in North Carolina. Funded by the National Science Foundation, we worked with Enrique Murillo, Lesley Bartlett, Thad Gulbrandsen, Marla Frederick and Kim Allen on five sites to compare the impact of restructuring on communities, changing conceptions of the public good and participation in public spheres.

Labyrinth of Images

Members of the American middle class are trapped inside a labyrinth of images of what the "middle class" is-- images of their own making and images circulated and shaped by the mass media. There is the "comfortable" middle class formed by the mutual fund shareholders of booming 1990s Wall Street, but supposedly ready to look out only after Number One, plus kith and kin. There is the garrisoned middle class, fearful of "crime"--though putatively not its perpetrators--and supportive of policies that have skyrocketed incarceration rates. There is the small entrepreneurial middle class, celebrated as the "backbone" of the American economy--shoe repair shopowners, owners of corner drug stores and Mom-and-Pop home-based Internet enterprises. There is the consuming middle class defined by advertisers who target it for its capacity to consume Sports Utility Vehicles, Walt Disney vacations and Nike shoes. There is the middle class represented by the self-abnegating soccer Mom, who fortifies the family internally by her self-sacrifice. There is the image of the middle-level manager of a Fortune 500 corporation--whose stock is shooting skyward as thousands of its employees are laid off--who wonders publicly whether he's next. And, from a distinctive media sector, there is the middle class disgusted by the "immorality" of the President.

Consistent with the mythic view of the nation as one epitomized by “ordinary citizens,” the category middle class often has more moral than economic connotations. The middle class consists in those who live a “normal” life in heterosexual families with one or two children, one or two cars, and one or two pets. North Carolinians who spoke with us use “middle class” to talk about those who are the core of a community's stable social and economic life (the rich and poor come and go), or to talk about those who are not in more exotic or suspect categories: for example, good old boys, on the one hand, or university people, on the other. The category also sometimes repels people or makes them angry when it is misused. Thus, those who are one dollar beyond poor but call themselves middle class angered one man (identifying with the working class) who said he wished that they would retain a common identity and cause with other suffering people at the bottom of the heap.

Given this variety of cultural images of the middle class, many find themselves in a state of anxiety over their own representation. The class's identity can be called into question in another way as well. Whereas the vast majority of Americans claim to be middle class, many are aware of the downward mobility described by analysts as a statistically “shrinking middle class” in an “hourglass” squeeze. Those doing well in hi tech and “knowledge worker” fields may not be as concerned about income and perceived job security. They may have little anxiety about maintaining a middle class lifestyle and passing it on to their children. Yet, even the well-off pay a price for the rising level of consumption that defines being middle class: long work hours, geographical uprooting, childcare difficulties with two wage-earner parents and sacrificing “home” time to long commutes. Whether they see themselves as better off, most are aware of others like them who have been adversely affected by the capricious processes of economic restructuring. Who's in and who's out of

the middle class, therefore, becomes a major source of anxiety.

Fate of the Public Good

These economic challenges and varied uses of the term middle class intersect with politics in several ways. First, the norm of the middle class also includes the idea that these people are more central than most to the enactment of civic virtue, or the making of a common good or the public sphere. They possess the key elements believed to go into that work--an education that allows them to think and speak well, a moral compass that can stand in for that of the whole society, and both time and money. The middle class, unmarked, is also racially specific in much discourse, like the category American, as Brackette Williams has pointed out; one must specify “the black middle class” to signify otherwise.

Somewhat paradoxically, the middle class in recent years has been decried as politically apathetic. Contests over public resources--particularly environmental resources, land uses and education--however, run counter to these attributions of political apathy. We observed that many citizens and groups have worked to secure their versions of the public good. In the case of “Citizens Unite,” residents of a local valley designated as the future site of an asphalt plant devoted tremendous energy and time to organizing against the plant and for tougher regulations to protect their county's air quality. In the “Durham Inner Village” case, a group of well-heeled citizens worked through public/private partnerships to renovate a section of downtown Durham. They envisioned how the area might be converted from an unsafe, useless hangout for alcoholics, into an inner village--a park, ringed by new homes and chic shops busy with strolling consumers and resident families. Although they do not stand to profit financially from the development project, members of this group were excited to be

movers in the “revitalization” of Durham. They were enthused by their own vision--nurtured by the new urbanism movement--of what the city could be.

Barriers to Participation

Constructions of the public-minded citizen leave out the probability that concepts of appropriate citizenship and the public good are class- and race-marked. The active groups we studied differed by the class, race and other social locations that shaped the imaginations of their members. “New social movements” that inspired Citizens Unite and Durham Inner Village provide decidedly middle class and white views of the public good. Mainstream environmentalism and new urbanism scarcely acknowledge fellow citizens of lesser means and the groups we studied made few or relatively futile gestures to include racially diverse members. Unlike working class groups, their visions leave to their own devices those who stand first in line to lose their jobs, fall below the poverty line, lose their health insurance, or find a landfill or asphalt plant located next door.

Many observers of American life have noted that Americans mobilize themselves to go beyond their private lives only under special circumstances--habitual “activists” are a small percentage of the American public. Compared with other nations, Americans are less likely to make connections between their private worlds and public ones. They are more likely, for example, to see their personal well-being changing independently from societal well-being. They can argue that the country is sliding rapidly downhill while still seeing their own life on the upswing, or they can ignore the role of the GI Bill or other public subsidies--the mortgage interest tax deduction, for example---as a factor which has facilitated their move into the middle class.

Constructions of the middle class and politics also ignore barriers to democratic

participation. Our interviews with citizens across our research sites turned up such obstacles. Active or not, everyone spoke of obstacles to living the ideals of democratic life. Things that discourage them from trying to effect change were quite predictable: Not enough time; not enough money; boring meetings; fear of offending others or simply being the object of others' gaze; and the “dirty” or even repulsive reputation of politics, which includes the perception that the fix is already in by the time “the public” is consulted. More serious are the silencing effects of the social distinctions of class and race. One woman never went to town meetings because “when you get in there, and whenever you say something, they look at you like ‘What are you doing? You ain't supposed to say nothing. Don't say nothing.’”

Some of the barriers to entering and remaking the public sphere relate to economic restructuring in ways that people recognize. On an impassioned roll, one woman commented:

“I think that the past 20 years of income stagnation, which is, for me, and for us, really led to a situation where both my spouse and myself have to work full time in order to have a reasonable standard of living. I think that that very fact has seriously served to squelch the kind of the level of community involvement that's possible for people. And in paranoid moments, I wonder if that was intentional, that that was the plan all along, to make sure that we're all working like dogs so that nobody has the time or the energy to translate their vision into reality, except the people with a lot more money than most of us have.”

Why Choices Matter

Relatively new conditions of jobs and work define the day-to-day context in which middle class families are both remaking what it means to be middle class and shaping American society for the 21st century. It is yet unclear which sources of

identity and meaning middle class people will choose to relate their family to the public good. Familiar cultural models and values of the middle class--the American Dream, forms of femininity and masculinity, (putative) comfort with difference, self-definition by work--have no guarantee of durability at the turn of the century. Greater absorption in consumer culture--self-definition by things--is a possibility for the "new" middle class; so, too, is a preoccupation with reproducing class standing or white privilege and thwarting perceived threats to middle class cultural capital. However much at odds it may seem to the investments of "class privilege," there is substantial middle class involvement in one or more of the new social movements.

Whatever source of identity and meaning will predominate, middle class families are developing personal and collective political orientations that are shaping the course of the country. It matters to the social texture of American society whether these families respond to recent social change by retreating into walled communities or to a narrower sense of their community of reference. It matters to the environment whether these families remain enmeshed in a growing spiral of consumption. It matters to children whether their parents can manage work, nurture them and at the same time connect them to a broader community. As the principal public of concern to politicians and corporations, the middle class will figure prominently--and sometimes loudly--in debates over immigration, interpretations of, and remedies for, social inequality and the possible demise of America's public school tradition.

Rather than resorting to conventional methods of survey research and qualitative analyses which constitute the bulk of studies on the middle class, we think that these issues of the future demand more ethnography and more innovative ethnography.

Dorothy Holland, Catherine Lutz and Donald Nonini teach at UNC-Chapel Hill. Along with graduate students funded by the NSF grant, "Estrangement from the Public Sphere: Economic Change, Democracy and Social Division in North Carolina," they are writing a book tentatively entitled, "Downsizing Democracy." Nonini is the author of British Colonial Rule and Malay Peasant Resistance, 1900-1957 (1992) and co-editor (with Aihwa Ong) of Ungrounded Empires: The Cultural Politics of Modern Chinese Transnationalism (1997). Lutz is author of Unnatural Emotions (1988), co-author (with Jane Collins) of Reading National Geographic (1993) and author of a work in progress entitled "War's Wages." Holland is Chair of the Department of Anthropology at UNC-CH. Along with co-authors, she has just published Identity and Agency in Cultural Worlds (1999), and is completing a second NSF-funded project, "Identity and Environmental Action: The US Environmental Movement."

Pillars of the Middle Class Community

By Madelyn Iris (Northwestern)
Anthropology Newsletter, February 1999 (p 18)

Joseph Ragsdell Sr, 83, an appliance repairman who worked two full-time jobs much of his life so he could support his children as well as the nieces and nephews he raised for a sister died Sunday....[He] taught Sunday School for more than 40 years. Mr. Ragsdell cared for his parents when they were alive and when a sister died, raised her 9 children along with his own 9, said a daughter....' He would walk 3 or 4 miles to work so he could take his bus fare and buy his children candy.

Though brief, Mr Ragsdell's obituary hinted at a life rich with relationships, filled with contribution and indicative of the sustaining role African American elders have played in the evolving life of the family. I didn't know him, but his life exemplifies the values and characteristics of a lifestyle repeatedly encountered in life stories of the older adults who participated in my study of aging in Chicago.

Historical and Cultural Artifacts

In a city like Chicago, which has undergone profound demographic shifts over the last half century, the older adult population represents an historical and cultural artifact of middle class working life. Although older adults represented less than 10% of the population only 20-30 years ago, conservative estimates predict that by 2050 more than 20% of the US population will be over age 65. In urban centers, the greatest growth will likely be among African American and Spanish-speaking elders. Although impressive, these numbers mask the extreme diversity found within the older population, and obscure the rich complexity of life and experience elders embody. As parents and grandparents, American elders have helped shape the values and lifestyles of today's middle class working families,

and in many instances still make direct and important contributions to the maintenance and functioning of these families.

In 1990 the Chicago Community Trust, a major philanthropy, examined its funding priorities for older adult programs. The Qualitative Study of Aging in Chicago, part of the multi-disciplinary Aging in Chicago Project, was an ethnographic study of older adults living in 5 distinct communities in the greater Chicago area. As project director, I worked with a team of interviewers to collect 256 interviews from 50 participants (aged 55-91), exploring their life histories, social and family networks, health histories and beliefs about health and aging, and their unique philosophies about aging. We focused on change across time in each of these domains, and especially on the reciprocal relationships linking older adults to their communities.

Urban Pioneers

A remarkable picture of how older family members continue to thrive within their communities emerged from our study, illuminating the many ways elders provide a "buffer" of stability for their children and grandchildren, their neighborhoods and larger community institutions, such as schools and churches. Stories told by 10 of our African American consultants were especially enlightening. These narratives not only gave life and reality to the statistics documenting demographic shifts, they provided in depth understanding of how family life has developed and changed in inner city environments. While most of these men and women were not what we would call "middle class" in terms of occupations or incomes, their values, lifestyles and attitudes place them solidly

within a middle class zone of aspirations. Almost all owned their own homes and over half had sent their children through college, although they themselves generally had only 8-12 years of education.

As William Julius Wilson points out (*The Truly Disadvantaged*, 1987), until recently, distinctions between middle and working class African Americans in inner city settings were blurred: professionals and factory workers lived side by side, restricted to particular neighborhoods and occupations by covertly institutionalized racial discrimination. Many of the African American men and women we interviewed illustrate this experience. Most lived in a south-side community in Chicago notorious for its high levels of poverty, crime and family instability. We chose this community specifically to interview lower and poverty level income elderly. Thus we were surprised by our participants' stories about lives filled with work, family and service to community. Almost all represented two-parent working families, who balanced work and family responsibilities long before such a life-style became popularized as a distinctly middle class phenomenon.

While some worked to meet basic needs, many whom we interviewed sought to enhance their incomes to achieve a higher standard of living--particularly home ownership--educational opportunities for their children and recreational outlets such as travel. They related their experiences as "urban pioneers," for these elderly African-Americans were among those residents who moved to this community in the late 1950s through the 1960s, when it was still largely populated by white, working and middle class families. Despite the prejudice and harassment many encountered, they sought a more stable neighborhood in which to buy their homes and raise their families. They were attracted by the tree-lined streets, solid brick bungalows and two-flats, and the

neighborhood's safe streets, parks, schools and churches.

Little of this stable neighborhood remained at the time of our interviews. Many neighborhood streets were lined with abandoned properties, claimed by drug dealers and gangs, and parks were too dangerous to visit. Their own college-educated children had relocated to better neighborhoods, often in the suburbs, in keeping with their rising status as middle class professionals and white-collar workers. The elders we interviewed told us of feeling "stuck" in their communities--yet still committed to them--and described their participation in block clubs, local school councils and police district advisory committees, and churches.

Assets to Community Life

Contrary to persistent mythology, many middle class, working families are not "stand alone" systems. Parents and grandparents are considered important family members and are often direct contributors to family resources. They represent assets, not drains, on community life. The African American elders we interviewed fulfill important roles within their family systems, providing material and non-material support: they may support their children's financial and family stability, contribute to the education of grandchildren and assist with childcare. They also strive to maintain their own financial stability and independence, to ensure they will not become burdens to their children. Without them, their families and communities would lack the foundational bedrock on which they stand. These elders are indispensable to their social networks and life-styles they have engendered. To truly understand the issues and challenges now facing middle class working families in America, we cannot ignore their extended connections with older family members who created the very networks and webs of relationships from which these younger individuals have emerged.

Anthropology's focus on changing social structures, household and kin relations and functions, and particularly on the meanings of these across time and space, should not neglect the place of elders in their family networks. The elderly do not constitute a disjunctive, non-productive or non-functional sector of American life: rather, they are important players in the evolving dynamic of a multicultural society.

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"Others" Among Us

By Michael Jindra (*Bethany Lutheran C*)
Anthropology Newsletter, December 1998 (pp 56, 54)

Why have anthropologists virtually overlooked the influences of such major social phenomena as the middle class and working families? I am convinced that part of the reason is the social and cultural distance between anthropologists and middle class culture. Whereas most of us would put ourselves in the middle class, our values, ideas and lifestyles tend to be significantly different from most of the middle class. There is a major gap between our own social position and that of the American public.

Few anthropologists seem to be able to comment on middle class Americans without being flippant, dismissive and arrogant, an attitude that simply does not pass for legitimate engagement in the public sphere. Because anthropologists tend to be alienated from much of middle and working class cultures, these groups are an "other" for us and deserve to be treated with the same respect that we give the far-flung subjects of conventional anthropological study. There is a significant gap between traditional peoples worldwide, who tend to be socially conservative and religious, and anthropologists, who tend to be secular and individualist. While appreciating "traditional knowledge" in other cultures, we tend to deride it in our own. As a result, we are most distanced and alienated from our own culture. Anyone viewing this situation from afar would have to conclude that it is the anthropologists who should be studied, since it is their beliefs and practices that are most puzzling!

Dearth of Centrists

In a recent *Newsweek* column, George Will accused Richard Rorty of "loathing for the real America" (May 25, 1998). Whatever the accuracy of Will's

statement, it does indicate a public relations problem for the left. Most of the "public" scholars who have been taken seriously by the media (Robert Bellah and Amitai Etzioni, for example) come from a position closer to the political center than most academics. Anthropology's irrelevance comes about largely because of our failure to produce centrist scholars who can write critically about and for the public.

Many of us are probably puzzled by such huge middle class cultures and phenomena as country music and stock car racing, or the popularity of evangelical Christian media, music and literature. But it is to these cultures that we should turn, without bias, but as sympathetically as we would approach any foreign culture.

Scholars who can get the public to look at and rethink itself need encouragement, not consignment to the margins of the discipline. Much as we have learned to establish "ethnographic authority" by evoking sympathy and understanding for the "others" whom we study, anthropologists will gain more credibility with a skeptical audience when criticizing other aspects of American life by pointing out the admirable aspects of our own culture.

Formative Moral Narratives

There is no shortage of relevant, important issues for anthropologists to study in North America. The significant changes in social structure that Tom Fricke pointed out in the article inaugurating this year's theme ("Home Work," October 1998 *AN*, p 1) have been matched by changes in the cultural life and ethos of the country. One way of examining this is to look at the narratives and mythology that have formed our

culture. For most of our country's history, such biblical narratives as Abraham and Isaac, Saul and David, Jesus' parables and the Gospel narratives formed the moral framework for a majority of Americans. These stories gave meaning, showed examples and were the almost-official guiding principles of a nation intent on greatness.

As the economic and technological power of the country has grown, new narratives have now begun to compete with and even replace the biblical lessons. *The Wizard of Oz*, *Star Trek* and *Star Wars*, family sitcoms such as *Father Knows Best* and *Home Improvement*, and the Disney empire have become the new storytellers witnessed by children and adults alike. The transition from biblical to secular narratives is expressed by how the big screen biblical epics of the 1950s and 1960s have been superceded by Hollywood blockbusters like *ET* and *Titanic*, most of which likewise carry moral messages which are sometimes at odds with the biblical epics.

My research focuses attention on the way the media now contribute to the construction of our worldviews. Specifically, I consider how average Americans understand the various *Star Trek* productions, how they reveal our dominant, scientific and progress-oriented ideology, and even more interestingly, how they point to new kinds of "quasi-religions" based in popular culture, and used by fans to give meaning to their lives. Fan clubs, conventions, role-play and the Internet provide plenty of opportunities for thick and thin description.

Sense of Community

The electronic media have helped individuals form a sense of community in recent decades. Countless stories tell of strangers finding a sense of commonality in popular culture, especially through shows like *Star Trek*, whose fans I have studied since 1992. Cultural studies

scholars delight in pointing out how different fan groups "poach" meanings from the show, reinterpreting them to give meaning to their own lives and issues. While this research is certainly credible, it says little about the vast numbers of Americans who have made the various *Star Trek* series among the most popular shows ever shown on television.

We can escape to alternative universes like *Star Trek* and Disney—where we find release from the corporate, bureaucratic world dominating our lives—but, many of us are also looking for meaning. Although many still find meaning through traditional organizations such as churches and volunteer or small groups, there are others who find it through media such as television and movies. Disney and *Star Trek* offer views of the "good life," a sense of ethics and a vision of rights and responsibilities. Fan clubs exhibit this vision by specifically adopting *Star Trek* philosophies such as IDIC (Infinite Diversity in Infinitive Combinations) and the Prime Directive (non-interference in other societies). Americans have developed an individualistic moral language based on media-influenced notions of what "seems right" rather than on any institutional or long-standing traditions. We pick and choose, like good consumers, from whatever values appeal to our senses.

Although Americans are known for their individualism, *Star Trek* reinforces the American tradition of forming volunteer organizations. One way for Americans to meet their need to be both autonomous and connected is through a media-derived cultural production like *Star Trek*. The experience can be enjoyed and discussed with other people, but viewers can still maintain their private lives, "living" *Star Trek* at select, bracketed times. Fans "enter" the *Star Trek* universe (kept in videotaped collections) whenever they watch the series or role-play, and take this experience into the real world through fan club charitable activities, thereby

attempting to bring about the future that *Star Trek* displays. Such media productions/mythologies like *Star Trek*, which are freely available over the airwaves, allow us to find meaningful narratives to fulfill our lives as well as connect, however superficially, with other people.

Researchers have documented that modern consumers often have stronger attachments to media productions than to kin or local community networks. It is around these media productions that many consumers devote large portions of their lives. Meaning, commitment and symbolism become centered on consumption, play and leisure. Spirituality is sought through popular culture, which is dominated by visual media. In phenomena such as *Star Trek*, the cultural codes and meanings come not from practices, rituals or stories intended for particular localized audiences, but over the airwaves and across thousands of miles, to people from many places and cultures. What are the implications of such momentous changes?

Reverse Tradition

Through our forays into other cultures we can gain a perspective into the uniqueness of American middle class culture. The tremendous change our society has undergone is culturally, socially and economically unique, even bizarre by the standards of many other cultures. Highlighting these changes and showing their originality are among the most important things anthropologists can do. Because anthropology combines a "literary" focus on symbolism with a social science methodology, it is better placed than either cultural studies or sociology to understand the tremendous shifts in contemporary middle class ethos. Moreover, anthropology allows to "bounce" the lessons of one culture off another.

I submit that the traditional anthropological wisdom of practicing

anthropology at home only to prepare for the "real" thing overseas can be reversed. By studying overseas, we come to understand our own culture, and can return to do the "real" work here, involving ourselves in the public sphere in a way that we cannot do overseas. It is old news that it is the "natives" who are now anthropologists.

Whereas studying death celebrations in Cameroon was fascinating, outsider status limited my ability and responsibility to make recommendations for change. Continual cross-cultural juxtaposition is the heart of our discipline, and essential to our future success and existence. But just as essential should be the study of our own communities--especially middle and working-class cultures--and the responsibility to help cope with the tremendous changes occurring on our own doorstep.

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Let's Set the Agenda

By Louise Lamphere (*U New Mexico*)
Anthropology Newsletter, February 1999 (pp 7-8)

The Alfred P Sloan Foundation has funded the AAA to develop a research agenda for future investigation on the middle class and working families. The AAA held a conference in May 1998 and a policy forum at the Philadelphia annual meeting to assess the state of anthropological knowledge on working families and to begin thinking about fruitful areas for research. The next step is to set an agenda that squarely focuses on the work/family nexus and develops a framework in which middle class working families are viewed in comparison with working families in other class contexts.

Working families are distributed up and down the class structure, from former welfare mothers entering the work force to well-off couples who may be corporate executives, lawyers and medical doctors. Working families are not all white. There are important segments, even in the middle class, that need to be studied: African American families, Spanish-surnamed families from Puerto Rican, Cuban Mexican and Hispano/Chicano backgrounds, and recent immigrant families from Taiwan, Korea, India, the Philippines and a variety of Central and Latin American countries.

Anthropologists with their commitment to comparison and the role of culture in shaping family life, as well as their expertise of US immigrant populations are in a unique position to make contributions. Research by Patricia Zavella on Chicana cannery families, Sherrie Grassmuck and Patricia Pessar on Dominican immigrants, and Nancy Foner on Jamaican nursing home attendants are just three of a number of anthropological studies that provide a beginning on which to build an agenda that emphasizes diversity, not homogeneity.

Transformation of Work

One of the most profound changes of the 20th century in the US has been the increased labor force participation of women. Women's employment is at an all-time high. Sixty percent of the 105 million women in the US over the age of 16 have a paid job, and 45% of all workers are women. This trend, which has been on-going since the 1920s, plus the decline in fertility and the increased divorce rate, has transformed the nature of the American family. Two job couples are the most common family form, and there are now a substantial number of working families headed by single mothers, as well as some two-income families composed of lesbian or gay couples and their children.

For the past 20 years, Anthropologists, along with our colleagues in sociology and social history, have been at the forefront of studying women's work and the increasing trend to dual-income families in the US. Important early research on women's work in industrial, clerical and service jobs has been pioneered by Karen Sacks, Sandra Morgen, Maria-Patricia Fernandez Kelly, Naomi Katz and Laura Lein. My own team research in Rhode Island and New Mexico has focused on dual-income families, examining the impact of women's labor force participation on the household division of labor, childcare strategies and the importance of kin and friendship networks in supporting working families.

The New Mexico research also examined how the structure of workplaces and management policies--flex-time, rotating shift structures, health benefits, maternity leave rules--shape both family strategies and women's commitment to their jobs. Our conclusion emphasized the

amount of variability among families even within ethnic groups and within the working class. Although we found that some husbands are doing substantial amounts of housework or childcare, and some plants instituted policies like flex-time for a short period, there is still what Arlie Hochschild called a “stalled revolution” both at home and in the work place.

To get a push forward, we need important policy changes in both public and private domains: from higher quality child care, to increased job sharing for young parents, to a national paid family leave policy.

A Process, Not a Thing

Although written 20 years ago, Rayna Rapp's, “Family and Class in Contemporary America: Notes towards an Understanding of Ideology” (*Science and Society* 42, 1978) offers important historical and theoretical insights. First, Rapp reminds us that “social class is shorthand for a process not a thing.” We need to understand the development of class positions in the US and look at the economic forces that shape the final years of the 20th century.

A second point made by Rapp is that class formation is always in flux. Shifting frontiers separate poverty, stable wage earning, affluent salaries and inherited wealth. Using some vivid images, Rapp says that categories of people get swept up at different times and places and deposited into different relations to the means of production and to one another. Then they get labeled blue collar or white collar, as members of ethnic groups or races, as men or as women. Yet all these categories of people need to be viewed in terms of their specific place in the history of capitalist accumulation as it developed in the US.

From this perspective the nature of the middle class has always been a changing one. By the end of World War

II, independent artisans, shopkeepers and independent professionals--the 19th century petty bourgeoisie--had vanished. Now the term middle class applies best to several different class segments. One group includes employees who earn steady, very high levels of income, and have some form of accumulated wealth. In this group are corporate managers, upper-level government and organizational bureaucrats, and professionals with PhDs, law, medical and business degrees. Almost all work for big business, the state or semipublic institutions.

These well-paid and “upper-middle class” employees contrast with another segment: middle managers, better-paid white collar workers and middle-income professionals such as, teachers, social workers, nurses, accountants. Clearly both groups earn salaries and benefits, but have different abilities to build what Rapp calls a stable resource base that allows for some amount of luxury and discretionary spending. Two used cars and a three bedroom house in a modest suburb constitute a different class position from a family that owns a house in the Berkeley Hills and vacation home at Lake Tahoe, has two children in private schools and two Lexus sedans in the garage.

Ideologically, the term “middle class” is loaded with positive rather than negative value. There is a tendency in the US to make the terms as inclusive as possible. Most Americans identify themselves as middle class, including many in a third segment: those who have high school or community college educations, rent an apartment, own one car and work in settings that might be considered blue collar, entry-level white collar or pink collar. I prefer to think of these Americans as working class, but certainly their experience as dual-income families are important to study. Furthermore, there are ethnic and regional variations in class structure, and we need to keep in mind the differing ways that groups have entered the US--such as

slaves, immigrants, refugees or populations incorporated through territorial conquest--and the evolution of each population through the 20th century. To signal this historical, regional and ethnic complexity it is crucial to think in terms of the "middle classes" rather than "the" middle class.

Agenda for Anthropology

This year I am affiliated with the U of California, Berkeley Center for Working Families, directed by Arlie Hochschild and funded by the Alfred P Sloan Foundation. The Center's focus is "Cultures of Care," and the multi-class, comparative method being used by researchers and pre-doctoral students is a model for the kinds of research anthropologists can do. Research funded by this center range from studies on after-school care for grade-schoolers in a local multi-ethnic community, and nurses and their husbands from Kerala, India, to Mexican immigrant families who work together in fast food restaurants.

Five issues should command the attention of anthropologists as we construct a research agenda: (1) the crisis in child care and after school care, (2) the time-bind and advent of the overworked American, (3) the lack of substantial structural changes in the work place to accommodate working families, (4) the impact of increasing class differentiation in the US and the growing downward mobility of many middle class households, and (5) the impact of technology of the work/home nexus.

Child Care Crisis

Recent welfare reform has pushed many mothers into the labor force creating a huge new demand for child care at the same time that low-paid child care workers are leaving centers and home day care because of burn-out and other job opportunities. Despite the vast literature on child care, there are few participant-observation studies of child

care centers and home day care sites and little research on the lives of day care workers and their own social movements to improve working conditions. Anthropologists with their commitment to participant observation and intensive interviewing can fill in the gap and especially look at the important relationships between women professionals and less-highly paid employees, on the one hand and female day care workers, on the other. The point would be to examine day care for families in a wide variety of ethnic populations as well as for high income versus medium income families.

Time Bind and Work Place

Juliet Schor's *The Overworked American* (1991) tells us that men work 49 hours a week and women 42, leaving little time for children. Arlie Hochschild suggests some of the ways families handle this stress (*The Time Bind*, 1997), but we need to examine families who have had some success changing their workplace's demands on their time. We need more studies of job sharing, part-time possibilities and facilitated leave patterns. We need to know why companies give up on these policies as much as why some are successful. Examining both the obstacles and successes (probably taking shape at the local rather than national level) could suggest ways of expanding our minimal family leave policy.

Downward Mobility

Even in this era of economic expansion, two-income families are experiencing corporate downsizing and rising educational costs which threaten their children's ability to attain the same class position as their parents. As the "rich get richer and the poor get poorer" we need more attention to what working families "squarely in the middle" are doing to cope with rising housing costs, issues of care for their children and aging parents, and fading educational opportunities for the next generation.

Minority and immigrant families are particularly important to consider as they develop culturally specific ways of coping with this crisis, yet may be denied access to standard sources of private and governmental support.

Technology Impact

Finally, there is increasing interest among anthropologists to understand the impact of technology on dual-income families. We need focus on technology as it relates to the work/family nexus. A careful study of computer-aided work at home that contrasts women's and men's work and family situations and examines the difference between insurance agents and mail-order workers, for example, would get at the important variability being forged as more Americans use their homes as work places. An examination of the historical and anthropological research on the history of homework would add an important perspective as well.

Anthropologists have a long history of research on women's work and dual-income families, and are now poised to make more significant impact in this critical area of American life. With our interest in immigrant and minority populations as well as our commitment to participant observation and intensive interviewing we can provide insights into the dynamics of this changing arena of family life as well as make concrete policy recommendations.

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Flexible Survivors

By Emily Martin (Princeton U)
Anthropology News, September 1999 (pp 5-7)

There are signs that mental conditions involving constant shifting in time and space, emotionally or cognitively--namely manic-depression and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)--have been undergoing a dramatic revision in American middle class culture, from being simply dreaded liabilities, to being especially valuable assets that can potentially enhance one's life in the particular social and cultural world now inhabited by many middle class Americans. To understand this change, I turn to the social concept of the "person," long a mainstay of anthropological analysis, a concept that is central to the earth-shaking changes many middle class Americans are now undergoing. As Marcel Mauss made clear, what it means to be a person is deeply embedded in its social context, and highly various over time and space. A particular kind of person, the "individual," seen as owner of himself and his capacities, rather than as part of a social whole, has been prominent in Euro-American culture since 17th century liberal democratic theory.

The Disciplined Person

What it means to be owner of oneself, however, has involved very different degrees of control over the boundaries around the self in different historical periods. In the first half of the 20th century, for example, a premium was placed on discipline and control because of the requirements of work in industrial settings. The moving assembly line with its dedicated machinery was oriented to efficient mass production and, eventually, to profitable mass marketing. Corporate organizations were hierarchically structured bureaucracies whose ideal employee was passive, stable, consistent and acquiescent. The stress was placed on stability and solidity: Sherry Turkle

observes that, "earlier in this century we spoke of identity as 'forged.' The metaphor of iron-like solidity captured the central value of a core identity" (1995).

The Adapting Person

Since the 1970s, rending political and economic changes have begun to make themselves felt in the US. These changes have important implications for understanding contemporary concepts of the person. The internationalization of labor and markets, growth of the service economy and abrupt decline of redistributive state services have meant that the fabric of the world has become substantially rewoven. In the US, concentration of wealth and income at the top of the social order is more extreme than at any time since the depression, while poverty has grown correspondingly deeper. Successive waves of downsizing have picked off, in addition to the disadvantaged, significant numbers of people from occupations and classes unaccustomed to a dramatic fall in their prospects and standard of living. The imperative to become the kind of worker who can succeed in extremely competitive circumstances has intensified, while the stakes at risk for failing have greatly increased. As one sign of the unforgiving nature of the way increased competition is experienced, references to the "survival of the fittest" have increased exponentially in the news media every year since 1970.

The factory which has often served as both a laboratory and a conceptual guide for understandings of human behavior, is also changing. The hierarchical factory of the mass production era, with its worker drones, is being replaced (mostly in the elite sectors of the global economy) with new forms: machines that process information and communicate with self-

managed workers, who are in turn invested with greater decision making powers. Corporations are flattening hierarchies, downsizing bureaucracies, enhancing their corporate "culture," becoming nimble and agile to survive in rapidly changing markets. They seek organization in the form of fluid networks of alliances, a highly decoupled and dynamic form with great organizational flexibility. Workers and managers are "evolving" with the aid of self-study, corporate training sessions and an insistence on self-management when they are lucky enough to be employed inside a corporation, and then aggressive entrepreneurialism during the frequent periods they are now expected to spend outside. The individual is still owner of himself, but the stakes have risen and they are ever changing.

Given this procession of dramatic changes on many social, cultural, economic and political fronts, what concepts of the ideal person will be enabled by and enable these conditions? As the mechanical regularity avidly sought from the assembly line worker gives way to the ideal of a flexible and constantly changing worker, what will happen to the value previously placed on stability and conformity? Some answers to these questions have been suggested by Jaques Donzelot. What Donzelot calls "changing people's attitudes toward change" has made its appearance in France through the legal right of every worker to "continued retraining": people are thought to require an active attitude toward change, from childhood to old age. The individual consists in potentials to be realized and capacities to be fulfilled. Since these potentials and capacities take their shape in relation to the requirements of a continuously changing environment, their content--and even the terms in which they are understood--are also in constant change. The person is made up of a flexible collection of assets; a person is proprietor of his or her self as a portfolio. In the 1990s, there has been an increase in "home based work," based on

telecommuting or the "You, Inc" phenomenon. People with the resources to do so think of themselves as mini-corporations, collections of assets that one must continually invest in, nurture, manage and develop. There is a sense as the nation-state yields its prominence in world affairs to the multi-national corporation, that the individual moves from being a citizen, oriented to the interests of the nation, to being a mini-corporation, oriented primarily to its interests in global flows of capital.

Manic Style

It might seem a long reach from workers in constant change to pathological mental conditions involving constant change, such as manic depression or ADHD. But an anthropological concept of culture encourages us to look across cultural domains as well as within for meaningful comparisons and contrasts. The lability associated with these mental conditions has often been linked with creativity and perhaps for this reason, they are becoming highly fascinating in business, educational and popular culture. For example, ADHD has begun to appear as an asset in books for business entrepreneurs; manic-depression, frequently loosely associated with tormented geniuses, has begun to occupy the best seller list in the form of memoirs and novels. Personal confessions by the rich and famous, especially in Hollywood and on Wall Street, who reveal their ADHD or manic-depression, abound. Both conditions have recently been flooding the press, best seller list and airwaves.

In popular culture, representations of these two conditions appear to be in the process of redefinition from being a disability to a strength. In each case, the qualities praised fit perfectly with the kind of emergent self Donzelot described: always changing, scanning the environment, dealing with all aspects of the interface with the outside in creative and innovative ways. For ADHD, praise

for the continuously changing person can be seen in the books, newsletter and Internet organizing of Thomas Hartmann. One of Hartmann's books on ADHD, *Focus Your Energy: Hunting for Success in Business with Attention Deficit Disorder* (1993), is usually shelved with the business books. A hunter's "strong sense of individualism, high creativity, and the ability to be a self-starter" make such a person far more able to start his or her own company than non-ADHD people (p 56).

In manic-depression, redefinition from a liability to an asset can be seen in the writings of a psychiatrist Kay Jamison, who with her recent memoir, *An Unquiet Mind* (1995), "came out" as manic-depressive herself. In her previous and current writing Jamison takes great pains to describe the positive aspects of manic-depression alongside the negative: echoing the good traits of ADHD, manic-depression entails a "finely wired, exquisitely alert nervous system." These thought processes are characteristic of the manic phase: "fluency, rapidity, and flexibility of thought on the one hand, and the ability to combine ideas or categories of thought to form new and original connections on the other...rapid, fluid, and divergent thought" (p 105). Beyond these examples, what might be called "manic (or hyper) style," a style that draws on the "mania" in manic-depression and the "hyper" in ADHD, is appearing on all sides, from Jim Carey and Ted Turner, who are self-acknowledged manic-depressives, to "Seinfeld's" Cosmo Kramer and Virgin Inc's Richard Branson, who are not. A Rockport ad features monolinguist Spaulding Gray sprawled in a chair, hair standing out electrically, claiming "I'm comfortable with my madness." Ted Turner appears in the *Saturday Evening Post* in a pair of photographs. In one he is a business man, lecturing soberly behind a podium with a corporate logo, and in the other he is a wild-eyed ship's captain, fiercely gripping the wheel at the helm of his yacht. The caption notes that Turner's competition

should be warned: he has stopped taking his Lithium (and so might well be about to launch a manic--and profitable--new venture).

In general, the qualities of the "manic style" fit well with the kind of person frequently described as highly desirable in corporate America: always adapting by scanning the environment for signs of change, flying from one thing to another, while pushing the limits of everything, and doing it all with an intense level of energy focused totally on the future. An ad campaign currently running for Unisys captures both the multiple tasking and the unremitting energy of the manic style in its images of a computer monitor-headed man who designs a system to report election results for the city of Rome while he golfs, another who fixes problems with Amadeus, the leading global travel reservation system, while ski jumping, and a woman who reduces the time needed to process welfare applications in California while lounging companionably on the couch with her husband. In each case, the Unisys employees have a computer monitor instead of a head, and on the screen flash changing scenes related to the work that preoccupies them while they are golfing, skiing or relaxing.

Are certain forms of irrationality, which are in fact an intrinsic part of daily life in late capitalism, emerging into visibility in popular culture? Perhaps the irrationality of the market (and what you have to do and be to succeed in it) is being more openly recognized and "rational choice" is being seen as dependant on "irrational" impulses and desires. The excess in Ted Turner as capitalist and yacht captain (depicted and experienced as talent) would then contain signs of apprehension: greater knowledge of what capitalism entails and greater fear of what it may require of people. The caption under the two photographs of Turner in the *Saturday Evening Post* ends on a fearful note: Turner's father, like Hemingway's, committed suicide - raising the implied question: will Turner end his

life by suicide as did Hemingway? A new analysis of the workings of late capital is even called *One World Ready or Not: the Manic Logic of Global Capitalism* (William Greider, 1997). It is filled with references to “manic capital,” oscillating with depression, and the calamitous consequences of both. The recent drop and rapid recovery of the stock exchange in October 1997 inspired a flurry of domain crossing remarks, in newspapers, such as: “If Wall Street were a person we'd think he was mentally ill.”

It remains to be seen what kinds of distinctions will be made as the discursive space around the categories “mania and hyper-activity” open up. Will two kinds of mania and hyper-activity emerge: a “good” kind, harnessed by Robin Williams, Ted Turner and the successful workers at Unisys; and a “bad” kind to which most sufferers of manic-depression and ADHD are relegated? In this case, even if the value given to the “irrational” experience of mania and hyper-activity increases, validity would yet again be denied to the mentally ill, and in fact their stigmatization might increase. After all, if they have, by definition, the ability to be manic or hyper-active, and if that ability comes to be seen as an important key to success, then why are they so often social and economic failures? Or, will the presence of a “manic style” in popular culture reduce the stigmatization of manic depression and ADHD? Now that he is an acknowledged manic-depressive, could Robin Williams' performances as a stand up comic contribute to moving the categories mania and hyper-activity away from being wholly stigmatized, because his performances give pleasure, bring rewards and in their inventiveness, produce forms of value? Do his funny, madcap antics present mania and hyper-activity to us as valuable intellectual property?

An anthropological approach to understanding changes in the concept of the kind of person one must become to survive as we approach the millennium

promises to shed light on changes in the valuation of mental conditions and even rationality itself. In turn, these insights may well have implications for our understanding of ideals being sought in many cultural domains, such as models of childhood development, education, work, personality and intelligence.

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The Mobile Middle Class

By Karen Fog Olwig (U of Copenhagen)
Anthropology Newsletter, November 1998

Life trajectories amongst the middle classes often involve a great deal of physical mobility. Indeed, if migration is defined as the act of moving "from one country, place or locale to another," the middle classes are among the most active migrants in the modern world. In my research on two family networks of middle class Caribbean background I have made such mobility, and the extensive family networks to which it gives rise, the organizing framework of my study. This has led to interesting new theoretical and methodological approaches to studies of the working middle class.

Migration is an inherently geographical phenomenon and thus it seems natural to study it in terms of movement from one place--usually in the periphery of metropolitan societies--to another, usually in a metropole. In the case of the Caribbean this form of migration study has typically been concerned with movement from a particular island to a Caribbean ghetto in a metropolitan city. This approach, however, has a way of privileging the study of social groups who, for economic reasons, tend to be forced to live in such ghetto areas, or who actively seek the cultural security provided by ghetto environments as a means of reconstituting localized home communities abroad. Such an approach means, that one tends to focus on people who form the lower classes in the metropole, and the "folk" in the places from which they have emigrated.

Complexity of Migratory Movements

Migration of Caribbean people does not necessarily stop when they reach their first migration destination. As migrants become established in the receiving

society they move to more attractive housing areas and job opportunities located outside the immigrant environment. Such mobility occurs most rapidly among migrants of middle class background, because they have had a better social, economic and educational basis for making such moves.

Interviews with more than 50 adults in two middle class family networks - approximately half born in the Caribbean - reveal varied patterns of mobility, both out of the Caribbean, within the receiving societies and back to the Caribbean. All those born in the Caribbean have spent extended periods of time outside their native island society, some having settled abroad permanently. Initially most moved to major migration destinations such as London, New York City and Toronto. Today, however, they and their grown children born abroad, have moved to more up-scale mixed, or mainly white neighborhoods, if they have not left the urban centers entirely. New York City, for example, which was an important migration destination during the 1950s and 1960s, was virtually abandoned by the 1990s. The one person who remained in 1997 was in the process of moving to her daughter in Nova Scotia. Those who stayed in the US now live in a number of different states, including Florida, North Carolina, Texas, California and New Jersey, as well as up-state New York.

Life Stories

As a result of these movements, the two family networks comprise vast social fields of relations, which are maintained primarily by such means as telephone calls, the internet and Christmas cards. Certain relatives also visit each other periodically, and many relatives are brought together on special occasions

such as weddings or funerals. Wider family relations therefore are not sustained by daily social interaction, but through various forms of long-distance communication which may range from chats about everyday occurrences and gossip about the whereabouts of particular relatives, to mutual recollections of past family events. Since family relations were, to a great extent, based on verbal exchanges it was rather natural for individuals to talk about the family, when I arrived to do my interviews.

As a primary fieldwork method, I used life story interviews where individuals were first asked to relate their life story and then, during follow-up questions, to elaborate on certain aspects in this life story as well as other pertinent topics. Life stories provide useful information on the welter of occurrences and relationships which characterize most people's lives. More importantly, however, they are cultural constructions which follow certain established norms concerning what kind of a life the narrators deem credible and socially acceptable. When people relate their life stories, I therefore obtain data on the sort of movements they have undertaken in the course of their lives, the socio-cultural order which they established in their life stories and their understanding of themselves in this order. Because life stories are related in social fields of family relations, it is possible to let the stories, shed light on one another--both in terms of the information provided and the significance which the wider, non-local framework of relations may have had for the narrators.

Mobility and Family Life

Anthropologists have questioned the viability of "traditional" anthropological research methods, such as participant observation, when studying middle or upper class families who regard the home as a private domain to which the fieldworker does not gain easy access. My research suggests that the privacy of

the middle class home may be most clearly demarcated in relation to the local neighborhood which is primarily inhabited by "strangers", and less intensely guarded when the researcher enters via the wider, non-local family sphere. Thus I have been welcomed in middle class homes in ways that would not have been possible had I been a local resident. I have, for example, been invited to stay in a number of family homes during my research journeys.

Non-local social fields of relations, such as family networks, constitute important social and cultural contexts of life for the working middle classes, and they therefore need to be explored. By situating fieldwork in such networks it is possible to delineate the variegated movements which are an integral part of middle class life today. It may also be possible to gain access to more private context of life such as the home which often guards against intrusions from the local community.

Karen Olwig's research is part of a larger research program "Livelihood, Identity and Organisation in Situations of Instability" which is supported by the Danish Council of Development Research.

Mastering the Art of Retirement

By Joel Savishinsky (Ithaca College)
Anthropology Newsletter, October 1999 (p 15)

Being contradictory in modern America is no longer a monopoly of the young. While older people commonly like to be thought of as wise, for example, some take a perverse pride in openly questioning their own wisdom. Alan Freudenberg liked to tease himself, and others, with this kind of humor. He had spent much of his adult life teaching government and civics at the local high-school, and devoted years of after-school hours to the planning board of his village's Common Council. He advocated learning from the past, assessing the present and managing the future. But when it came to preparing for his own retirement, he reflected on what he called "the fallacy of mis-placed prudence," proclaiming that "life is what happens while you're out making plans."

Novel "Stage" of Life

At the age of 63, Alan became one of 26 participants in a longitudinal study of retirement that my students and I have been conducting in Shelby, a rural community in upstate New York. Using methods of participant-observation, semi-structured interviews and life-story analysis, we are following a group of 13 women and 13 men as they anticipate and experience the early stages of this period of life. We began to work with these people 6 to 8 months before their formal retirement, first interviewing them about what they expected their lives to be like after leaving full-time work, then participating in and observing their retirement rituals. We now meet periodically to follow the changes in their lives.

Underlying this research is a view of retirement as a process rather than single event. The magnitude of this human experience is also rooted in the fact that

retirement itself--as a novel "stage of life"--has created a new American model of the life course. Furthermore, because our society lacks norms for structuring the transition into this later phase of maturity, people end up making the passage in different ways. One critical variable is the extent to which individuals plan, or believe in planning for, their transition out of the work force. We found contrasting approaches to this process. Some retirees, the "Zen Masters," emphasize an attitude of unscheduled openness and unformulated expectations to what the future might bring; while others, the "Master Planners," stress a carefully thought-out agenda of activities, resources and priorities around which to organize retired life.

Master Planners

The first time I met Ed Trayvor was in the comfort of his study. As his wife Harriet served tea, Ed tried to serve up answers to my questions about what he expected from his forthcoming retirement. He started several answers, but dropped each in mid-sentence, and then said, "Wait. I'll show you." He left the room, and returned with a long legal pad, which he placed in my lap. On it were 4 pages of neat, densely packed handwritten notes that comprised a detailed list of all the things Ed did (and did not) want to do when he left work the following month. Intending to avoid boring meetings and equally boring people, and abjuring the dry professional literature from his career as a lawyer and fund-raiser, the positive part of Ed's ledger mentioned: devoting more energy to public service, getting involved in community education, spending more time with grandchildren, and refitting the sailboat. "You need to have a plan," he emphasized, using the same word that other retirees have

invoked, “otherwise life gets away from you. You wake up, and hours, days, a whole week is gone. . . and you don’t know what happened to them. I’ve waited too long to do too many things to let that happen.”

This proclamation was not couched in the form of a complaint. At 64, Ed acknowledged a good life so far, but because he felt he had deferred a number of gratifications, he had taken great pleasure compiling a list of what he hoped to enjoy next. It had made the last 12 months of work go quickly.

A year later, when we took stock of the first phase of retired life, Ed took pride in his progress report. Pulling out the pad again, he spoke about his recent election to the local school board, the tedious (and indecisive) people he no longer had to sit across from in professional meetings, and the summer weekends spent on the lake. “Look,” he confessed, “there are still lots of things I haven’t gotten to, I know. But it’s a start. We’re under way.” What made Ed happy was not some claim that the list had been completed, but that the plan itself was working.

Zen Masters

For other people, the prospect of retirement yields a radically different picture, one that is clear but empty, list-less but not pointless. Close to finishing a long phase of adult life characterized by work, schedules, family commitments or other domestic and community responsibilities, these individuals do not want retirement to be filled in--before it has barely begun--with scripts, agendas or padfulls of priorities crowded with other people’s figures and dutiful details. They have decided to plan not to plan.

One who embraced this approach was Sandra Golecki, a retired 68 year-old music educator who spoke of “the excitement of emptiness.” Settled into the comfort of a Bach cantata and her living

room couch one morning, Sandra reached to a shelf behind her, and pulled down a large artist’s sketchbook. Instead of another detailed list, she turned back the cover and proudly displayed a completely white surface. Fanning her fingers over the vacant paper she said, “retiring was an unexpected invitation, something akin to the childhood dream of walking through a hidden door and stepping into. . . what?. . . some strange, magical land.”

Sandra did not have a lot of support for taking the step into retirement in that spirit of wonderment. Her co-workers did not question her decision to retire, but they were puzzled--some to the point of disbelief--that in leaving work she was also effectively leaving music. It was not that she disliked music, but she was tired of building her life around it. In recent years, teaching had turned predictable and repetitious, the educational bureaucracy increasingly petty and irritating, and too many of her colleagues wrapped up in committees, gossip and their small triumphs and defeats. As she approached the decision to retire, Sandra recalls saying to herself: “Yes. Music is wonderful. But there has to be more to life than this.”

The thoroughly unmusical and unacademic nature of what Sandra got engrossed in surprised even her: instead of creativity, pedagogy and performance, she got hooked on polo and politics. Both developments emerged within the first few months. A neighbor invited her to a polo match, where Sandra quickly became fascinated and soon found herself engrossed and engaged in a part of life, and a social circle, she had never dreamed of stepping foot in before.

Politics surfaced when she suddenly remembered a promise she had once made, that when the time and opportunity came, she would try to understand her own political past. By the one-year mark of her retirement, she had attended a convention and was giving serious thought to getting involved in the next

year's election. "If you're open to life," she reflected, "this is the kind of thing that happens."

Method in the Madness

The point of these two tales is not so much the merit or purpose of polo or politics, community service or sailing, or whether people's pursuits are new, resurrected, deferred or newly discovered forms of gratification. Rather, it is the realization that the "method in the madness" for some people lies in not planning, whereas for others the satisfaction lies in knowing that the route and itinerary are clearly laid out, that there are known and worthwhile goals to be pursued.

The distinct strategies that Sandra and Ed represent are, admittedly, those of middle-class people who have given retirement a good deal of thought. They have made conscious, albeit different decisions, about how to handle it. But their positive experiences indicate that these alternative approaches work equally well for different people, given the distinct kinds of values, work histories, role models and family circumstances that they bring to this new stage of life. As a sizable body of research has now shown, most Americans do not engage in extensive preparations for retirement, and yet they find this transition to be relatively untraumatic. As the retirees of Shelby suggest, all roads may or may not lead to Rome, but there are several that lead into retirement.

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the National Endowment for the Humanities. Other aspects of this project have been described in his publications: "The Unbearable Lightness of Retirement: Ritual and Support in A Modern Life Passage," Research on Aging (17,3,1995); and "At Work, At Home, At Large: The Sense of Person and Place in Retirement," North American Dialogue (3,1,1998).

Real Work

By John Sherry (*Intel Architecture Labs*)
Anthropology Newsletter, March 1999 (pp 19-20)

As new technologies invade all our lives – from inside our own homes to the most remote and exotic locales – anthropology is uniquely suited to help provide a better understanding of the effects. Consider, for instance, the frequent assertions that computers and the Internet are tools for “access to information” and inherent forces for democratization. How are we to assess such claims?

I am a member of an interdisciplinary team—which includes two anthropologists—engaged by Intel Corporation, the company that makes microprocessors found in most personal computers (PCs). We are ostensibly employed to identify “new uses and new users” of computing power, but our research is almost inherently a critical process – we find ourselves constantly challenging the assumptions and perspectives of technology designers. We venture out to homes, businesses, playgrounds, shop floors, public spaces and anywhere else where we can gather the insights that lead to a better understanding of people and technology.

Production vs Access

Research among American small businesses, for example, highlighted a surprisingly different situation than the “access to information” mantra suggests. We have found that PCs are most commonly used not to access information, but to produce information—information required by powerful outsiders (bank loan officers, government regulators, industry standards bodies). As such, PC use typically falls into the class of what more than one small business operator called “shit work.” This is opposed to the “real work,” which involves satisfying customers, creating products or providing

the services that are considered the heart of the organizational mission.

When I first encountered this ideological construction of “real work”/“shit work” and the relations of power implicated in the use of computing technology, I was struck by its similarity to what I had encountered in my own research with a community-based Navajo organization. There, too, computer use was implicated in acceding to the demands of powerful, non-local institutions. The ideology of what counts as “real work” stands as an issue to be further explored cross-culturally. From the perspective of technological design, it opens a whole range of discussions about how to better support what people value most in the practice of work.

Technology and Aesthetics

Perhaps even more than personal computers, the Internet has become the focus of intense ideological posturing and great controversy. It is clear that, from the point of view of the people who contribute to this vast electronic juggernaut, there is no single “Internet.” The Internet is a product of the multiple orientations, agendas, goals and behaviors that people bring to Web pages, Usenet newsgroups and list servers (to name but three examples). These worlds are what we make of them to a degree that is far easier to recognize than with physical environments. This fact alone is interesting for enhancing cultural ecologists’ understanding of common properties.

Yet, the Internet is not quite as “free of space and time” as popular discourse often asserts. It is grounded in unexpected ways. We recently conducted a short study of workers in New York’s

“Silicon Alley,” San Francisco’s “Multimedia Gulch” and the “Digital Coast” of Los Angeles. The hip, creative and technologically savvy young people we encountered in each of these areas frequently saw themselves--explicitly or inexplicitly--as engaged in a kind of marriage of technology and aesthetic design that harkens back to the artist engineers of the Renaissance. More than that, however, we were struck by how important local communities of practice were in shaping professional identities and design sensibilities. Web developers participated in local listservs, membership organizations and various events at which they swapped information about design or technology, forged collaborative arrangements and negotiated intensely their personal and collective identities as “new media professionals.” Their encounters and relationships in physical space frequently spilled over into their design work in cyberspace.

Real Value to Real People

As these examples suggest, our work at Intel often involves adopting a critical perspective. Technological design always carries assumptions about potential end users. Our work thus includes sensitizing engineers to the values, activities and perspectives of the people for whom they are designing, so that our products might actually provide real value to real people. Part of the fun of this is communicating our research to non-specialists, who are surprisingly receptive and appreciative.

Some may see this endeavor as “straining the gnat and swallowing the camel”—that is, engaging in pointed critiques of particular technological designs while failing to critically engage the broader goals of the corporation or capitalist system as a whole. Our work is thus not without some dilemmas and anxieties, such as balancing the desire to be relevant with the desire to be true to our personal and professional values. We take some cold comfort in hearing from

academic colleagues that these dilemmas are not unique to our situation.

As academic job markets tighten, it is inevitable that many quality anthropologists will be forced to look elsewhere for work. For those willing to exert a little extra effort in translating ethnographic research into various “local vernaculars,” there are many alternatives. The high tech industry is one such alternative, where an audience is already calling for a more thorough ethnographic understanding of how new technologies are affecting our lives.

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Housing the Good Life

By Nicholas Townsend (Brown University)
Anthropology Newsletter, January 1999 (pp 1, 4)

Home ownership is the defining aspiration and sign of membership for the middle class in the United States. Homes are worked for and worked on--they are both valuable and valued--but home ownership also ties the middle class into a system of employment and consumption that has profound contradictions. Homes, the sites of class reproduction as well as individual reproduction, are the places where people's aspirations and desires come face-to-face with circumstances. The tensions and complexities of middle class family life are there revealed.

The archetypal habitat of the American middle class working family is the single family home in the suburbs. The lives of suburban home owners have often been characterized as boring, complacent, mediocre, alienated and frightened. The suburbs themselves as sprawling, ugly, environmentally disastrous, rows and rows of "little boxes made of ticky tacky." But an anthropological position recognizes that the intersection of home with class and family deserves serious analytic attention and that the values of millions of Americans should be approached with empathy and attention rather than derision.

Meanings of Home

Researching the meaning of fatherhood in the lives of men from a community in northern California I was struck by how often the subject of home ownership came up and by how buying a home was crucial to men's life stories and their definitions of success. Being a family man involved marriage and children and work and home in a constellation or "package deal" that men did not dis-assemble. The point of marriage is to have children, the point of

work is to provide a home for those children, the point of having children is to give purpose to work. Men described an array of shifts and sacrifices that they had made to buy a first home. Some had worked out arrangements with kin to co-sign, share equity, rent to buy, or provide a place for older family members to live in old age. Others had lived in mobile homes or rented rooms to save money. Or they had worked multiple jobs and then scrimped and saved to renovate, remodel or enlarge the first small houses they could afford. After the first house, they talked about moves to follow jobs, or for better schools, larger houses or better neighborhoods.

In their accounts, these men repeatedly expressed the values of home ownership in terms of safety, success and social standing, as well as in terms of tax benefits and financial savings. One man's words encapsulated the normative connections between home and family: "Home ownership has helped my wife and my family and I understand the meaning of family and commitment. It is a unifying event in a person's life. Marriages and families cannot survive without it. They may get by without a house, but they never get the most out of the loving bonds a family can find."

Meanings of home ownership as security and support for family life have changed over the last two generations. Raising children while living in a rented apartment is no longer seen as an acceptable middle class norm. Material decline in cities in the US has been accompanied by changes in the meanings and use of public spaces. The men I talked to, for instance, described their own childhood enjoyment of public parks as places for unsupervised play, but they described parks today as dangerous for

their children who were escorted to the park and watched while there. Home ownership, in its normative sense, means ownership of a home in a neighborhood of owner-occupied houses. The ownership of one's own home therefore means living in a particular kind of neighborhood and leading a particular kind of life.

Time and Distance

Owning a home in a neighborhood of owner-occupied homes is more than providing oneself with suitable shelter, it is expressive of social location. Suburbs built since the 1950s are built around the automobile in the same way that an earlier generation of suburbs and new towns was built around the street car and railroad. They mark a sharp geographic separation of work and home which is made manifest in the particularly middle class institution of the commute. Although many service workers are too poorly paid to live near their employment and spend long hours traveling to and from work, the combination of suburban home-ownership and commuting comes out of a more volitional separation of work and home – a separation that is moral as well as physical.

To live in the suburbs is to use physical distance to express moral difference from the city, which was described to me as full of crime, violence, dirt, rudeness and laziness. At the same time that suburban developments distance themselves from the city, they appropriate the values of the countryside. Many developments, for instance, include in their names the "oaks," "meadows" and "woods," that were destroyed in their construction. But suburban communities are not simply denials of the urban and destroyers of the rural, they are distinct types of communities in their own right. This new type of community has been noticed, criticized and taken as the base for improvement since its inception by such diverse figures as Ebenezer Howard (the "garden city" movement), Lewis Mumford and Herbert Gans.

The men I have talked to are prepared to pay a high price for the separation of work and home, and for providing a secure home for their families. They pay this price in money, of course, but also in time--time at work and time on the road. It was almost a mantra for these men that they wanted to "be there" for their children in a way that their fathers had not been there for them, and that they wanted to work fewer hours so that they could spend time with their families. But as often as they said that, they also told me about the hours they did work and the forced contradiction between work and family became apparent. "I usually get in about 6:00 in the morning and I try to get out of there by 4:00 or 5:00 at night," said one man. "I try not to work too many hours." I wondered how many would be too many for a man who is working 10 or 11-hour days and then commuting.

And the commuting required to realize values of suburban home ownership is indeed onerous. In the central valley of California, house prices decreased by \$1000 for every mile away from the employment centers of the San Francisco Bay Area. The cost of this trade-off between time and money comes in the impact on daily life and parenting. One man's account brings out the bind he is put in as he tries to provide a life he cannot afford and suffers the conflict between succeeding as a father and a provider. In this comment he describes the relation between where he lives, where he works and the kind of life his family has.

In fact, this neighborhood, this whole tract, this whole town works in the Bay area, believe it or not. I haven't met one person in all these neighbors right here [laughs] that does not work in the Bay area. Four o'clock--all those garage doors go open and right down [the highway]. Four-fifteen you kind of beat most of the

crazies out there, so it takes about an hour and 15 minutes, an hour and a half, depending on no accidents.

Our babysitter laid down the law. We took our vacation when she says we take our vacation because she gets up at 4:00 in the morning. You don't find too many babysitters who do that. Of course, our kids are carried in [asleep]. Laid on the bed that she has and she goes back to bed. But still, she has to get up and let us in. We get on the road [home] about 3:15 and we get home about quarter to 5. Barring you know--not Fridays [laughs]. It's anywhere from 5:00 to 5:30.

I'd like to be a better parent, spend more time with them, get them lots of stuff that we can do, but, you know, it's not enough. Especially since we moved out here. It's not enough and that really bothers me. So weekends, we try and really make it worth their while cause it seems like all the other times we're dumping them off at some babysitter and going to bed, and it's like you only have so many hours when you're home.

You know what really bothers me. I feel like I say, "Hurry up!" all the time. "Hurry up. We gotta do this. We gotta do that." And now they use that a lot in their language: "Hurry up." I could hear the other one saying, "Hurry up! Hurry up!" You know, that bothers me cause, I don't remember that when I was a kid.

Higher Prices, Higher Stakes

Housing, and especially owner-occupied housing, has not only become more expensive over the last two generations, it has gone up in price faster than real earnings. At the same time, owner occupancy has become more common. Before World War II, less than half the housing units in the US were owner-occupied, currently two thirds are, and the level is higher for whites and married couples. American home buyers are paying a higher percentage of their incomes for housing at the same time that home ownership has become more and more the behavioral pattern and the cultural norm. One consequence has been an increasing desperation in the housing market. While rapid inflation of housing prices has brought unprecedented wealth to some sectors of the middle class it has put most in a financial, moral and time squeeze.

Home ownership is widely represented as independence and self-sufficiency, but almost all home owners actually owe more than they own. Three and three quarter trillion dollars were owed on homes in 1995 (to which could be added \$255 billion in home equity loans and lines of credit). Rather than giving people freedom to confront their circumstances, very high levels of debt for something which is so culturally valued, so meaningful as a marker of position and individual wealth, makes them hostages to the demands of their employers, committed to selling their time and labor in a situation where not having a job means losing not only income, but home, social position and individual identity. When the national, regional or local economy declines because jobs are exported or speculative bubbles burst, home ownership rapidly becomes a liability as payments take up more of smaller incomes, values decline and families sell at a loss or have their homes foreclosed.

Homes are deeply gendered as the sites of reproduction and the location of gendered divisions of labor. Home ownership is also gendered, even though it is often discussed as a family strategy and even though two incomes are now required for most couples to pay for the housing they want. After divorce, women are frequently left without the resources of credit, down payment or income to buy a home, or with homes that they do not have the resources to keep. For men, a norm of home ownership has increased pressure to fill the good provider role. Stepping out of the rat race to be close and nurturing fathers is urged on men at the same time as the circumstances of their lives and the insecurity of a global economy demand ever greater devotion to their jobs.

Contradictions of Middle Class Life

Distinction is frequently made between the home as social space for family life and the house as a physical structure. My own research suggests that many middle class men do not make this distinction. For them, providing a house is part of contributing to family life and buying a house is a sign of personal stability and independence. Home ownership and community membership are intimately connected--house, family and work are not distinct elements but interdependent aspects of a value system and a life course. Home ownership does not simply provide the physical setting, it is an integral part of the fabric and strategy of American middle class family life.

Nicholas Townsend is working on The Package Deal, a book about the patterning of fatherhood, marriage, work and home in the lives of a group of men in the US. Herbert Gans' The Levittowners remains a classic recognition and description of community in the suburbs. Gans' Middle American Individualism is a discussion of individualism and community in American life and is a rock of balanced understanding in a flood of lesser works

of hand-wringing and complacency. Katherine Newman's Falling From Grace is a study of the moral and physical impact of destroyed middle class dreams. The values of home ownership are certainly not restricted to suburban detached houses or the white professional class. Brett Williams, for example, talks about the meanings of, and constraints on, ownership of urban row houses in Washington, DC in Upscaling Downtown.

Values That Matter

By Thomas S Weisner (UC Los Angeles)
Anthropology Newsletter, May 1999 (pp 1, 4-5)

At the end of each year, *Time* magazine publishes an annual issue in which the editors select the significant news figure(s) who had the most impact on the nation and the world that year. President Clinton and Ken Starr shared the cover for 1998. In contrast, the "Youth of America" were given that honor in 1967. The youth of America were presented in the magazine as the hope of the future. They were depicted as an eager, exploring, energetic, valued generation. Some were serving their country in Vietnam; some were vigorously protesting that war. They were going to colleges in unprecedented numbers and doing well. They were bringing new political ideas, new forms of intimacy and sexuality, new music and aesthetics, and a concern for racial justice and tolerance to the country. The youth of the Sixties and early Seventies had then--and still have--an enduring generational identity crystallized in political, cultural and personal life experiences. But what happened when they themselves became parents and had children? Our longitudinal research suggests that these youth diffused many of their new values and practices into middle class life; that their children often did carry on many of their parents' values; and that the parents by and large also continued middle class models emphasizing child stimulation and independence.

Children of the Counterculture

For the past 24 years, my colleagues and I have been following a group of 50 middle class, two-parent married couples, and 150 nonconventional, countercultural families and their children who were born in 1975, in the Family Lifestyles Project (FLS) at UCLA. Attrition has only been 2-4%. The nonconventional families in 1975 were divided between 50 single

unmarried mothers by choice (that is, not single due to widowhood or divorce), 50 unmarried couples having a child together, and 50 women and their partners living in a commune or non-kin living group. All parents are Euro-American, and were living throughout California when the study began. We began visits with the parents when the mothers were in their third trimester of pregnancy. Over the course of the study, we have had contact some 13 times. We interviewed the parents, tested and then talked with their children, contacted their teachers for school records, and did fieldwork and ethnographic studies.

By 1993, about 60% of the families in this study were two-parent couple households, another quarter were single parents, with the remainder in changing, less stable family lifestyles and a few (4% or so) still in communal living situations. At that point, about 80% of all families were middle class with regard to their incomes and occupations, although a subgroup of mostly nonconventional families were in working class, service or artisan jobs, or were at the poverty level.

We have tracked the school achievement, peer relations, behavior problems, drug use, as well as values and social attitude of all the sample children. Contrary to some who had dire predictions regarding the children of the nonconventional or "hippie" families, for the most part they seem to be doing as well or better than our comparison group on these assessments, as well as when compared with other national samples of youth of their generation. Furthermore, some of the nonconventional families' experiments regarding family life and child rearing have diffused into normative middle class life and these practices and ideals are now accepted as "middle class."

Our studies also show that there is considerable intergenerational continuity of values among many families, that nonconventional families can and do have children doing well by standard measures of school achievement, and that they have reduced the likelihood of significant behavior problems at adolescence. Some two-thirds of the nonconventional sample parents show considerable continuity in their progressive values, although many others feel ambivalent about or have lost that values commitment.

Successful Experiments

What is normative for middle class families today is in part the result of successful experiments from the past that have diffused widely and become accepted. Middle class fathers are now commonly involved in the birth of their child and in infant and child care; breastfeeding and the use of natural foods are common; employer family leave policies exist, as well as more awareness of the need to integrate day care and women's work. There is increased tolerance for a diversity of family lifestyles and parenting roles. New religious movements, drawing from world religious traditions as well as "New Age" beliefs, are today a recognized part of middle class spiritual life. And, girls and boys have a less gender-specific range of toys and media images from which to choose. Although certainly not universally accepted or available to all income levels, these new practices are far more prevalent than when the families in our study chose to try them in the 1970s, and struggled to make them possible.

We found significant intergenerational continuity in the transmission of coherent clusters of values of parents to their adolescent children. We examined 8 sets of values orientations of mothers in 1975, and asked both these mothers and their children about the same values some 17 years later. These values included: Gender egalitarianism; materialism; future orientation;

conventional achievement goals; pronaturalism (importance of being expressive, using natural foods, care for the environment); humanism and tolerance; and commitment to experimentation and innovation as a goal in family and personal life. Nonconventional and countercultural parents had higher scores on and more sustained commitment over time to values such as egalitarianism, nonmaterialism, pronaturalism and innovation.

The overall canonical correlation of mothers' and teens' values orientations was .54; correlations between particular parental values and their teen's ranged from .13 to .45; 6 of 8 correlations were statistically significant; in fact, 5 of 8 values correlations between the mother's values at the third trimester and their teen's values 17 years later, were significant. (We also interviewed fathers with a similar basic pattern.) In addition, we asked the teens to respond to the Astin questionnaire, given to hundreds of thousands of college freshmen in the US each year. The teens in our study from nonconventional families were significantly more likely to report that they believed in liberal social values, compared to teens in the FLS conventional comparison sample, and the national sample of entering college students. At the same time, they were no different in their college aspirations and plans.

Solid Foundation for Most

The families in our sample instantiated their values in various ways which they reported to us, including organized *joint activities* with their children reflecting their values (such as attending political events or using gender egalitarian toys and selecting media), developing a *family charter or story* about the kind of family they were which reflected their values (eg, we are a family that has always thrived on change and questioning convention), and using their lifestyle orientations to *account for*

troubling events and changes in their lives to their children by emphasizing their efforts to fit their family life to their values (a proactive account focused on their own choices or societal forces, as opposed to blaming others or themselves). In these ways, families provided a variation on the middle class developmental pathway of everyday beliefs and practices. Such activities, stories and accounts, if at least selectively instantiated in practices, and consistently used over time, may have offered teens a shared, available framework for negotiating with parents and peers during periods of personal and familial conflict, and an initial core ideology to assist them as they began forming their own.

The youth in our nonconventional sample were doing as well or better in school than our comparison sample at the end of sixth grade and in high school, and sustained commitment to a set of values was among the significant predictors (along with socioeconomic status and the child's early tested ability levels). The youth who took the SAT did as well or better than both national College Board averages and our own comparison sample. A subset of nonconventional parents, however, struggled with jobs, personal problems, and in other ways, and their teens were more likely to be having problems.

Helen Garnier and Judith Stein at UCLA found that a sustained commitment to humanistic/egalitarian values among the nonconventional family sample had a positive effect on reducing the likelihood of adolescents having behavior problems. Commitment to a cluster of values including conventional achievement, future orientation and acceptance of conventional authority, was *likewise* associated with fewer behavior problems.

A related finding is that most nonconventional, as well as two-parent comparison group families, were quite similar in the high rates of verbalizations, frequent positive and encouraging interactions, stimulation of the child, and

other characteristic "middle class" parent-child behavioral patterns. Exchanges of questions between parents and children, as well as offering children choices and parental play with children were very common in both conventional and nonconventional family groups. Parents also emphasized the importance of developing self-esteem and independence in their children. (Of course there was also considerable individual variation among families.) In these respects, these parents reproduced and even exaggerated some core middle class parental goals and practices, while they challenged others.

Shared Middle Class Goals

Although what is defined as middle class changes constantly, there are two general characteristics of middle class parenting and child development that have persisted for the last three generations and longer, and which most families in our sample (nonconventional and comparison sample alike) by and large reproduced.

First is the "pedagogical" cultural model for child development described by Robert LeVine and colleagues (*Child Care and Culture: Lessons from Africa*, 1994). A pedagogical developmental model is characterized by a concern with the achievement of literacy, emphasis on individual child stimulation and active engagement of the child with others, exploratory behavior, cognitive and verbal signs of intelligence, verbal communication (such as treating the child as a presumptive co-equal interlocutor), and question-response exchanges.

Second, middle class parents--certainly compared to parents in other cultures--place an emphasis on individualism, autonomy, self-reliance and self expression in their children, along with concerns over sufficient basic trust, attachment and the security and esteem of the self, and use of praise and encouragement.

By and large, both nonconventional and more conventional families and children reflected the pedagogical and autonomy emphases of the middle class in their behaviors, although they questioned middle class emphases in other ways. Conventional and nonconventional families, middle class or not, were more similar to each other in their relatively high rates of stimulating behaviors, or autonomy-encouraging practices, compared to much lower rates for those parental and child behaviors found in many cultures around the world.

Parents' values in the nonconventional family sample more often differed from the comparison sample in other ways--usually selectively supporting, challenging or offering modifications to some of these other middle class American developmental goals and practices. Nonconventional families were more likely to differ from our comparison sample in their family arrangements, values orientations (nonconventional families emphasized more progressive, tolerant values, less materialistic, more gender egalitarian, more questioning of conventional authority), and in other specific cultural practices (spirituality, political activities, diet and nutrition, and others).

Experience, Behavior and Ambivalence

Countercultural families *experienced* what they tried out in their lifestyle experiments as very different because it varied from the unmarked middle class norms of the time, and their innovations were perceived that way by the larger society—even as dangerous and revolutionary at times. But parents' experience as they talked to us about them did not necessarily match their actual behavioral practices as we observed them. In cross-cultural perspective, these innovations, however important to parents and difficult to do, often were relatively modest in magnitude. For example, parents with pronatural goals breastfed

their infants past 12 months—a long time for middle class parents in 1975, whereas many parents around the world begin weaning gradually only after 18 months.

Furthermore, new values and practices, like more normative middle class child rearing and cultural models of parenting are experienced and expressed in practice with conflict and ambivalence. Beatrice Whiting, for example, has called the middle class push for autonomy and self-expression the “dependency hang-up,” in which middle class parents emphasize the values of independence and self reliance, while at the same time worrying and feeling anxious about their own need for and fears of the loss of close and dependent relationships with their children, as well as the loss of control and dominance over children.

Real Middle Class Concerns

There are many circumstances responsible for the generally more troubled, less optimistic view of the children and youth of the US today, compared to the very hopeful, excited view of youth of 1967. Concerns about middle class families and their children are to a significant extent due to concerns about stagnating incomes, and work pressures facing dual-earning families and single parent households, but often these are presented as concerns exclusively about values or lifestyles. Katherine Newman has richly documented the personal experiences and struggles of families facing downward mobility in income, insecure jobs and work pressures, in *Declining Fortunes* (1993) and *Falling From Grace* (1988). The point is that time use pressures, providing child care, decent schools, children born out of wedlock, alternative family forms, drugs and alcohol and sexual experimentation have become middle class concerns, no longer problems ostensibly only of the poor, minorities or marginal. In our study, nonconventional and conventional families alike—both parents and children—did better with sufficient basic economic

resources and relative stability of family life and caregivers over time.

Successful Hybrids

Those who point to “family values” (the goals, meanings and purposes of family life and human development) as important in parenting and children’s development are right. Of course, values and goals do matter. They can positively affect the well being of children along with basic levels of family stability and the adequate resources that all families need. Our work with both conventional and more nonconventional families in the broad middle class suggests, however, that more than one kind of values orientation can provide that kind of positive developmental environment for children, and that more than one kind of family lifestyle (single parents, unmarried couples, changing family situations) can provide the context for relatively successful development and well-being by the standards of American society. Nonconventional families who selectively blended alternative choices, with more “middle class” values and practices, seemed to have teens who were doing well by both middle class standards and according to their own parental goals.

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Furin and Anne Staunton undertook interviews and fieldwork with the adolescents and parents. Most of all, we thank the 200 families who participate in the FLS. Some of the work reported was completed while Weisner was at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, with support provided by NSF and the William T Grant Foundation. A recent FLS reference is in T S Weisner & L Bernheimer (1998), “Children of the 1960s at Midlife: Generational Identity and the Family Adaptive Project,” Welcome to Middle Age! and Other Cultural Fictions, Richard Shweder, Ed.

Consuming America

By Richard Wilk (Indiana U)
Anthropology Newsletter, February 1999 (pp 1, 4-5)

The hardest thing to see, according to George Orwell, is something right in front of your nose. Anthropologists have always had an easier time focussing on the distant and exotic. We have been less successful finding the exotic close to home, especially in those mundane and vulgar symbols of the middle class that surround and frame everyday life, which millions take for granted. But the things American middle class consume in such abundance, which they also take very much for granted, have fascinating social histories. Finding out how they became so ordinary can be an engrossing intellectual journey. It may also be one of the most important contributions that anthropologists can make to help solve the global environmental crisis.

The Comforts of Home

The North American middle class way of life is centered on the home. In houses which are growing in size every generation, Americans now consume more resources per capita than any other people in the history of the planet. But instead of seeing themselves as living a life of almost unimaginable luxury, the word Americans use to describe their standard of living is "comfortable." Where did this notion of comfort come from? And how did it become so focussed on material culture, the basis of constantly rising levels of consumption?

One way to answer these questions is to learn the social histories of the peculiar things that have come to furnish the American dream. Following the theme Ralph Linton pioneered in his famous essay on the American breakfast, we can disclose the cultural nature of consumption in the average home by tracing the origins of mundane items to

their exotic origins. Take, for example, the reclining chair.

The Seat of Power

In 1996 La-Z-Boy Company was the third-ranked manufacturer of furniture in the US, with \$947 million in sales. Introduced as "novelty furniture" in 1927, intended for outdoor use in the back yard, the La-Z-Boy® recliner did not find a market niche until it became a symbol of working class domesticity and respectability. It was advertised as a way to lure a man home after work; furnishing the nest where the upwardly mobile male relaxed from his daily struggle. Sales took off after WW II, when the "recliner lounge chair" became part of the domestic dream of single-family suburban homes full of nuclear families. When television--the electronic hearth--took over the domestic evening, Dad's recliner often landed the best spot.

There were no clear cultural antecedents for the recliner chair; early American furniture was known for its spare simplicity. From the perspective of symbolic boundaries, the big soft chair could be seen as dangerous and transgressive. It is after all furniture for the public part of the house, which transforms into something very much like that most private of places, the bed. In a culture that values hard work and conviviality, the recliner encourages dozing and sleep, even while others in the room stay awake. Elite social critics fastened on the recliner as a symbol of an overstuffed, morally lax working class, the "couch potatoes" who actually used their leisure time in a leisurely way, instead of uplifting themselves in museums or other cultural pursuits. In the 1960s the middle class was exhorted by the *New Yorker* magazine to "get out of

your La-Z-Boy® long enough to do something!”

The La-Z-Boy® was accepted, despite its ambiguity, when it became part of a radical reformulation of American leisure, attitudes towards work, and engagement in the home and family as a cultural project. It was enmeshed in a movement that built a country around the polarities of work and home, undercutting all the civil spaces and social groups in between.

Together But Separate

In the 18th and 19th centuries, middle class family life was not built around shared leisure. Working days were long, and even on the farm there were separate male and female work groups. When work was over, people wanted to party, talk, drink, ride, do something active, usually in all-male and all-female groups in such settings as bars, sewing circles, social clubs, sports, churches and lodges. Despite today's nostalgic images of Victorian parlor conviviality, families rarely spent their evenings sitting together around the fireplace, except perhaps on holidays and other special occasions.

Until the 20th century, Americans never imagined that the reward for hard work was lying still and passive on an overstuffed chair for hours, surrounded by the nuclear family. When at home they were always doing something--knitting, playing cards, crafts, or some kind of assembly work. The idea that work and stress require long evenings of passive relaxation, is a recently invented tradition--part of a program of nuclear family togetherness and shared leisure pushed on the rest of the country. Twentieth century social reformers waged war on what they saw as the unruly and destructive entertainment, and the informally mixed-up family arrangements of the “lower classes.” As with so many dramatic changes in American life, the “wedge” issue was health. Extended families and sex-segregated raucous public amusements were labeled unhealthy and

pathological. A healthy society of thriving individuals could only be built in a conjugal setting where the nuclear family rested daily from the rigors of disciplined work.

The Good Life?

The reclining chair, like any other piece of material culture, is not just a passive reflection or indicator of social change. Major advances in the anthropology of consumption, in the hands of theorists like Appadurai and Bourdieu, have shown us that objects are much more deeply embedded in social process. Material culture has been part of a major transformation of middle class family life over the last 30 years.

Leisure is now a project for the whole family, engaging more and more time and energy. Home furnishings are tools of transformation, and manufacturers have responded with new images and designs. In the 1980s and 1990s recliner makers embraced the new label, “motion furniture.” Gliding across increasingly blurred class distinctions, the overstuffed chairs were no longer exiled to the den, TV room or rec room. “Motion Modular Furniture Groupings,” where several sections of a sofa-group recline separately, now include fold-down trays, pull-out drawers, phones and a “multiple motor massage system” with optional heater. Advertising and marketing, once focussed on dad after a hard day at the office, now puts mom and the babies together in a chair, and a whole happy family reclining together in their living-room module. Popular kid-size recliners promote true family democracy and “personalized comfort.” There are special chairs for fat and thin, and units can be “customized to match any décor, family size or lifestyle.” With all this diversity, *Consumer's Digest* reports that one in four American homes has at least one reclining chair.

In a world where so many fashions begin with the elite and then trickle down

the social scale, recliners stubbornly swim against the flow. At the high end of the scale, better chairs cost \$800 or more, and the owners of La-Z-Boy® “Galleries” report that expensive fabrics including cashmere and leather are extremely popular. There is even a market for an exotic imported Norwegian “stressless” recliner, which offers an “infinite number of positions” starting at more than \$1000.

The transformation of middle class domesticity has been anything but peaceful. Behind the happy advertising images that show harmonized living rooms, happy families and the joy of togetherness are millions of divorces, incidents of domestic violence and other kinds of conflict. Some sociologists think that the allocation and spending of money in middle class households has become a focus for highly charged issues of entitlement and authority raised by dramatic changes in work and gender roles. Consumer goods usually become emotionally and socially important as gifts, tools and even weapons in negotiating and renegotiating domestic life.

Even La-Z-Boy advertisements acknowledge the problem of couples who are always “arguing about who gets the La-Z-Boy®.” In the working class family, the recliner was “dad’s chair;” after all he was the breadwinner and he deserved his relaxation. Advertisements in the 1940s showed mom guiltily enjoying a rest in the chair while dad was at work. Mom and the children may now have their own recliners, but this doesn’t mean that dad has given up his position. Men still tend to have the most elaborate models, and as a trade journal puts it “These custom-built ‘cocoon’ become the director’s chair in home theater ensembles.” From his self-contained throne, dad now rules by remote control.

Just Rewards?

Most Americans who own recliners don’t see them as badges of potato-hood,

sloth or passivity. Instead, the theme word for reclining motion furniture is “relaxation.” The folklore of the middle class is that life is hard, and everyone needs compensation, times when they can “lie back and take it easy.” That time in the chair becomes a virtue, a necessity for health in a world of business, stress, and the continuing drain of work and responsibility. La-Z-Boy imagines their customers as “people who have made it through the lean years and have earned the right to enjoy their success.” They deserve a reclining chair, their “Grand Snuggler” and “Dreamland,” or even their “Avenger.” Motion furniture is sold as just compensation for the toils of “all the hard-working people who make America hum.” But are there limits to how much material compensation Americans “deserve” for their hard labor? And is material abundance, an overflowing cornucopia of consumer goods really providing Americans with the happiness they expect?

Repeated surveys find, on the contrary, a negative relationship between wealth and self-reported happiness. According to Juliet Schor (*The Overspent American*), many people feel trapped in a work and spend cycle, frustrated with technology, drowning in abundance. Voluntary simplicity groups and “simplicity circles,” are spreading and expanding, while foundations like the Center for a New American Dream try to envision a less materialistic society.

American family consumerism is not just a moral or intellectual issue, it is one of the world’s most pressing environmental problems, one of the most important fundamental causes of global warming and climate change. The average American, according to recent estimates by the Worldwatch Institute, annually consumes 50 to 60 times more resources than does an average resident of Sub-Saharan Africa. Americans consume energy and materials at a profligate rate unmatched by any other country, and as the energy crisis recedes into the past, our

cars, houses and bodies are once again getting more bloated every year. Yet the material lives of the American middle class are less known to anthropology than Trobriand jewelry.

Take a Chair

My example of the recliner chair is meant to make a simple point; the consuming world of middle class Americans is rich in meaning, and bears much closer scrutiny by anthropologists. When Harold Wilhite and I began research on energy consumption and household decision-making of the middle class of northern California in 1981, we found only one other anthropologist (Willett Kempton) doing consumption-related work in the US. While few anthropologists seemed interested, many in the energy conservation community found our ethnographic approach innovative and useful.

In Europe, particularly in England, anthropologists are key players in a renewed field of "material culture studies" that takes the consumer world of the middle class seriously. They have provided rich ethnographies of shopping, housing and everyday material culture from the Sony Walkman to woolen carpets. There is nothing like it in the US, where few anthropologists work on middle class consumer culture, and those who do find a much more receptive audience in the Association for Consumer Research than the AAA. Monographs such as archaeologist Michael Schiffer's *The Portable Radio in American Life* are few and far between. Ironically, the key social theorists of American consumer culture are Europeans like Baudrillard and Barthes.

It's hard to explain this peculiar indifference to an important issue that is literally right in our faces (or perhaps under our buttocks). Isn't it striking that the very element that most defines American culture--a love of technology and material abundance--is the thing we

most stridently ignore? Over the years graduate students in my seminars on consumer culture have produced fascinating, ethnographically rich work on topics like fishing tackle, lawn ornaments, ketchup and mountain bikes. But then, facing the reality of the job market, they head off to do their dissertations on something more "exotic." Perhaps it is time for us to sit down, lean back and pay some more attention to what is happening at home.

Richard Wilk is Professor of Anthropology at Indiana U. His research in Belize and the US has focussed on household decision-making, consumer culture, research ethics, transnationalism and development issues. He has recently published a textbook in economic anthropology (Economies and Cultures), and is currently writing about globalization and consumer culture.

APPENDIX B:

List of *Anthropology Newsletter* Articles

Articles Commissioned for the *Anthropology Newsletter* on Middle Class Working Families

- Darrah, Charles, Jan English-Lueck and James Freeman
1998 "Living With Technology," *Anthropology Newsletter* 39(9): 1, 4.
- Dudley, Katherine M
1999 "(Dis)locating the Middle Class," *Anthropology Newsletter* 40(4): 1, 4.
- Fricke, Tom
1998 "Home Work," *Anthropology Newsletter* 39(7): 1, 4, 5.
- Goldschmidt, Walter
1999 "Dynamics of Status in America," *Anthropology Newsletter* 40(5): 62, 64.
- Harkness, Sara
1998 "Time for Families," *Anthropology Newsletter* 39(8): 1, 4.
- Holland, Dorothy, Catherine Lutz, Don Nonini
1999 "Public Life, Public Good," *Anthropology Newsletter* 40(3): 1, 4.
- Martin, Emily
1999 "Flexible Survivors," *Anthropology News* 40(6): 5-7.
- Townsend, Nicholas
1999 "Housing the Good Life," *Anthropology Newsletter* 40(1): 1, 4.
- Weisner, Thomas S
1999 "Values That Matter," *Anthropology Newsletter* 40(5): 1, 4, 5.
- Wilk, Richard
1999 "Consuming America," *Anthropology Newsletter* 40(2): 1, 4, 5.

Other Articles Appearing in the *Anthropology Newsletter* on Middle Class Working Families

- Adams, Jane
1999 "Many Sides to Relevance," *Anthropology Newsletter* 40(4): 14.
- Albert, Steven
1998 "Anthropology of Everyday Competence," *Anthropology Newsletter* 39(9): 10.
- Arnould, Eric, Linda Price, Carolyn Folkman
1999 "Cherished Possessions," *Anthropology Newsletter* 40(2): 17.
- Cassell, Joan
1998 "Are Women Surgeons Different?" *Anthropology Newsletter* 39(9): 10-11.
- Counts, Dorothy and David
1998 "Home is Where They Park It?" *Anthropology Newsletter* 39(8): 9-10.
- Descartes, Lara
1999 "Surveying the Big City," *Anthropology Newsletter* 40(3): 26.
- Durrenberger, E Paul and Kendall Thu
1998 "Coming in from the Margins," *Anthropology Newsletter* 39(7): 58, 60.

- Eisenhart, Margaret
 1998 "Success in Science," *Anthropology Newsletter* 39(8): 10-11.
- Erickson, Ken
 1999 "Postal Modernism," *Anthropology Newsletter* 40(3): 17-18.
- Fink, Deborah
 1998 "Things Fall Apart," *Anthropology Newsletter* 39(7): 17.
- Gerber, Eleanor
 1998 "Relevance Through Surveys," *Anthropology Newsletter* 39(9): 16-17.
- Greengrass, Mara R
 1998 "How Did You Do It?" *Anthropology Newsletter* 39(7): 19.
- Groger, Lisa
 1999 "Relinquishing Care," *Anthropology Newsletter* 40(3): 19.
- Gullestad, Marianne
 1998 "Studying the Self-Evident," *Anthropology Newsletter* 39(8): 3, 6.
- Iris, Madelyn
 1999 "Pillars of the Middle Class Community," *Anthropology Newsletter* 40(2): 18.
- Jackson, J L Jr.
 1999 "Party Politics-The Two Party System," *Anthropology Newsletter* 40(5): 19-20.
- Jindra, Michael
 1998 "'Others' Among Us," *Anthropology Newsletter* 39(9): 54, 56.
- Lackey, J F
 1999 "Confronting the Other in PA Dutch Country," *Anthropology Newsletter* 40(5): 18-19.
- Lamphere, Louise
 1999 "Let's Set the Agenda," *Anthropology Newsletter* 40(2): 7-8.
- Maxwell, Andrew H
 1999 "'Bikers' and Motorcyclists," *Anthropology Newsletter* 40(3): 18-19.
- McCreery, John
 1999 "Expanding Our Horizons," *Anthropology Newsletter* 40(3): 7.
- Nardi, Bonnie
 1998 "Relevant Anthropology Viewed from Technology Studies," *Anthropology Newsletter* 39(8): 22, 24.
- Olsen, Barbara
 1999 "Relevance in Our Cupboard," *Anthropology Newsletter* 40(2): 16, 17.
- Olwig, Karen F
 1998 "The Mobile Middle Class," *Anthropology Newsletter* 39(8): 11-12.
- Overbey, Mary Margaret
 1998 "Relevance of Middle-Class Working Families," *Anthropology Newsletter* 39(7): 3.
- Savishinski, Joel
 1998 "Mastering the Art of Retirement," *Anthropology Newsletter* 39(7): 15.
- Sherry, John
 1999 "Real Work," *Anthropology Newsletter* 40(3): 20-21.
- Sibley, Will
 1998 "Long History of 'Home' Work," *Anthropology Newsletter* 39(9): 2.

Slorah, Patricia

1999 "Evolution of Family and Work," *Anthropology Newsletter* 40(1): 14.

Strauss, C

1999 "Meanings of Welfare Reform," *Anthropology Newsletter* 40(5): 18.

Townsend, Nicholas

1999 "To Be A Father," *Anthropology Newsletter* 40(4): 18.

Varenne, Herve

1999 "Neither Here Nor There," *Anthropology Newsletter* 40(4): 2.

APPENDIX C:

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