

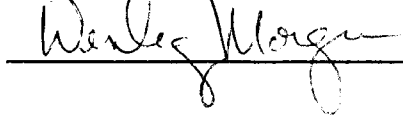
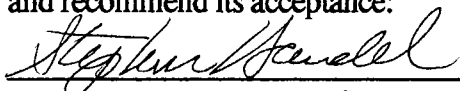
To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Reva Heron entitled "Intuition and Deliberation: A Study of Women's Sexual Choices." I have examined the final copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in Psychology.



Howard Pollio, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation
and recommend its acceptance:



Accepted for the Council:



Associate Vice Chancellor and
Dean of the Graduate School

INTUITION AND DELIBERATION: A STUDY
OF WOMEN'S SEXUAL CHOICES

A Dissertation
Presented for the
Doctor of Philosophy
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Reva Lee Heron
December 1997

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband and dearest friend, Derald York, and to the memory of my mother, Wini Heron. I am deeply grateful to have had their support and love. They believed in me, laughed with me, challenged me, and never let me take myself either too seriously or not seriously enough.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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I would also like to thank my family, including my husband's family, and my friends and colleagues. Their support, love, and encouragement have made this journey a source of wonder and delight. My relationships with them have allowed me to remain open to new experiences; to remain grounded while reaching for my dreams. Finally, I am profoundly grateful to my husband, Derald, who has always loved me and valued me for who I am.

ABSTRACT

This project provided a description of women's experience of making a choice about whether or not to become sexually intimate with a potential partner. The study also involved the development of a procedure for studying decision-making which included both qualitative and quantitative components. The qualitative component was comprised of in-depth phenomenological interview and hermeneutic analysis of narratives. The quantitative component involved the "policy capturing" technique derived from Brunswik's Lens Model. Fifteen adult women participated in both the qualitative and quantitative phases of the project. Findings from the phenomenological procedure included a thematic structure of the experience of sexual choice. Major themes described by participants included: Not Right/Right, Attraction, Intimacy, Control, and Anticipations/Consequences. These themes were always contextualized within an historical and interpersonal framework; this ground of "Who I Am" involved women's awareness of changes over time in their perceptions of themselves and their worlds. The themes from the phenomenological interviews were used to construct vignettes which were utilized in the policy capturing procedure. For each vignette, participants were asked to rate how likely they would be to engage in sexual intercourse. Stepwise regression analyses were employed to test differential weighting of themes for individual participants and for the group as a whole. Although some of the judgment policies were idiosyncratic, the policies for most participants indicated that the largest proportion of variance was accounted for by the historical and interpersonal ground of "Who I Am." The results of the policy capturing for the group agreed with the thematic structure from phase one. Together, the themes and their ground accounted for 95% of the variance in participants' sexual judgments.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	5
Overview	5
Personal/Individual Factors	6
Relationship Factors	12
Social Factors	14
Factors Related to Circumstance or Opportunity	16
Models of Sexual Choice	16
The Salience of Gender as a Dimension of Sexual Choice	18
Methodological Critique of Prior Research and Implications for the Current Project	21
III. THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL BACKGROUND	24
Overview	24
Phenomenology: Philosophical Considerations	25
Method Derived from Phenomenological Philosophy	34
Application of the Phenomenological Method to Diverse Domains	36
Probabilistic Functionalism and the Lens Model	39
Method Derived from Brunswik's Theoretical Constructs	45
Application of the Lens Model to Diverse Domains	54
IV. COMPARISON OF THE SYSTEMS AND METHODOLOGICAL INTEGRATION	58
Intention of the Current Study	70
V. METHOD	72
Introduction	72
Participants	72
Procedure	73
Phase I	73
Phase II	75
VI. RESULTS	79
Introduction	79
Description of the Participants	79
Phase I: Phenomenological Analyses	80
Themes	80
Not Right/Right	80
Attraction	83
Intimacy	84
Control	86
Anticipations and Consequences	87
Ground	88
Thematic Structure of the Experience of Sexual Choice	90
Phase II: Policy Capturing	98
Vignette Construction	98
Regression Analyses	102

CHAPTER	PAGE
Correlational Data	102
Policy Capturing	104
Idiographic Analyses	104
Nomothetic Analyses	108
Reliability Data	112
Comparison of Qualitative and Quantitative Results	114
VII. DISCUSSION	118
Major Findings: The Experience of Sexual Choice	119
The Experiential Ground of Who I Am	119
Themes	123
Not Right/Right	123
Attraction	124
Intimacy	125
Control	126
Anticipations and Consequences	127
Thematic Structure of Sexual Choice	129
Evaluation of the Procedure	130
Suggestions for Future Research	133
Practical Implications and Concluding Comments	135
REFERENCES	140
APPENDICES	152
VITA	162

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE	PAGE
1. Demographic Information	81
2. Correlations between participants' responses on Question 1	103
3. Proportion of Variance Accounted for (R^2) and Usefulness Indices (UI) for cues	105
4. Standard Multiple Regression of Sexual Choice on Cues and Experiential Ground	109
5. Standard Multiple Regression of Sexual Choice on Cues	111
6. Standard Multiple Regression of Ground on Cues	113

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE	PAGE
1. Graphic Representation of Intentionality	28
2. The Lens Model	43
3. Structural Complementarity of Intentionality and the Lens Model	59
4. Thematic Structure of the Experience of Sexual Choice	91

“No person in the world can boast of having made one important and authentic decision on the basis of mature and thorough deliberation, in which every possibility was weighed. We do not marry that way, we have no hobbies that way, we do not join a political party that way, and we do not convert to a religion that way. To make a choice is to decide without rational foundation, to take a risk, to create the future.”

J. H. Van den Berg, M.D.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Choices regarding sexual activity are among the more weighty and complex decisions that an individual makes in his or her lifetime. At various times in a person's life, choices must be made about whether or not to have sex at all, when and with whom to have sex, and which sexual behaviors are acceptable or unacceptable. One must choose whether or not to utilize a contraceptive method, which method to use, and how to deal with the consequences of the choice. An individual's choices will have implications with which he or she must contend. The possibility of pregnancy is a potential consideration as are risks related to sexually transmitted disease (STD) and sexual coercion. There also are potential ramifications with regard to one's relationships with partners, oneself, family members, and peers.

Sometimes, the choices made will have a salutary effect on the individual's life, enriching relationships and leading to positive consequences (e.g., a hoped-for pregnancy, avoidance of health risks, or increases in physical pleasure and self-confidence). At other times, the choices will be poor ones and the person must deal with unfortunate consequences. If sexual behaviors are solely guided by impulse and do not involve careful deliberation the person may feel disappointed or exploited as a consequence of the experience. On the other hand, a sexual choice wholly in lacking in spontaneity may be equally devoid of pleasure and delight. When sexual decisions go awry, the results can be devastating for the individual. Given the salience of decisions concerning sexuality, it is essential to understand the process by which such choices are made.

The primary purpose of the present study is to provide a thorough description of one specific aspect of sexual choice; namely, the choice made by a woman regarding whether or not she will have sex with a potential partner with whom she has not already been sexually intimate. The focus is specifically on women's sexual choice rather than

including both men and women. While men's sexual choices are of interest in their own right, recent scholars have noted that research on human sexuality has been framed within a "male-as-normative" context and investigators have neglected to ask women about their own experience of their sexuality or of themselves as sexual beings (e.g. Jordan, 1987; Rubin, 1982). Research that has focused on women's sexual choices (e.g., Gaulier, Travis, & Allgeier, 1986; Green & Sandos, 1983) has not emphasized women's *experience* of those choices. Echoing the widespread concerns of feminist researchers, Daniluk (1993) notes that researchers must begin to "allow the authority of women's experience to construct women's realities" (p. 54). Thus, the current project is intended to provide an exploration of women's own understanding of their choices regarding sexual intimacy.

A second purpose of the project is to introduce a new methodological procedure that may be utilized in any study of human judgment. This procedure begins with phenomenological interviews with the women and is followed by a thematic analysis of their narratives in which they elucidate their experiences of choosing whether or not to become sexually intimate. The existing research in this area has generally focused on aspects of sexual choice that were of interest to the investigators. This project differs in that it allows women the opportunity to guide us toward those aspects of sexual choice which are most salient *for the women themselves*. A second phase of the study involves a quantitative methodological and analytic procedure derived from the research on social judgment. This method, known as "policy capturing", has typically involved the use of variables chosen by the researcher on the basis of theoretical considerations or scholarly interest. Again, the present study differs in that the variables employed in this phase of the research were derived from the thematic analyses conducted in the first phase. Thus, the variables of interest were given by the women's own experience and not by a priori considerations related to the research. It is hoped that this procedure will allow for the attainment of a rich description and deeper understanding of women's choices regarding

sexual intimacy. In addition, this method provides a much-needed bridge between qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Finally, it is hoped that the procedure will be applicable in other investigations of social judgment and choice.

It should be noted that most extant research on sexual choice is based on the assumption that sexual choices are rational and involves a conscious process of reflection and deliberation. This assumption is reflected by the language employed in the research literature; the entire body of research is generally framed within the context of "sexual decision-making" rather than as "sexual choice" or "sexual choosing." The distinction between a decision and a choice is an important one. The verb "decide" is derived from the Latin "decidere", which means "to cut off." To decide is thus to come to a conclusion, remove doubt, and make a judgment, thereby cutting off other alternatives. The verb "choose" is derived from the Germanic "kiesen", which is most closely related to the Greek "geu(omai)", which means "(to) enjoy" and to the Latin "gust(tare)", which means "(to) taste." Thus, to choose may involve a decision; it may also involve showing a preference or inclination toward one alternative without a sense of the finality inherent in deciding. In addition, both etymologies suggest that there is a more sensual aspect to choosing as opposed to deciding, and it appears that choosing more easily allows for the influence of non-reflective and intuitive modes as well as more rational, reflective ones. Deciding, on the other hand, appears to involve only the rational and reflective processes. Given the distinction between the nuances of choice and decision, the framework of "sexual decision-making" seems to limit us to those processes that are clearly defined and reflective in nature. By expanding the exploration to include both decisions and choices, one opens the investigation to include both the reflected and the unreflected, the rational and the intuitive, the conscious and the unconscious.

In the following chapter, I present an overview of the available research on sexual choice and decision-making. Given that most investigations were conducted under the

rubric of “sexual decision-making”, the aforementioned assumptions of this framework will be reflected in the discussion. For example, prior research typically deals with sexual decisions rather than choices and generally assumes that sexual decisions are the product of a rational, conscious (though often fallible) process. Following a presentation of the relevant research findings, I will discuss the limitations of the research and provide a rationale for employing qualitative methods.

In Chapter III, I present a discussion of the theoretical and methodological systems that underlie the procedures employed in this study. First, I will discuss Existential-Phenomenology and the phenomenological method. Second, I will outline the theoretical system upon which the policy capturing method is based: Egon Brunswik’s Lens Model. The Lens Model itself will then be described, followed by a discussion of the policy capturing method and the analytic procedures utilized by that method. In the fourth chapter, I present an integration of the two systems, delineate the method developed for the present study, and discuss the reasons this method was chosen for investigation of sexual choice.

The specific procedure employed in the current investigation is described in Chapter V, with results of the study given in Chapter VI. The first part of Chapter VI describes the thematic structure of the experience of women’s choice regarding whether or not to become sexually intimate with a potential partner. The second part of the chapter provides the results of the policy capturing procedure. The final chapter presents a discussion of the present research, observations regarding the method developed, and implications for future research.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Overview

Sexuality is a phenomenon of great complexity. Within its realm are interwoven experiences of bodily sensations, relationships with other people and ourselves, and cultural mores and values. The meaning of sexuality is dynamic and subject to change across individuals, cultures, and periods of time. It has been suggested that "human sexuality has no essence or nature that transcends historical and cultural circumstances, but rather encompasses a diversity of sexualities that are made, constructed, as a result of personal, social, economic and political factors" (Naus, 1987). Obviously, the study of sexuality does not occur outside of the context in which sexuality (and everything else) derives its meaning. One could easily perform a substitution in the above passage and claim that "research in human sexuality has no essence or nature that transcends historical and cultural circumstances...."

What, then, do we discover when we review the existing research on sexual choice? First, we might note that the majority of the investigations involving normative sexual choice have focused on heterosexual college-student populations or younger adolescents. Older women have largely been neglected in the research, as have women of color and women of homosexual or bisexual orientation. Second, many studies have focused on contraceptive use and risky sexual behaviors (e.g. unprotected intercourse); this surely reflects our nation's concerns regarding the high rates of teen pregnancy and the rising rates of HIV-infection and other sexually transmitted diseases (Reiss, 1990). Third, the body of research is framed in terms of "sexual decision-making." The ramifications of this terminology appear to suggest the widespread assumption that sexual choices are based on a rational, conscious process that could be mapped if only the proper variables were known. For that reason, much of the research has involved a search for specific factors

that influence the decision-making process. A review of the literature reveals very few studies that do not rely on this "factor-oriented" approach. For that reason, the present review will first outline findings related to each of four major classes of factors: personal/individual factors, relationship factors, social factors, and factors related to circumstance or opportunity. Although there is clearly a great deal of overlap and interaction between these four factors, there have been few investigations that have sought to understand complex interrelations between them. For that reason, each of the factors will be presented separately. Following this presentation, I will briefly discuss those models which represent an attempt at integrating factors and exploring their interrelationships. A description of the salience of gender with regard to sexual choice is presented next. The implications of such choices often differ for men and women and these differences should be taken into consideration in any serious discussion of the topic. Finally, the strengths and limitations of existing research will be summarized and the particular relevance of the current investigation will be discussed.

Personal/Individual Factors

This class of factors is comprised by those influences specific to the individual and includes personal values and morals, religious beliefs, cognitive/ developmental factors, personality characteristics, demographic characteristics (e.g. socioeconomic status and level of education) and level of sexual arousal. Numerous studies have found that sexual decisions are influenced by the individual's personal value system and his or her beliefs as to what constitutes acceptable or moral sexual behavior. In one of the earliest studies of premarital dating behavior, Ehrmann (1959) interviewed college students about their dating and sexual activities. He found that an individual's level of sexual activity was determined by a "code of sexual conduct" that was derived in part from social mores, personal values, and peer attitudes and conduct. Although the intervening years have certainly witnessed many changes with regard to what constitutes "acceptable or moral behavior", the

importance of an individual's personal value system appears to have remained stable. Personal values have emerged as significant predictors of sexual behavior in a large number of investigations (e.g., Driscoll & Davis, 1971; Herold & Goodwin, 1981; Lock & Vincent, 1995; Peplau, Rubin & Hill, 1977; and Schulz, Bohrnstedt, Borgatta & Evans, 1977), with values and morals consistently endorsed as a significant reason for postponement or avoidance of premarital sexual activity.

In their discussion of the influence of personal values on the sexual decision making of adolescents, Juhasz and Sonnenshein-Schneider (1980) note that the development of a system of morals and values is concomitant with the development of sense of personal identity and interpersonal relatedness. They state, "In order to examine what is important to us--ideas, ideals, persons, and products--we must first know ourselves. Second, we must be able to communicate our feelings about these values, especially in relationships" (p. 747). In a more recent discussion of the topic (1987), they suggest that one must first consider the basic meaning that an individual attaches to sexuality and sexual intercourse. Second, one must consider the influence of the person's values on the meaning of his or her sexual activities. The meaning of the activity is thought to be derived from the interaction between an individual and his/her world. In their research with adolescents, Juhasz and Sonnenshein-Schneider (1987) found that older adolescents were less influenced by parents, peers, and religious authorities; the authors interpreted this as a transformation of external social influences to an internalized sense of moral autonomy.

Other researchers have utilized Kohlberg's stage theory of moral development as a model for conceptualizing premarital sexual behavior (e.g. D'Augelli & D'Augelli, 1977). These studies have found that women whose moral reasoning was oriented at a lower stage of development were high in sex guilt and were less sexually experienced than women whose moral reasoning was more highly developed (D'Augelli & Cross, 1975). Sex guilt

is defined as a tendency to punish oneself or to feel guilty about transgressions against sexual standards (Mosher & Cross, 1971). Level of sex guilt has been found to be associated with disrupted processing of sexual information (Lewis, Gibbons & Gerrard, 1986). Shame and guilt also were found to be an important reason for young women's avoidance of sexual intercourse (Driscoll & Davis, 1971). In addition, a recent phenomenological investigation of women's experience of their own sexuality revealed that "the experiences of shame and self-blame were themes that were consistently interwoven in each participant's account of her sexuality, experiences that served to impair and thwart their emotional and sexual development" (Daniluk, 1993, p. 65).

Religiosity, viewed here as a specific aspect of an individual's value system, has also been shown to influence sexual-decision making (Bayer, 1977; Herold & Goodwin, 1981; Miller & Simon, 1974; and Wyatt, 1989). Results have indicated that persons with traditional religious beliefs tend to delay intercourse longer than do individuals without such beliefs. The influence of personal values and religiosity on sexual decision-making also appears to be much stronger for women than for men.

In addition to moral development, researchers have studied the influence of cognitive development on sexual decisions made by adolescents and young adults. A Piagetian model of cognitive development has been employed to explain adolescents' tendency to engage in unplanned and unprotected intercourse (Cobliner, 1974; Cvetkovich, Grote, Bjorseth & Sarkissian, 1975; Juhasz & Sonnenshein-Schneider, 1980). These authors suggest that many adolescents have not yet attained formal operational thinking, and thus are unable to effectively plan for intercourse and utilize contraceptives. Although these researchers have hypothesized that adolescents engage in risky sex due to "irrational" thinking, others assert that, for adults, risky sex may in fact be a rational gamble based on weighing of perceived risks versus the opportunity for fulfillment of emotional and physical desires (Pinkerton & Abramson, 1992). In support of this position, it has been

found that, in a sample of adult minority women who either were infected with HIV or were at risk of infection, condom use was most heavily influenced by “how women assess their risk with specific partners in specific situations, and how they weight this risk against their own expectations of potential physical discomfort or reduced sexual pleasure” (Kline, Kline & Oken 1992, p. 455).

Other investigators have employed cognitive models to explain condom use. For example, Byrne and Fisher (1983) outlined a five-step model of effective condom use. First, the individual must obtain and recall accurate information regarding available contraceptive methods. Second, they must acknowledge the likelihood of actually engaging in sexual intercourse. Third, the individual must actually obtain the contraceptive. Fourth, they must engage in communication and negotiation with their sexual partner. Finally, they must actually use the contraceptive. As an extension of the model, Fisher (1990) added two steps; the first additional step involved active decision-making about contraceptive use whereas the second step involved a shift to a “preventative contraceptive script.” As a test of the models of contraceptive use, researchers (Caron, Davis, Halteman & Stickle, 1993) investigated specific predictors of condom use among college freshmen. They found that women tended to use condoms if they rejected traditional attitudes regarding sex roles (i.e., they did not endorse the notion of a “double standard” for men and women). Rejection of the double standard was not predictive of condom use for men. Positive attitudes toward condoms were predictive of reported level of condom use for both men and women.

It has widely been assumed that, to make well-informed choices about sexual behavior, the individual must possess a requisite amount of knowledge about sexual and reproductive issues. Several studies have documented the influence of sexual knowledge on sexual decision-making, noting that adolescent females with higher sexual knowledge tend to have more reliable contraceptive use (Sandler, Watson & Levine, 1992). Sexual

knowledge does seem to have an impact on female adolescents' decisions about sexual activity through its association with attitudes concerning sexuality and gender roles (Lock & Vincent, 1995).

With regard to personality characteristics, results have been largely inconclusive. A small number of studies, however, have found significant relationships between personality measures and sexual behavior. For example, it has been found that intercourse occurred earlier for those women who scored low on a measure of authoritarian submission and high on self-esteem (Peplau, Rubin & Hill, 1977). Further, a measure of object constancy, defined as a high level of differentiation between self and other and a high capacity for commitment to one's partner and to the relationship, was found to be associated with a number of sexual behaviors in a sample of young adults (Randolph & Winstead, 1988). Individuals with high object constancy were compared to respondents with low object constancy. Specifically, it was found that a high object constancy score was associated with higher levels of satisfaction, greater exclusivity, and higher frequency of dates. High object constancy also was related to longer duration of the relationship, greater expectation of the continuity of the relationship, and increased likelihood that the decision to engage in intercourse was discussed in advance with the partner. Further, respondents with high object constancy were less likely to regret the decision once it had been made. Finally, a recent investigation suggested that reliable contraception use in female adolescents was more likely for respondents with an internal, as opposed to external, locus of control (Sandler, Watson & Levine, 1992).

A review of the literature reveals a number of demographic characteristics that have been found to be associated with an increased incidence of premarital sexual intercourse among adolescents and young adults. These include: older age (Newcomer & Baldwin, 1992); lower levels of educational attainment and aspirations (Miller & Simon, 1974; Wyatt, 1989); and low socioeconomic status (Dryfoos, 1990; Lock & Vincent, 1995).

Ethnicity has also been found to be a significant predictor, as African-American females tend to begin having sex at earlier ages than do their European-American counterparts (Lock & Vincent, 1995; Wyatt, 1989).

Finally, one of the more robust findings is that an individual's level of sexual arousal or sexual desire is highly associated with sexual behavior. Sexual desire or arousal is commonly endorsed as a reason for engaging in sexual activity both for men and women (e.g. Carrol, Volk & Hyde, 1985; Christopher & Cate, 1984; DeLamater & MacCorquodale, 1979; Randolph & Winstead, 1988; Rosenthal, Lewis & Cohen, 1996). In one of the few investigations which included information concerning effect size, researchers explored college students' reasons for engaging in intercourse for the first time and found that 42% of the variance was accounted for by the physical arousal of the respondent and his or her partner (Christopher & Cate, 1985).

Thus, it appears that sexual arousal is an important element in choices regarding sexual intimacy. Because of this, it may be of value to consider the topic of sexual arousal in slightly more detail. It has been suggested that men and women may have different experiences of sexual arousal (Rook & Hammen, 1977). Women's physiological state of sexual arousal is less obvious than men's: vaginal lubrication is a more subtle phenomenon than penile erection. Thus, there are perhaps fewer overt physiological cues to indicate arousal is occurring. Research has indicated that when men and women are presented with erotic materials, they do not differ in their levels of measurable physiological response (i.e., penile erection or vaginal lubrication). When asked to rate their level of arousal, however, women are less likely than men to rate themselves as aroused (Heiman, 1977). In addition to differences in physiological indicators, there appears to be a gender difference with regard to acceptable ways of perceiving and acting upon sexual arousal (e.g., Gaulier, Travis, & Allgeier, 1986; Green & Sandos, 1983; McCormick, 1979; Peplau, Rubin, & Hill, 1977). In particular, women's sex-role socialization has

traditionally stressed passivity and responsiveness rather than activity and initiation. In contrast, men are expected to be the initiators and it is less acceptable for them to take a passive and receptive role toward the woman. These expectations place limits on an individual's pattern of response to his or her perceived arousal.

Relationship Factors

Sexual activity occurs within the context of a relationship, so it is to be expected that relationship variables will have an important influence on sexual choice. In the majority of studies related to sexual choice, relationship factors account for much of the variance in young women's decisions regarding their desired level of sexual intimacy with a potential partner. One investigation found that relationship variables (i.e., quality of the relationship, level of commitment, expected duration of the relationship, and the meaning of intercourse within the context of the relationship) accounted for 24% of the variance in respondents' decisions about their first sexual experience (Christopher & Cate, 1985). The level of emotional commitment in the relationship has been found to be a determining factor for sexual activity in samples of college-aged women (e.g. Ehrmann, 1959; Lewis & Burr, 1975; Randolph & Winstead, 1988; Schulz, Bohrnstedt, Borgatta & Evans, 1977), younger adolescent girls (Lock & Vincent, 1995) and adult women (Kline, Kline & Oken, 1992). In one study, over half of a sample of inner-city African American teens stated that they believed intercourse was acceptable if both partners cared for one another (Herz & Reis, 1987). Another investigation (Carrol, Volk & Hyde, 1985) conducted with college students found that, for men, love and commitment were valued but were not viewed as necessary prerequisites for intercourse. In contrast, the majority of women indicated that they would not engage in intercourse in the absence of a loving commitment between themselves and their partner. One exception to this trend was reported in a recent focus-group study of inner-city adolescent girls (Rosenthal, Lewis & Cohen, 1996). The authors state that, "these adolescent girls described a range of types of relationships in which sexual

intercourse occurs. They reported sexual intercourse occurring in both emotionally intimate and solely physical relationships, which is in contrast with the findings of other focus groups in which all of the girls spoke of having sex within the context of a relationship” (p. 735). Even within the context of more casual relationships, however, these girls stated that it was important that the partner “treat them with respect” and provide for them, materially.

In a similar vein, it has been found that young women view sexual activity as a way to facilitate or insure commitment in a relationship (Miller & Simon, 1974; Randolph & Winstead, 1988; Rosenthal, Lewis & Cohen, 1996). Indeed, many young women report that pressure from a partner, or a desire to please the partner, is a significant influence on their decision to engage in sexual intercourse (Christopher & Cate, 1984; DeLamater & MacCorquodale, 1979; Randolph & Winstead, 1988). This finding was replicated in a study of older women ranging in age from 18 to 36 years (Wyatt, 1989). Likewise, a partner’s unwillingness to engage in intercourse is a potent inhibiting factor for sexual activity (Driscoll & Davis, 1971; Herold & Goodwin, 1981). In one investigation, 64% of men indicated that their partner’s desire not to have intercourse was the major reason for the couple’s abstinence (Peplau, Rubin & Hill, 1977).

Within the context of a developing relationship, timing of intercourse is an important consideration for many young women. This is reflected in the findings of numerous investigations, as sexual activity is inhibited if women believe that it is “too early in the relationship” (Peplau, Rubin & Hill, 1977) or if the relationship is not of sufficient duration (Christopher & Cate, 1985). Furthermore, a study of 14 year old pregnant or recently delivered African American girls found that the girls had attempted to establish a trusting relationship with their partner before engaging in sexual activity (Pete & DeSantis, 1990).

Social Factors

Having examined both individual and relational factors, I now move to a discussion of social context and its influence on sexual choice. The social context provides an influence through a number of channels, including family and peer relationships as well as larger social institutions. As much of the research regarding sexual choice has been conducted with samples of adolescents and young adults, it is perhaps not surprising that parental influence is a significant factor for many respondents. In one of the earlier investigations of premarital sexual behavior, it was found that close relationships with parents tended to inhibit sexual behavior. In addition, respondents who perceived their parents as being sexually permissive were more likely to engage in sex than were participants who perceived their parents as sexually restrictive (DeLamater & MacCorquodale, 1979). Low levels of parental involvement and a lack of parental supervision have been found to be associated with higher levels of sexual intercourse among adolescents (Cobliner, 1974; Miller & Simon, 1974). Among a group of pregnant or recently delivered African American 14 year olds, most of the girls mentioned the nature of their family relationships in which they were largely left unsupervised (Pete & DeSantis, 1990). They described their mothers as inconsistent with regard to their stated limits on their daughter's behaviors and to the enforcement of those limits. Some of the mothers were described as ineffective authority figures and most of the girls did not feel comfortable discussing sexual topics with them.

A recent exploration of the sexual behaviors of rural adolescent females found that girls from two-parent families and girls who were able to communicate with their parent(s) were less likely to engage in sexual intercourse (Lock & Vincent, 1995). In addition, a focus-group study with inner-city teenage girls revealed that girls often relied on the presence of family members as a way to reduce the risk of engaging in intercourse (Rosenthal, Lewis & Cohen, 1996). One of the participants in this study stated, "I make

sure my mom is around every time he comes over or my sister's in the next room" (p. 734). The authors note that "this was described not only as being helpful to protect against the boy's impulses, but also against the risk the girl would do something she was not sure she wanted to do" (p. 734).

Adolescents generally have two basic reference groups: the family and the peer group. As the adolescent develops, peer become increasingly important as a source of validation, identification, and support. Peer influence has consistently been found to be of importance in the prediction of adolescent sexual behavior, particularly for males (Ehrmann, 1959; Lock & Vincent; 1995; Mirande, 1968). Respondents indicate that peer pressure is an important motive for the decision to have sex (Christopher & Cate, 1984; Cobliner, 1974; Rosenthal, Lewis & Cohen, 1996; Wyatt, 1989). In addition, young people are far more likely to engage in sexual activity if they perceive that their peers are sexually active (Christopher & Cate, 1985; Herz & Reis, 1987). Sexual behavior is likely to be inhibited when the individual fears that the peer group will not approve (Herold & Goodwin, 1981). In a longitudinal study of college student's sexual experience, the single largest predictor of sexual activity was the sexual experience of participants' friends: "For men and women both, and regardless of interpersonal commitment, each additional friend (out of five) who is perceived to have had premarital sexual intercourse increases the student's own likelihood of premarital coitus by about 12 percent" (Schulz, Bohrnstedt, Borgatta and Evans, 1977).

Larger social institutions also are implicated in an individual's choices regarding sexual activity. Social mores and cultural values provide the individual with information regarding what the society considers to be acceptable or desirable in terms of sexual behavior (Ehrmann, 1959; Juhasz & Sonnenshein-Schneider, 1980; Spanier, 1976a). The influence of religiosity has already been described in terms of its inhibiting impact on sexual behaviors. Religious attitudes are a major source of influence on women's

experience of their own sexuality and of themselves as sexual beings (Daniluk, 1993). Other societal influences on sexual behavior and attitudes include the medical profession, the media, and the culture as a whole, all of which have been described as contributing to women's feelings of shame and self-doubt (Daniluk, 1993). In addition, it has been noted that societal stereotypes and unequal status in male-female relationships may interfere with women's acquisition of sexual knowledge, impede women's ability to communicate their sexual needs, decrease women's ability to protect themselves against STD's, sexual coercion and unwanted pregnancy, and lower women's overall enjoyment of sexual activity (Wyatt & Riederle, 1994).

Factors Related to Circumstance or Opportunity

Thus far, I have considered personal, relational and social factors and their influence on sexual choice. I now provide a brief discussion of those factors related to circumstance or opportunity. In several investigations of sexual choice, participants have reported that the presence of situational opportunities for sexual behavior is an important factor with regard to their level of sexual activity (Christopher & Cate, 1984; Christopher & Cate, 1985; Ehrmann, 1959; Schulz, et. al., 1977). Similarly, an increased level of sexual activity has been found to be associated with increased dating frequency (Schulz, et. al., 1977; Spanier 1976a; Spanier, 1976b). Increased sexual activity is also noted for individuals who report higher levels of exposure to erotic material and childhood sex play (Spanier, 1976a; Spanier, 1976b) and for individuals who report higher levels of alcohol and drug use (Christopher & Cate, 1985; Miller & Simon, 1974; Rosenthal, Lewis & Cohen, 1996).

Models of Sexual Choice

Although most of the research on this topic has relied on a factor-oriented approach with little attention devoted to discussion of interrelationships among factors, there have been a few notable exceptions in which researchers have tested more complex models of

sexual choice. One of the earliest studies tested interrelationships among a large number of social variables and individual characteristics (DeLamater & MacCorquodale, 1979). When specific individual variables were tested, several emerged as significant predictors of premarital sexual experience. Sexual activity was greatest for those participants who reported that they were not close with their parents, perceived their parents as sexually permissive, believed their peers to be sexually active, and reported a high level of commitment with their partner. In addition, sexual activity was facilitated by high levels of self-esteem, an internal locus of control, low religiosity, liberal political orientation, and nontraditional (egalitarian) gender role orientation. When all of the sociopsychological predictors were combined, however, egalitarianism emerged as the only significant predictor of sexual permissiveness.

In later years, more sophisticated methods of data analysis have been utilized to test specific causal models of sexual choice. For example, Bayer (1977) applied a path analytic procedure to data from a large-scale national survey of entering college students. Of a large set of predictor variables, it was found that approximately 9% of the variance in students' sexual behavior was accounted for by religiosity and political orientation. An additional 1% of the variance for women was accounted for by region of residency whereas for men an additional 1% was accounted for by school achievement. In another investigation, a path analytic procedure revealed that college students' values affect their behavior directly; there was also an indirect effect, as values influenced peer associations, which in turn affected respondents' sexual behavior (Schulz, et. al., 1977).

In one of the most recent attempts at causal modeling of sexual choice, it was found that rural adolescents' sexual behavior was influenced by a large number of factors; path analysis was employed to determine both direct and indirect effects of the variables in the model (Lock & Vincent, 1995). The authors reported that participants were less likely to engage in premarital sexual intercourse if they came from a two-parent family, had positive

sexual attitudes, were younger, had best friends who were not sexually active, and did not intend to go steady with a partner. Indirect effects were also noted for age, race, sex role attitude, knowledge, parent-adolescent communication, and educational goals.

Research which has been conducted in the area of sexual decision-making reveals complex interrelations between different sources of influence. Some of the more important determinants include: the individual's level of sexual arousal and that of his or her partner; social and interpersonal influences from parents, peers, one's partner, and one's culture; the decision-maker's value system and level of cognitive and moral development; and the contextual or situational forces which limit or allow for sexual expression. The weighting of the various determinants is mediated by the individual's gender, level of sexual experience, and his or her expectations for the future. Clearly, sexual choice is a complex phenomenon that cannot be adequately described without consideration of interrelationships among the various influences. As will be noted from the preceding review of the literature, the major factors overlap conceptually and empirically. Thus, the phenomenon of sexual choice is of sufficient complexity to suggest the utility of employing methods that allow for consideration of interrelationships among the variables.

The Salience of Gender as a Dimension of Sexual Choice

Research on the determinants of sexual choice has provided ample evidence for the existence of gender differences. Generally, it appears that women are most influenced by interpersonal factors, including the quality of their relationship with the potential sex partner and with family members and peers. Women's sexual choices seem to depend very much on the level of commitment and intimacy present in their sexual relationships. In contrast, although issues of commitment and intimacy are salient for men, their sexual choices are not so strongly influenced by such concerns. Men's sexual choices are influenced very much by situational factors and peer expectations; in addition, men accept casual sex far more readily than do women. Given that there are differences in men's and

women's experience of sexual choice, it seems important to consider possible explanations for and implications of these differences.

It is generally expected that men and women will differ with regard to their sexual motives and sexual behaviors. Peplau, Rubin, and Hill (1977) noted the influence of traditional gender roles on the experience of sexual activity within the context of a heterosexual relationship. Within this context, it is generally assumed that men will initiate of sexual activity whereas women are expected to set limits on the level of sexual intimacy. Thus, there are limits on what is "acceptable" behavior for men and women. Traditional gender role expectations do appear to influence sexual behavior; for example, students rate strategies for initiating sexual intercourse as being more likely to be engaged in by males whereas strategies for avoiding sexual intercourse are gender-typed as "feminine" or as more likely for females (McCormick, 1979). Furthermore, males indicate that they would be more likely to engage in initiatory behaviors than their female counterparts (Green & Sandos, 1983). Along these lines, it is expected that men will exercise "positive control" in the relationship through their initiation of sex whereas women will exercise "negative control" by refusing sex; this has been termed the woman's "veto power" (Ehrmann, 1959).

Even though people perceive and expect men to initiate sexual activity and women to set limits on such advances, there is substantial research which suggests that these expectations do not fully capture the complexity of sexual choice. Studies employing interviews, field observations, and open-ended essay questions have revealed that women engage in specific behaviors to increase or decrease the likelihood of sexual involvement with a man of their choice (Jesser, 1978; Moore, 1985; Perper & Fox, 1980). Women are able to describe in explicit detail the strategies they would use to influence a potential partner to avoid or to initiate sexual intercourse (Perper & Weis, 1987). It has been suggested that women are significantly more active than men in the early stages of sexual

negotiation, although it appears that they allow men to take the initiative once the negotiation advances beyond a certain level. This "transition of power" has been reported in other studies, although the exact point during the negotiation process at which it occurs has yet to be determined, and probably differs across couples and situations (Gaulier, Travis, & Allgeier, 1986).

Expectations regarding acceptable limits for sexual behavior for women and men are based in part on the notion that women have more to lose if the sexual activity results in pregnancy or loss of reputation; this argument has been expanded by both sociobiological and interpersonal learning theorists. The evolutionary theorists posit that women must be more cautious and selective than men with regard to their sexual choices because the consequences of such choices are potentially more devastating for women. There is "differential parental investment" at all levels of the reproductive process, with the female investing more than the male at each level (Symons, 1979). If the choice of a sexual partner is a poor one, the woman bears the brunt of the reproductive costs; women are therefore expected to be more likely than men to engage in limit-setting and to place emphasis on commitment and the quality of the relationship.

An alternative explanation is provided by social learning theory. Within this framework, it is assumed that the differences are due to learned sexual scripts about what types of behavior are appropriate for men and women within a specific sociocultural milieu (Simon, 1974). Thus, one would expect to see shifts in behavior over time and across cultures. It seems likely that each of the models has some explanatory and predictive value; the evidence from the literature would suggest that, although women's sexual behavior has become more permissive over time, women are still less permissive than are men with regard to casual sexual relations. Women and men do appear to have somewhat different motives, or goals, for engaging in sexual activity, and thus one would expect differences in behavior. It is interesting to note that when men and women are asked which

strategies they would use in order to obtain the same goal (i.e., either having or avoiding sexual intercourse) their answers do not differ significantly. That is, although students of both genders are likely to state that the goal of “avoiding intercourse” is more appropriate for females, the actual strategies proposed by men and women to reach that goal are virtually identical (McCormick, 1979). At present men and women appear to have different motives that influence their sexual decision-making processes. However one chooses to explain the gender difference, it seems clear that the lens of gender is an important one, and must be considered in any meaningful study of sexual choice.

Methodological Critique of Prior Research and Implications for the Current Project

The review of the research illuminates many aspects of the sexual decision-making process although these investigations are limited in important ways. First of all, much of the research is correlational in nature and thus prohibits any causal statements about which factors determine sexual decision-making for a given individual. Despite the correlational nature of the studies, many researchers have stated their findings within a causal framework. Although there have been some attempts at causal modeling (most notably: Bayer, 1977; Lock & Vincent, 1995; Schulz, et al., 1977) such attempts are not normative.

Second, relatively few studies actually report the amount of variance accounted for by predictor variables; in the few investigations that do report this information, relatively low levels of variance are accounted for by the predictors chosen for analysis. A notable exception is the investigation by Christopher and Cate (1985), in which over 75% of the variance is accounted for by three factors: Physical Arousal, Relationship variables, and Circumstance.

Third, the predictors included for analysis are almost invariably generated a priori by the investigators on the basis of theoretical considerations or findings from previous research. It seems that a far better procedure would be to allow the research participants to

reveal their own predictors. A few studies have employed interview or essay techniques that required respondents to list motives or influences. There are problems with this method, however, in that short essays may not allow respondents sufficient space in which to articulate the factors that influence their decisions. Furthermore, interviews are typically described as being highly structured, with little room for open elaboration; thus, the investigator is again imposing an a priori structure on the basis of theoretical considerations. It seems that an appropriate alternative method would involve thematic analysis of phenomenological interviews. Such a method would allow the participant to describe the dimensions of relevance; in addition, it would not require that all of the relevant information be accessible to conscious reflection. The advantages of such an analysis have been explicated by phenomenological researchers (e.g., Polkinghorne, 1989).

I was able to locate only two studies that allowed participants to discuss their experiences of sexual choice in an open format. The two studies employed semi-structured (Rosenthal, Lewis & Cohen, 1996) or open-ended phenomenological (Daniluk, 1993) focus group methods in which group members were simply asked to discuss their sexual experiences. Transcripts of group sessions were then thematized and relevant dimensions elucidated. These two studies provide important explorations of women's own experiences of making sexual choices.

A fourth limitation to the available research is that college student samples have been greatly over represented. Community samples are rare, as are samples of older adults, married people, gay men and lesbians, and minorities other than African American women. Thus, it is not clear the extent to which the results are generalizable. The research on adolescent populations is more diverse than that conducted with adult samples. Finally, there is a need for more studies which compare data collected from individuals and couples. It is clear that sexual decision making occurs within an interpersonal context and the salient

dimensions of the process may be reflected most readily when both partners provide information.

The current project represents an endeavor to refine our knowledge about women's sexual choices by allowing one group of women to describe dimensions of sexual choice that are experientially relevant for them. The phenomenological method provides one way in which we can "allow the authority of women's experiences to construct women's realities" (Daniluk, 1993). Furthermore, participants in the study are diverse in terms of age, level of sexual experience, and lifestyle. The inclusion of a diverse group of women represents a change from the typical investigation on sexual choice, which has focused primarily on young adults and adolescents.

The procedure employed in this project represents an integration of two specific methods of investigation: the phenomenological interview and the policy capturing procedure. Each method is derived from key assumptions within larger theoretical systems: respectively, Existential-Phenomenology and Egon Brunswik's probabilistic functionalism. Thus, an elucidation of the procedure must begin with an understanding of the two systems and the fundamental methodological issues that flow from them. In the next chapter, I present the theoretical and methodological considerations that provide the grounding for the procedure. I begin with Existential Phenomenology and the phenomenological method. Next, I present Brunswik's theory of probabilistic functionalism, the Lens Model, and policy capturing technique derived therefrom. In Chapter IV, I will offer an integration of the two methods and describe its relevance for the study of sexual choice.

CHAPTER III

THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Overview

The process of human judgment and choice has long been a topic of interest to researchers in psychology. People make many choices and judgments every day of their lives. Some of these are relatively trivial, such as choosing where to go to lunch or where to park one's car. Others are of great importance, such as deciding whether or not to bear a child or choosing a sexual partner. Still others are monumental; one might imagine the decision processes surrounding America's involvement in the Vietnam War or in the decision about whether or not to discontinue life support to a critically ill patient. Human beings live their lives within a tapestry of choices and possibilities, so it is little wonder that the topic has been of interest.

In this chapter, two broad theoretical systems will be described, both of which have been utilized in the study of human judgment. The first is Existential-Phenomenology; the second is Egon Brunswik's Lens Model. The philosophical and theoretical premises of each system will be described, as will the research methodologies deriving from these formulations. Examples of research applications within each system will be presented, with a particular emphasis on those that have focused specifically on issues surrounding human decision-making or choice. Since both theories were developed largely within the domain of perception, the applicability of the models to non-perceptual areas will be addressed. Following this general overview, the two systems will be compared and contrasted: parallels and differences will be elucidated. In the following chapter, a synthesis of the two methods will be presented which combines the relevant aspects of both into a coherent method for studying human judgment.

Phenomenology: Philosophical Considerations

To the phenomenologist, the individual and the world are inextricably intertwined aspects of a single system. Neither the world nor the person can be studied independently of one another since it is the interrelationship between the two that gives meaning to experience. Such a view forms the essential basis of phenomenological inquiry: "The existential-phenomenological psychologist speaks of the total, indissoluble unity or interrelationship of the individual and his or her world. The existential man or woman is more than simply natural man or natural woman. In the truest sense, the person is viewed as having no existence apart from the world and the world as having no existence apart from persons. Each individual and his or her world are said to co-constitute one another" (Valle, King, & Halling, 1989, p. 7). This co-constitution of experience is referred to by Heidegger as "being-in-the-world" and the process may be seen as a dialogue between person and world.

Edmund Husserl is generally acknowledged as the originator of phenomenology. As he envisioned it, phenomenology was to be a science that remains in direct contact with absolute being, or knowledge of the essential (Husserl, 1965). He believed that human science must study the world of objects as they are given in experience. To embark upon a meaningful study of the world of human experience, one must look "to the things themselves." His notion of "things," however, differs from the positivistic approach which tends to emphasize objectively measurable aspects of objects. As Craig (1988) notes, the phenomenologist is interested in the meaningfulness of phenomena rather than in their measurement.

One of the primary tenets of phenomenology is that the proper study of human experience must begin with a move away from the natural science assumptions that only recognize the physical, or spatio-temporal, as real. "The concept of nature applies, properly speaking, only to the spatio-temporal world and not to the psychical. Therefore it

is only corporeal being that can be submitted to empirical investigation, wherein it is experienced as identical in a number of diverse appearances, since only corporeal being is distinct from its appearances, only it is subject to laws of causality in the physical sense. The world of the psychical, on the other hand, is composed of monadic beings whose relation to each other is not causal. It is a world where there is no distinction between being and appearance; the being of the psychical is its appearing, a phenomenal being constantly in flux, graspable only in an essential intuition" (Husserl, 1965, p. 11). An object's physical identity is knowable only as it is present to experience.

Thus, existence of the world is not denied but is assumed to have little significance for philosophy. The relation to consciousness is that which makes the world an object amenable to investigation through philosophical or psychological methods; to learn about the world one must examine the experiences in which the phenomena are given to us. The phenomenologist does not go beyond appearances, since these are the only data available to consciousness. When Husserl cried, "To the things themselves!", he meant "to the things as they are given in consciousness" for he assumed that one cannot access the things-in-themselves (i.e., as objective things separate from experience). Husserl described the difference, when he contended that we must turn, "To things themselves! Not, however, to things as they are "in themselves" (*an sich*), where their being is relative, but in the psychic flow, where their being is absolute, an essential being with the absoluteness of subjectivity" (Husserl, 1965, p. 108).

To understand the interrelationship between person and world, one must first consider the notion of intentionality. Intentionality may be thought of as a correlational postulate, requiring a relationship between one thing with another. The focus of phenomenology is the system of relations between the person and the world with the principle of intentionality describing the essential nature of such relations. All experience is experience of some particular thing, and , "Intentionality is the directional shape of

experience" (Ihde, 1986, p. 41). That which is experienced, as it is experienced, is referred to as the noema, or noematic correlate. The mode of experiencing is noesis, or the noetic correlate. Intention may be diagrammed as (I)noesis -----> noema, or the experiencer experiencing that which is experienced. Figure 1 presents a graphic representation of the field and shape of intentionality. The field of overall experience is indicated by the ellipse; the two points at either end represent the phenomenal experience and that to which this experience refers. The lines of relation between the two foci indicate the possible modes of experience.

The analysis begins with what appears (noema) and then moves reflexively towards its how of appearing. Noesis, or the mode of experiencing, appears reflexively. The endpoint of the analysis is the constitution of the experiencing "I" as counterpart to the noema. The "I" is the last element experienced, thereby indicating that phenomenological analysis is the opposite of introspection. As Husserl noted, there is a difference between introspection, which simply observes aspects of consciousness, and reflection, which grasps them vitally (Husserl, 1965). Introspection is focused on "I" whereas reflection encounters the noema. "I" is derived reflexively, for by the nature of its correlation with the noema, the phenomenological "I" emerges only as it encounters other things, people, and events. That is, the person comes to be aware of him- or herself only in association with and through the world to which he or she is intentionally related: "I and the world are correlated...without world there is no I and without I there is no world (humanly conceived)" (Ihde, 1986, p. 62). We come to an understanding of phenomenal experience by a process of reflection, and, "To reflect is to reflect about something, which is to say, in phenomenological language, that reflection is intentional" (Ihde, 1986, p. 51). The notion of intentionality describes the phenomenological emphasis on the interrelatedness and co-constitution of individuals and their worlds.

The Intentional Field

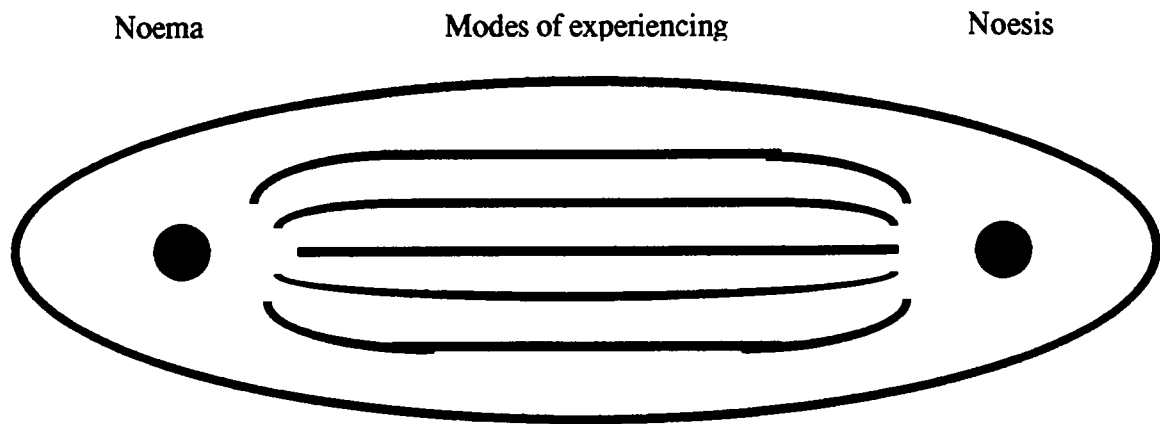


Figure 1. Graphic Representation of Intentionality

The phenomenological approach suggests that one may come to understand experience through a process of reflection. To do this, we must first engage in what Husserl referred to as "the phenomenological reduction" or *epoche*. The reduction necessitates the suspension, or "bracketing" of beliefs and attitudes about the world (Valle, King, & Halling, 1989). The reduction does not deny the existence of the natural world; what it does hold in abeyance is the belief that the world exists independently. Thus, the world becomes a world of phenomena, or a "world-for-consciousness." Intentionality describes the nature of the relationship between consciousness and the world as they come into contact: "...no matter what the status of the phenomenon's claim to actuality and no matter whether, at some future time, I decide critically that the world exists or that it is an illusion, still this phenomenon itself, as mine, is not nothing but is precisely what makes such critical decisions at all possible and accordingly makes possible whatever has for me sense and validity as 'true' being--definitively decided or definitively decidable being" (Husserl, 1970, p. 19). The *epoche* reduces phenomena to pure meaning and to that which is meant, simply as it is meant.

Again, Husserl did not argue against the existence of an objective world but only that consciousness is where the world is constituted and that the world and consciousness are inseparable in any meaningful examination of experience. "The attempt to conceive the universe of true being as something lying outside the universe of possible consciousness, possible knowledge, possible evidence, the two being related to one another merely externally by a rigid law, is nonsensical. They belong together essentially; and, as belonging together essentially, they are also concretely one, one in the only absolute concretion: transcendental subjectivity" (Husserl, 1970, p. 84). It should here be noted that Husserl's formulation requires that one accept the idea of a transcendental ego that somehow stands above the intentional relation and reflects upon it. It appears that Husserl desired access to essential truths, and the leap to a transcendental ego was necessary for

him to move beyond the myriad uncertainties present in experience. Husserl rejected later existentialist notions, as he held firm to his belief that philosophy must focus on essentials, absolutes, and invariants. However, later existential theorists have utilized many of Husserl's assumptions without finding a need to resort to a transcendental level of analysis.

One may trace the origins of existential, as opposed to transcendental, phenomenology to the work of Heidegger (1962). For Heidegger, intentionality is best expressed as "being-in-the-world." There is a form of Being that belongs to persons who exist within a phenomenal world; this being-in-the-world is referred to as Dasein. "...to Dasein, Being in a world is something that belongs essentially. Thus Dasein's understanding of Being pertains with equal primordially both to an understanding of something like a "world" and to the understanding of the Being of those entities which become accessible within the world" (Heidegger, 1962, p. 33). Dasein understands itself in terms of the world of phenomena, which are "those things that show themselves in themselves." Phenomenology is the way we come to terms with things.

Like Husserl, Heidegger did not reject the notion of an objectively existing environment, as the idea of environment is something we assume and employ on a practical level. However, we cannot ever really find or define this objectively existing environment, and an emphasis on it does not help us understand the lived experience of the world. "...no sooner was the 'phenomenon of knowing the world' grasped than it got interpreted in a 'superficial' formal manner. The evidence for this is the procedure (still customary today) of setting up knowing as a 'relation between subject and object'--a procedure in which there lurks as much 'truth' as vacuity. But subject and Object do not coincide with Dasein and the world" (Heidegger, 1962, p. 87). That is, Dasein and the world are co-created and cannot be meaningfully discussed as separate entities.

Heidegger opposed naturalistic dichotomization, which leads to the postulation of an introspective inner sphere that is not fully in contact with a world of independently

existing objects. In contrast to the naturalistic view, existential phenomenology posits that the person and the world are inextricably interconnected within a system of meaning:

“When Dasein directs itself towards something and grasps it, it does not somehow first get out of an inner sphere in which it has been proximally encapsulated, but its primary kind of Being is such that it is always ‘outside’ alongside entities which it encounters and which belong to a world already discovered. Nor is any inner sphere abandoned when Dasein dwells alongside the entity to be known, and determines its character; but even in this ‘Being-outside’ alongside the object, Dasein is still ‘inside’; if we understand this in the correct sense; that is to say, it is itself ‘inside’ as a Being-in-the-world which knows. And furthermore, the perceiving of what is known is not a process of returning with one’s booty to the ‘cabinet’ of consciousness after one has gone out and grasped it; even in perceiving, retaining, and preserving, the Dasein which knows remains outside, and it does so as Dasein” (Heidegger, 1962, p. 89).

There are many possible ways of experiencing the world, and nature is only one of these ways. In fact, Nature may be seen as a limiting case of that Being which Dasein experiences in the world. The idea that some object has an independent existence requires the assumption of substantiality; this derives in part from the Cartesian notion of res extensa. An object that has substance is assumed to exist in the absence of all other entities. This type of being is a being-in-itself. But the world only becomes present to a perceiver whose being is “in-the-world.” Because the phenomena as they present themselves constitute the only world that is accessible to us or meaningful for us, it is such phenomena that become the focus of our investigations.

One of the more provocative extensions of the existential-phenomenological system was provided by Merleau-Ponty (1992). Like Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty argued that it is meaningless to discuss some hypothetical “inner person” because an individual only knows him- or herself on the basis of interaction with the world. Thus, the assumption of a

transcendental ego is neither necessary nor useful. For Merleau-Ponty, the primary thing that one learns from the phenomenological reduction is that the reduction can never be complete. We exist in a world and it does not make sense to move, as Husserl did, toward a “transcendental ego” that is somehow above and detached from the world of phenomena. More reasonable is Heidegger’s notion of being-in-the world. The world is what we perceive; it is not helpful to argue about whether we perceive a “real” world or if our perceptions about the world are “accurate”. “The perceived, by its nature, admits of the ambiguous, the shifting, and is shaped by its context” (Merleau-Ponty, 1992, p. 11).

Like Husserl and Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty emphasized perception as the modal phenomenal experience, but added the consideration of an embodied perceiver living within a world of meaning. The focus on the body as lived provides access to an expanded world of meaning and to a new way of discovering aspects of the phenomenal field. Perception, for Merleau-Ponty, is not a judgment but rather is pre-judgmental; it finds meaning inherent in the phenomena through an interpretive process. “Sense experience is that vital communication with the world which makes it present as a familiar setting of our life. It is to it that the perceived object and the perceiving subject owe their thickness. It is the intentional tissue which the effort to know will try to take apart” (Merleau-Ponty, 1992, p. 53). In elaborating this “effort to take apart” the intentional tissue, Merleau-Ponty offered one of his more valuable insights: the distinction between reflective and unreflective consciousness.

Fouche (1984) elaborated upon Merleau-Ponty’s distinction between cognitive (reflective) and pre-cognitive (unreflective) levels of consciousness. “Merleau-Ponty’s theory of operative intentionality as constitutive of meaning at a precognitive or prethetic level is indispensable as a key to his view of the reduction. Underlying the level of meaning established by cognitive activity--there is, for Merleau-Ponty, a level of meaning which comes into being through our precognitive or antepredicative activity--the level at

which there comes, through our perceptual syntheses, to be a world.” (Fouche, 1984, p. 116). The incompleteness of the reduction is reflected in the fact that we may be able to bracket our thetic or cognitive activity but we are still left with the phenomenal field. We are not conscious of some neutral world of facts about which we make value judgments; rather, our initial evaluations are formulated at a precognitive level. This prethetic level of consciousness is unreflective, and it is through the process of reflecting on the unreflected that we are able to enter the richness of the phenomenal field.

Even though one may not be able to complete the reduction, it is still of value to suspend beliefs about the world insofar as we are able to do so. The bracketing process does not somehow magically detach us from the phenomenon and render us Godlike and totally neutral; it does, however, help us to avoid reification of our own perspectives, interests, and values. One can only embrace the Husserlian reduction in its entirety (i.e., suspend belief in existence) if one accepts that the phenomenon can be transcended. Merleau-Ponty’s bracketing process does not lead to Husserl’s transcendental ego; it leads to the phenomenal field which includes self, body, others, and world. “Where the Husserlian epoche would include a bracketing of the faith that there is a world the Merleau-Pontyan epoche would apply only to our beliefs about the world...what we question is not the existence of the world but the notion of perception as a pure receptivity, with its concomitant absolutization of [one] perspective onto the world.” (Fouche, 1984, p. 121).

Thus, the bracketing process espoused by Merleau-Ponty forces us to recognize that, as scientists, we are not neutral spectators who are somehow privy to the “truth” about an objective world. Rather, we ourselves are embodied participants in a world of meaning. This distinction between reflective and unreflective consciousness has led to more detailed analyses of the ways in which the phenomenological method can add to our understanding of human experience. These methodological considerations will now be presented.

Method Derived from Phenomenological Philosophy

As Merleau-Ponty suggested, the task of the phenomenologist is to reflect upon the unreflected: to make the implicit explicit. Although there is no single manner by which this goal is achieved, different methodologies have similar properties. First, it should be emphasized that the phenomenological method is not introspective and there are numerous differences between introspection and reflection. Introspection is a term that derives from the naturalistic split between the subject and object and such a dichotomy is meaningless to the phenomenologist. Conceptually, introspection requires that there be some "inner sphere" of consciousness in which one observes, but does not make full contact with, the external world. In phenomenological reflection, the individual and the world are co-constituted and it is only in and by their interrelationship that meaning arises. Whereas introspection is a limited process, phenomenological inquiry involves a full openness to the individual's system of meaning and his or her interactions with the world and is, indeed, the only meaningful point of entry into the phenomenal field.

Introspection focuses on the "I", or the experiencer, whereas in phenomenological methods subjective language is used as narrative background for a description of the phenomena of interest. Regardless of the phenomenon, the phenomenological method allows access to the existential structure and meaning in an individual's opening to his or her world. Basically, the phenomenologist assumes that the individual is the expert with regard to his or her own experience and should be the source of all data. In his discussion of the method, von Eckartsberg notes: "My teacher, Gordon Allport, could never understand why psychologists neglect and even distrust the self-report. He would ask, 'Why don't we just ask the person what is going on?' The question still needs to be asked today because very few people have heard it" (von Eckartsberg, 1989, p. 139).

One way of approaching a phenomenological inquiry involves the variational method. Ihde speaks of this method as "possibilization" of the phenomenon, and applies it

in his analysis of reversible visual figures (Ihde, 1986). This type of method involves the perceiver's effort to engage the phenomenon in as many ways as possible. It is not that the perceiver is creating something new within the phenomenon; rather, the perceiver is effortfully looking for what is "already there." One actively seeks, but does not create, possibilities. For example, one might instruct the perceiver to seek perceptual possibilities within any one of a number of phenomenon: for instance, a two-dimensional drawing of a reversible figure or a selection of music presented in an auditory mode. The method could also be utilized by asking a participant to provide a sample of narratives which describe some particular life experience. It is assumed that, as one utilizes the variational method, invariances in the phenomenon may be discovered. These invariances may be thought of as essential aspects of the phenomena, or as phenomenal structures, themes or meanings. As Merleau-Ponty (1992) suggested, the reflective differs from the unreflective in that the former seeks to thematize its content; by reflecting upon that which is unreflected, the unreflected is rendered thematic.

A first step in any phenomenological investigation must involve epoche in which one brackets or suspends assumptions. An attempt is made to enter the participant's phenomenal world with a minimum of preconceptions and hypotheses. Of course, as Fouche (1984) has argued, the bracketing process is never complete. However, one should certainly have some understanding of one's own biases and preconceptions so that the attempt can be made to avoid becoming a victim of these biases. Many researchers in the field suggest that one begin by engaging in a period of self-reflection or conducting a "bracketing interview" in which such preconceptions and hypotheses are identified (Polkinghorne, 1989; Pollio, Henley, & Thompson, 1997). Awareness of the biases may allow the researcher to avoid serious contamination of the participant's description of the phenomenon.

Polkinghorne (1989) describes a general methodological format that can be applied to a wide variety of phenomena . First, one gathers a number of descriptions from individuals who have had the experience of interest. Some level of experience with the phenomenon is essential, because "The point of subject selection is to obtain richly varied descriptions, not to achieve statistical generalization" (Polkinghorne, 1989, p. 48). Second, the descriptions are analyzed, or thematized, so that one begins to grasp those common elements that define the experience. This process of analysis may be conducted by an individual or by a group of researchers; the latter method allows for further bracketing of individual researchers' biases and provides an additional level of evaluation since all members of the analysis-group must agree that the themes are to be noted in the descriptions rendered by participants. Participant verbalizations are taken as descriptions of their experience, not as statements about some independent reality and the goal of phenomenological inquiry is to uncover the interrelationships and invariant structures present in the phenomenal experience. Finally, a clear and articulate description of the experience is presented.

The steps in the specific method vary somewhat according to the researcher; the basic notion is that any themes revealed are based on the data themselves, that one uncovers the overall thematic structure of the experience, and the final goal is a rich description of the phenomenon. Whereas research methods derived under a positivist framework seek explanations, the phenomenological approaches seek descriptions: the research addresses the question of what, not why or how.

Application of the Phenomenological Method to Diverse Domains

To date, phenomenologists have applied their methods to a variety of topics. In their introductory text on Existential-phenomenology, Valle, King and Halling (1989) present research focused on perception, learning and memory, child development, the experience of the body, anxiety, person perception and relationships, personality

assessment, psychopathology, psychotherapy, and aesthetics. Pollio, Henley and Thompson (1997) describe research that has extended the method to focus on the lived body, the experience of time, person-perception, loneliness, the meanings of death, the experience of falling apart, and reparation. Other researchers have focused on serial learning, decision-making, the experience of anger, the structure of privacy, the process of comprehension, feelings of familiarity, knowledge of one's own attitudes, experience of objects as lying within a horizontal-vertical field, the experience of addiction, transformation within the context of psychotherapy, and the problem of unconscious motivation (Giorgi, Fischer & von Eckartsberg, 1971).

Within the area of choice and judgment, the phenomenological method was applied by Cloonan (1971) to come to an understanding of individual processes involving a choice between two different experimental tasks. He discovered that decisions were cast in terms of a temporal dimension; past events were considered as were future expectations and goals. Decisions were seen as "moments" within a much larger temporal frame; they also were considered in light of both the immediately occurring aspects of the situation and the overall context of the individual's life. Other researchers have extended phenomenological methods to an analysis of group decision-making at a mental health clinic (Faber, Nilakantan, Rothmeier, & Zapf, 1978). As with the experimental situation studied by Cloonan, participants contextualized the decision process as somehow fitting into some larger life project. In addition, the theme of time emerged directly from interviews with participants. As noted in the previous chapter, a recent investigation utilized the phenomenological method in a focus-group study of women's experiences of their sexuality (Daniluk, 1993). As with other phenomenological studies, the phenomenon of interest (in this case, the meaning of sexuality and the choices derived therefrom) was considered as fitting into a larger experiential context which included family, culture, social institutions and personal identity.

As Cloonan (1971) points out, these aspects of decision-making have been discussed on a philosophical level by both Sartre and Ricoeur. Sartre noted that any new choice may be viewed as but one possibility within an entire universe of possibilities. Furthermore, the choice is constrained by the configuration of possibilities that have been manifest in the person's life (Sartre, 1956). Similarly, Ricoeur suggests that the process of deciding involves what he refers to as "indetermination of the self" in that one must remain continuously open to consideration of the range of possibilities (Ricoeur, 1966, p. 186). The focal decision of the moment is but one moment within a context of past choices and future expectations; choice of one option changes the entire configuration of possibilities and is also constrained by this pattern of possibilities.

The phenomenological approach to psychological phenomena was initially derived from a focus on the area of perception. Wertz (1989) has gone so far as to suggest that, for Husserl, perception is the most essential way of experiencing the world because the perceiver comes into contact with things existing and immediately present. However, Husserl acknowledged that perception is perspectival and therefore includes aspects of the larger field of human experience such as memory, thinking, anticipation, and behavior. Indeed, it involves the person's entire "project of life." Husserl (1970) also suggested that phenomenological descriptions may be derived in the case of sensuous perception but that recollection and expectation also are amenable to a phenomenological analysis.

In short, phenomenological descriptions may be rendered for any idea or experience, and ideas should be broadened to include the person, his or her community, and the culture in which that community exists. This enlarged field of consideration includes the natural sciences, the social sciences, and any belief system that influences the person's actions. Furthermore, Husserl called for phenomenological analysis of intersubjective systems of meaning including, but not limited to, language, social bonds, social institutions, literature, and fine arts. On a theoretical/philosophical level, then, the

methods derived from phenomenology may be utilized to study all aspects of human experience.

Probabilistic Functionalism and the Lens Model

One of the best descriptions of Brunswik's theoretical contributions is given by Hammond (1966). Hammond notes that in Brunswik's earlier theoretical formulations, emphasis was given to the notion of intentionalistic attainment in perception. Intentionalistic attainment is described as a process whereby immediately given experience is directed towards some independently and objectively measured object and the object is more or less successfully attained by the perceiving subject. In Brunswik's later formulations, the theory became more objectivistic, and the notion of the immediately given experience was altered to include only proximal, sensory cues. The full theory, which eventually was explicated by Brunswik, is known as "probabilistic functionalism". The model reflects the strong influence of Darwinism, as the focus is on the adaptive interrelationship of the organismic system with the environmental system. The perceptual event is seen as a "coming-to-terms" of the organism with the environment.

There are several variables of interest in this conceptualization of the organismic-environmental system. The first one is the distal variable, which requires definition from a source independent of the organism. The interest in distal variables reflects Brunswik's advocacy of an investigation of the "environment in depth", or the environment as it extends away from the common boundary of the organismic and environmental systems. Distal variables are those which are farthest removed from the surface of the organism and which are assumed to exist independently of the organism. A second type of variable is termed the proximal variable, which is defined in terms of those physical stimuli which impinge upon the sensory surface of the organism. Peripheral variables represent a third type, and include all physiological processes occurring during the perceptual event. A fourth variable is the central variable, which includes any hypothetical intraorganismic

constructs presumed to occur during the event including, but not limited to, motivation and attitude.

Brunswik referred to his theory as "probabilistic functionalism"; the two terms chosen to represent the theory have particular relevance and are worthy of discussion. First, the emphasis on "functionalism" reflects the influence of Darwinism and involves the notion that the organism evolves within, and is adapted to, a certain ecology. It is this ecology that the psychologist must study if he or she wishes research results to generalize or to have practical significance. Survival depends on the organism's ability to establish stable interrelationships with the environment. Thus, Brunswik's theory requires that we deal with both the organism and the environment, with the latter including distal objects, people, and events.

In describing the process by which such an investigation can and should occur, Brunswik introduces the concept of representative research design and a related principle, behavior research isomorphy. Representative design involves the study of the environment in depth, particularly of those elements in the environment of relevance to the organism. The choice of research variables should be such that the research environment is representative of the organism's natural habitat. The principle of behavior research isomorphy requires that research focus where the organism's behavior focuses; again, the goal is to investigate the intersection between the organism and its environment and to do it in a manner best representing the ecology in which the organism exists.

The second term of Brunswik's theory reflects his belief that one of the primary attributes of any organism-environment system is that the organism's knowledge of the environment is uncertain, or "probabilistic." That is, the environment may be controlled by strict physical laws although the organism does not know these laws in their entirety in any particular case. The environment's lawfulness is hidden behind a "semieratic medium of probabilistic cue-object relations" (Hammond, 1966, p. 35). As Brunswik stated, "The

crucial point is that while God may not gamble, animals and humans do, and that they cannot help but to gamble in an ecology that is of essence only partly accessible to their foresight. And although an infinite and omniscient intellect could operate by law and ratiocination alone, as a psychologist even such a being would have to follow the methodological postulate of behavior-research isomorphism, and operate at the probabilistic level of discourse." (Brunswik, 1955, p. 236).

The probability lies in mediational transactions between the two systems. It is assumed that there is uncertainty in the relationship between distal variables and proximal cues arising from those distal objects. The cues occur at the surface of the organism; they are "local representatives" of distal variables and are more or less correlated with the distal variable under consideration. Various cues also are correlated with one another; there is cue intersubstitutability, and the organism's flexible use of the various cues is referred to as "vicarious mediation" or "vicarious functioning." The strength of relationship between the cue and the distal variable denotes the "ecological validity" of the cue, and reflects the extent to which the cue is a veridical representation of the distal state of affairs. Some cues are more valid than others, and the organism using the more valid cues is assumed to be more successful in terms of adaptation and survival. Brunswik describes the behavior of the perceiving organism in terms of making a "best-bet" wager about the strength of cue-object relations: "All a finite, sub-divine individual can do when acting is...to make a posit, or wager. The best he can do is to compromise between cues so that his posit approaches a "best bet" on the basis of all the probabilities, or past relative frequencies, of relevant relationships lumped together." (Brunswik, 1943, p. 258). Thus, the relationship between proximal cues and distal objects is viewed in terms of a system of correlation coefficients, and the organism that utilizes the most strongly correlated cues in making its judgments is expected to have a more veridical representation of the world.

Hammond notes that, "...Probabilistic functionalism would argue that learning involves the increasingly effective utilization of all the available intersubstitutable perceptual and response dispositions available to a member of a given species" (1966, p. 60). The meaningfulness of the event is a co-creation of the organism and the environment and thus "research should focus where behavior focuses." Brunswik, in discussing his hopes for a psychological research program, advocated a focus on distal-distal studies: in other words, a psychology in terms of objects or a psychology "without, yet about, the organism." He did not see a need to posit internal, central, events in order to account for the behavior of organisms; rather, he chose to focus on interrelationships between an organism's response and distal objects in the environment. Brunswik was not completely opposed to the notion of central inferences so long as the ultimate relation sought by the experimenter was a central-distal one.

In discussing his theory of probabilistic functionalism, Brunswik proposed a pictorial and methodological representation of the theory which he referred to as the Lens Model (see Figure 2). The Lens Model represents the process by which the qualities of a distal object are represented by a set of intersubstitutable proximal cues which are "recombined" by the organism into a more-or-less veridical perception of the distal object. Later theorists (most notably, Hammond, 1966) have deconstructed the lens model and presented it in statistical terms. As noted above, the cue's ecological validity is the relative frequency of the cue's association with the distal variable; this relationship can be stated statistically in terms of a correlation coefficient. The functional validity of the cue is the relative frequency of its association with the organism's response; this, too, can be stated in terms of correlation. In addition, the interrelationships across various cues can be denoted in correlational terms. Indeed, the entire relational system involving the perceiving subject and the world can be described in terms of a set of correlation coefficients.

The Lens Model

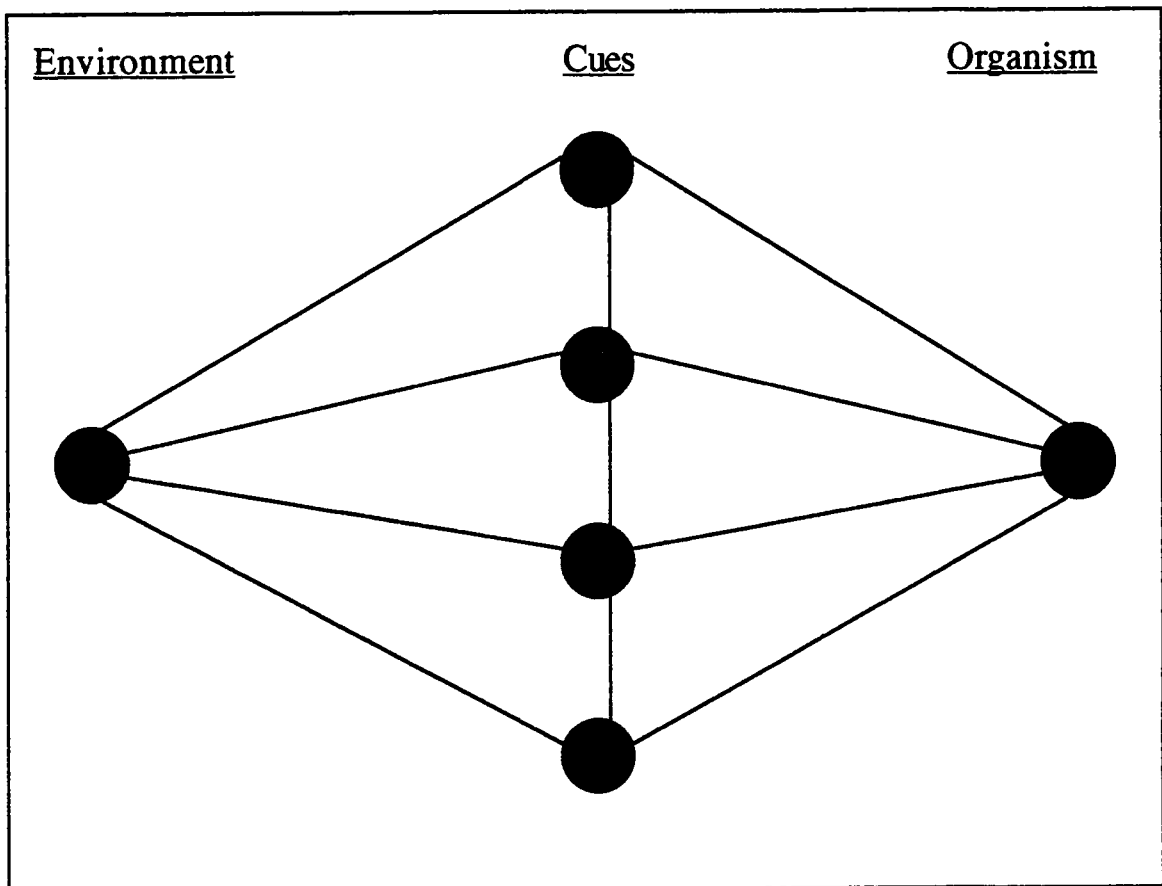


Figure 2. The Lens Model

The lens model equation is given by Hammond (1966) as:

$$r_a = \frac{R_e^2 + R_s^2 - \sum d + C \sqrt{1 - R_e^2} \sqrt{1 - R_s^2}}{2}$$

where:

- r_a = the correlation between the subject's judgments and the variable estimated (achievement)
- R_e = the multiple correlation between the cues and the variable estimated
- R_s = the multiple correlation between the cues and the perceiver's judgments
- $\sum d$ = the sum of the products $(r_{ei} - r_{si})(\beta_{ei} - \beta_{si})$ where
 - r_{ei} = the correlation between any given individual cue, "cue i," and the variable estimated
 - r_{si} = the correlation between cue i and the perceiver's judgment
 - β_{ei} = the beta weight for the correlation between cue i and the variable estimated, and
 - β_{si} = the beta weight for the correlation between cue i and the perceiver's responses
- C = the correlation between the variance unaccounted for by the multiple correlation in the ecology and the variance unaccounted for by the multiple correlation in the perceiver's response system

Thus, $\sum d$ is a measure of the extent to which the linear aspects of the two systems match one another, and C is a measure of the extent to which the nonlinear or configural aspects of the systems match one another. Brunswik assumed that achievement (r_a) would be optimal if the correlation between each cue and the distal variable was matched by the correlation between each cue and the response (i.e., each cue would be utilized according to the extent to which it is valid). The equation is appropriate for analyzing subjects' capabilities with respect to tasks that have both linear and nonlinear relations. "The extent to which [the two systems] come-to-terms is indicated not only by r (the correlation between the central layers of the two systems), but also by $\sum d$, which indicates the relation between the "surface layers" of the systems" (Hammond, 1966, p. 76). The use of and

further deconstruction of, the Lens Model Equation (LME), is presented in the following section.

Method Derived from Brunswik's Theoretical Constructs

One of the most widely used applications of Brunswik's approach is Social Judgment Theory (SJT), which was developed originally by Hammond but is explicated in Brehmer and Joyce (1988). SJT is the result of application of Brunswik's probabilistic functionalism to the analysis of human judgment in social situations. Its focus concerns the relationship between the person and an environment of objects and other people. SJT defines judgment as a process that involves "the integration of information from a set of cues into a judgment about some distal state of affairs" (Brehmer, 1988, p. 14).

The Social Judgment theorist is broadly interested in three measures of judgment within social situations. First, there is achievement, which describes how well the judgment agrees with some actual state of affairs. The second measure is agreement, or the similarity between judgments made by two or more persons. Third, one may conduct a judgment analysis, or policy capturing, in which the judgment process of an individual judge is described in detail (Stewart, 1988). Policy capturing is of particular interest because it taps into the judgment process itself and because it is employed in the current study.

Statistical analysis of judgment data may be utilized in one of two ways. The nomothetic method involves the averaging of data over a sample of judges; a mean judgment is derived for each case, or judgment task, and mean judgments can be analyzed. Alternatively, judgments may be analyzed separately for each judge; this is referred to as the idiographic method. Judgment analysis is based on the Lens Model; the focus is on the judgment of an individual who, using multiple intersubstitutable cues, derives information about some distal state of affairs. For example, a researcher might be interested in finding out how a clinician comes to diagnose a patient with a certain disorder. The judgment task

is accurate diagnosis, and the relevant cues might include a number of behaviors and/or statements made by an actual or hypothetical patient.

The first step in a policy capturing study involves the clear definition of the judgment of interest. The judgment may be scaled categorically or numerically (e.g., as a "yes-no" decision or as a likelihood rating). Whichever scaling method one uses, the nature of the judgment task and the scale used to denote the judgment must be clearly understood by all judges. In our hypothetical research example, the categorical judgment might be "does this patient meet the symptom criteria for Bipolar Disorder?" The judgment task here is categorical, as it involves a "yes-no" decision. The patient information might be provided in the context of a clinical interview or in a clinical case vignette (real or constructed).

The second step in policy capturing is the identification of cues. The cues should include all of the important information that is used to make the judgment in question, although the number of cues should be as small as possible. A typical method is to construct a survey or a series of interviews with judges to generate a comprehensive list of possible cues. These cues are then, upon conferring with the judges, reduced to those cues thought to be of most importance. The number of cues may range anywhere from 2 to 64; a typical number falls in the range of 3 to 20. In the diagnosis task, for example, cues might be derived from accepted nosological systems, from published clinical case studies, and from interviews with experienced clinicians.

The third step in the process is the specification of the judgment context, or the assumptions that judges can make about each case. One might specify the purpose and/or consequences of the judgment, the conditions leading up to the judgment, or any constant characteristics of the objects or events being judged. Thus, the diagnosing clinician might understand that the judgment task is designed to illuminate the diagnostic process and will not be used for purposes of specifying treatment.

The fourth step in policy capturing is the definition of the values that can be taken by each cue. Ideally, cues take on a range of numerical values that are representative of their actual distribution in the environment. For example, one cue used in the diagnosis task might be the number of manic episodes occurring in the past year; an attempt should be made to give a numerical value that represents the actual range of possible manic episodes in the population.

The fifth step involves making sure that intercorrelations among the cues match correlations in the environment. If the actual intercorrelations are unknown, they should be estimated. The idea here is that the judgment tasks should accurately represent tasks that the judge might encounter in everyday experience. Thus, if the researcher is constructing a set of clinical case vignettes, cue intercorrelations (i.e., "symptom patterns") should be similar to those that actually exist; otherwise, the vignettes would be rendered illogical and possibly nonsensical, rendering meaningless a person's responses to such vignettes. Cue intercorrelations also may be determined by a pilot investigation in which judges are asked to read over the research profiles and indicate those that are atypical. Atypical cue profiles are deleted from the final set of judgment profiles. Stewart (1988) advocates the use of real cases whenever possible, because they present actual rather than estimated cue intercorrelations.

The final two steps in the policy capturing method are to construct the judgment task and to have judges consider each case and rate it on the relevant judgment scale. With regard to task construction, a set of case vignettes can be developed that sample the possible range of cue values and combinations. Thus, tasks should be representative, should be able to support statistical estimation of lens model parameters, and should be able to be completed in a reasonable time frame by the judges. The cases may be examples of real ones or hypothetical cases may be generated. The number of cases should range from approximately 40 to 75. This number is large enough to insure statistical power but small

enough to be completed within a reasonable period of time. The number of cases depends on a number of considerations. The number of cases should be increased under the following conditions: large numbers of cues, the necessity of utilizing nonlinear function forms in order to accurately represent the data, a poor fit of the statistical model to the judgments (i.e., a low R^2 , and high cue intercorrelations). In his methodological design, Stewart (1988) advocates the presentation of 50 cases followed by a short break, then presentation of 25 crossvalidation cases (holdout cases that have not yet been presented) followed by 25 repeated cases (to measure reliability). The final step in the SJT model is to have judges consider each case and rate it on the judgment scale. At this point, one is ready to begin the statistical analyses.

The SJT analysis involves use of multiple regression techniques. In the nomothetic method, data are averaged over judges in order to obtain a mean judgment for each case, which are then analyzed statistically. In our hypothetical diagnostic task, the data for a number of clinicians could be averaged to determine the mean clinical value for each particular configuration of cues. With the idiographic method, judgments are analyzed separately for each judge; in other words, the individual's judgment policy is captured. Regression analysis is used to determine those weights for cues that will best reproduce the judgments. The extent to which one can predict the judgments depends on how well the regression model fits the judge's policy and on how consistently the judge applies that policy. The multiple correlation (R) measures the fit of the regression model to the judgments.

It is best to use standardized Beta weights, as they are not affected by the cue scaling or to cue intercorrelations; for this reason they can be directly compared with one another. Standard regression coefficients are expressed in standard score form (mean of zero and standard deviation of one). If using standardized Beta weights, one is able to compare a judge's relative weighting of various cues. For example, in the diagnostic

example, one could directly compare the weight given to number of manic episodes versus severity of depression. Beta weights also provide an estimate of the direct impact of the cue on a set of judgments. Hierarchical regression techniques can be used to partial out the effects of certain cues so as to assess the impact of each cue over and above the overall cue configuration. Stepwise regression is a reasonable procedure for use in policy capturing because it eliminates cues that do not have substantial weight.

The use of linear regression assumes that the relation between each cue and the judgment is linear and additive; some policies, however, are nonlinear and nonadditive. Indications of nonlinearity include a low R^2 , nonlinear scatterplots of cues versus judgments, significant lack of fit of the regression equation, and high C-terms in the Lens Model Equation (LME). To deal with the presence of nonlinearity, one may add nonlinear terms to the regression equation (e.g. polynomial or curvilinear), or one may rescale the function forms. Further, it appears that an increase in number of cues tends to be associated with a decrease in nonlinearity (Lee & Yates, 1992). Stenson (1974) suggests that it is always theoretically possible to make C vanish by applying appropriate transformations to the cue measurements and/or by supplementing the list of cues with nonadditive combinations of predictor variables. He further notes that C can be interpreted as an index of "nonlinear knowledge" only if one is certain that the set of possible cues has been exhausted. Otherwise, C might reflect the subject's linear or nonlinear use of additional cues that have not been measured in one's research design. There are occasions in which relevant cues may not be amenable to isolation or measurement. In such cases, Stenson argues, the LME parameters may still be estimated given the application of the statistical reasoning typically employed in test construction. The LME is thereby modified to make it analogous to the validity coefficient for the correlation between a test and a criterion measure. Stenson further contends that one may estimate reliabilities as one would in test theory, and thereby determine all components of the LME without ever

knowing what cues a judge is using. This would be useful if one is more interested in the LME components themselves than in the nature of the specific cues utilized in the judgment task.

To understand more fully the statistical procedures used in a judgment analysis, it is useful to decompose the LME into its various components. As noted above, the LME can be stated as:

$$r_a = \frac{R_e^2 + R_s^2 - \sum d + C \sqrt{1 - R_e^2} \sqrt{1 - R_s^2}}{2}$$

The various components of the LME may be expressed in a fairly straightforward manner:

"The ability of a human being to predict the world is completely determined by three factors: how predictable the world is, how consistent the person is, and how well the person understands the world" (Ullman & Doherty, 1984).

The first term in the equation reflects the linear component, or $1/2 (R_e^2 + R_s^2 - \sum d)$; this component provides information about the extent to which the judge has utilized the linear relations in the task. The second term, $C \sqrt{1 - R_e^2} \sqrt{1 - R_s^2}$, is an expression of the nonlinear component, or the extent to which the judge has used nonlinear and configural aspects of the task. The lens model describes a situation in which an individual is making a judgment about some criterion of interest. Within the judgment context, several sources of information are available, none of which predicts the criterion perfectly. The task of the individual is to identify the most useful sources of information and to utilize them in making accurate judgments. The regression analysis, applied to the lens model, allows for a determination of the judge's weighting strategy.

The various elements of the LME allow for an in-depth analysis of two different components of the judgment (Beal, Gillis, & Stewart, 1978). First, one may conduct an

ecological analysis, or analysis of the environmental side of the Lens Model. Within the framework of ecological analysis, one may analyze individual cues in order to gain information about the correlation between a given cue and the criterion; this analysis gives information about the ecological validity of each cue, or the extent to which each cue is useful in predicting the criterion. Individual cue analysis also provides information about whether a function is linear or nonlinear. One may also examine cues in combination, to determine the optimal weighting system of the cues. This weighting system reflects the task environment and gives information about the system that will allow for maximum prediction of the criterion.

The second broad type of analysis pertains to the organism's side of the Lens Model; that is, one may conduct an analysis of the judge. For example, one may determine the extent to which the judge relies on any given cue in making the judgment in question; that is, which cue best predicts the judge's response. This particular index is obtained by examining the degree to which each cue varies systematically with the judge's response over a series of tasks. If cue values and judgments vary systematically, this is evidence that they are related. Furthermore, one may investigate how the judge is weighting the cues in combination to arrive at the judgments; policy capturing utilizes this type of analysis. With the regression model, one may observe the similarity or covariation between an individual's judgments and predictions based on a particular weighting scheme.

Finally, the investigator may be most interested in determining the similarity between the pattern of cue weights in the environment and the weighting scheme which best models the judgments of the individual. The judge's estimated response scores can thus be correlated with the estimated criterion scores. The value of the Lens Model as used within the SJT framework is that the tasks are formally representative of those typically encountered by the judge. One variation of particular interest is the single-system lens

model, which is based on the investigation of the cognitive system of an individual. The single-system model is the policy capturing model proper.

As noted above, stepwise, or hierarchical, regression analyses are of particular value in policy capturing. The LME has been extended by a number of researchers to make it more amenable to this type of analysis. The formulations of these researchers will now be presented, so as to clarify the role of stepwise regression in capturing of the policies of individual judges. One of the first extensions of the LME was given by Castellan (1972), and provides a discussion of the method by which the LME may be applied to a judgment task involving multiple criteria. It was Castellan who derived the standard decomposition of the LME into its component parts, including the linear and nonlinear sources of variance, the matrix of intercorrelations between cues, and the ecological versus organismic correlational systems. Castellan's extension of the LME allows for an examination of multivariate cue weightings in the ecology or in the judge's policy, with information given about cue utility and validity. Castellan also introduced a discussion of the value of standardization so as to derive fully comparable Beta weights from the regression analysis.

Stewart (1976) extended the analysis of the LME to take into account a semipartialling process in which nonoverlapping partitions can be studied with the hierarchical regression technique. One may therefore partial out the effects of each cue over and above the effects of other cues in combination. Information is thereby obtained regarding the consistency of the policy and the differential weightings of the cues. One limitation of Stewart's analysis is that it requires that the order of cue entry into the equation be determined a priori. Typically, such a priori ordering is based on the results of previous research and the assumptions of the researcher.

Cooksey and Freebody (1985) deal with this limitation by extending the analysis to that of a fully partialled multivariate model in which there is no a priori specification of the order of entry into the equation. The unique contributions of each cue can therefore be

assessed, as can any overlap or shared variation. In addition, one can look at linear versus nonlinear components. In this model, there is no theoretical basis for assigning overlap to one subset or the other; rather, the shared variance remains isolated in a third term. The LME for the judge's policy becomes:

$$\hat{Y}_j = \hat{Y}_{j(1.2)} + \hat{Y}_{j(2.1)} + \hat{Y}_{j(j.1,2)} + Z_j$$

where:

$\hat{Y}_j$	=	The variance in judgment accounted for by the cues in combination
$\hat{Y}_{j(1.2)}$	=	The unique variance accounted for by cue 1 over and above that accounted for by cue 2
$\hat{Y}_{j(2.1)}$	=	The unique variance accounted for by cue 2 over and above that accounted for by cue 1
$\hat{Y}_{j(j.1,2)}$	=	The variance shared by cues 1 and 2
Z_j	=	The variance in judgment not accounted for by the cues

Using this version of the LME, one may study individual beta weights for cues and cue subsets, with the effects of other cues partialled out. The residual components can be studied in a similar manner, as can overlap terms. If one has theoretical grounds for specifying order of entry, or if past data have suggested a certain ordering, then the hierarchical model presented by Stewart is appropriate; as Cooksey and Freebody state, "When no real a priori reason exists for this assignment, an arbitrary allocation of variance overlap to the first subset entered may severely distort many of the lens model parameters and would yield a misleading view of a particular individual's judgmental processes. The fully partialled multivariate lens model would be preferred in those cases where subsets of cues are of interest yet the researcher has no a priori basis for assigning overlap to one subset or the other." (Cooksey & Freebody, 1985, p. 71). It might also be noted that

another method of partialling out the variance associated with a given cue has been offered by Johnson and Doherty (1983); they propose the application of a usefulness index for a given cue. The usefulness index is that variance associated with a cue when it is entered last into a regression equation; the index may thus be considered a lower-bound estimate of cue utility. The method proposed by Cooksey and Freebody, however, appears to be a more advanced and generally useful method of partialling out cue variance, and should probably be utilized whenever there is no a priori reason for choosing any specific order of entry. The value of these statistical/methodological advancements is that they allow for a more substantive consideration of the organism's behavior within a research environment that is modeled after the type of natural ecology in which real-world judgments are assumed to take place.

Application of the Lens Model to Diverse Domains

As a theorist and researcher, Brunswik was most interested in the topic of perception; however, this model has been usefully applied to a variety of other psychological domains. Hammond quotes Brunswik in saying that, "[The Lens Model] can be transported from perception to action and other psychological functions. It even may be used for 'explanation' in the sense of subsuming a single act under a generalized 'wish,' ascertained by the probabilistic application of operational criteria of 'purposiveness' such as those of Tolman" (Hammond, 1966, p. 39). Thus, although Brunswik began with perception, he and Tolman soon applied the model to means-end analyses and purposive behavior (Tolman & Brunswik, 1966). Cues, in this case, become paths that may be used by an organism as a means of achieving its goal. The means-object and the goal are intentionally attained. Means-objects can be good, ambivalent, indifferent, or bad. Cues can be reliable, ambiguous, nonsignificant, or misleading. The psychological success of an organism depends on its ability to pick a good means-object for reaching the

desired goal and to select reliable cues for this good means-object. As it adapts to the ecology in which it finds itself, the organism will learn to use the more reliable cues.

Within this model, Tolman and Brunswik assume that the organism makes hypotheses about the relationship between the means-object and the desired goal. Some hypotheses are innately given, others are derived from past experience. There must be some flexibility, or vicarious mediation, in order for the organism to learn new and better hypotheses. This view of the organism as bringing hypotheses to the judgment task reflects Brunswik's willingness to entertain the inference of some degree of central processing.

The Social Judgment Theory (SJT), however, remains one of the most widely used applications of Brunswik's theory. SJT offers an application of the behavior-research isomorphy principle, which assumes that an understanding of people's actions requires an understanding of their intentions and goals. SJT has been used in the area of clinical judgment, multiple-cue probability learning tasks, conflict and conflict resolution, value judgment, personnel selection, university planning, medication effects on cognitive processes, and interpersonal learning (Brehmer & Joyce, 1988). SJT has also been used to study academic advisement (Johnson and Doherty, 1983), intentional action (Heider, 1966), learning and memory (Jarvik, 1966), and concept attainment (Azuma & Cronbach, 1966).

Although they may not be strictly allied with the SJT movement, other researchers have applied Brunswik's theoretical formulations and methods to a variety of judgment tasks within social settings. For example, Cooksey and Freebody (1985) applied their generalized multivariate lens model to an analysis of student teachers' judgment policies in the prediction of children's reading achievement at the end of the school year. Other researchers have applied the method to the study of nonverbal behaviors in job interviews (Gifford, Ng, and Wilkinson, 1985), selection of managers (Russell, 1985), person

perception of strangers versus acquaintances (Paunonen, 1989), rapport in adversarial and cooperative dyads (Bernieri, Gillis, Davis & Grahe, 1996), training of lie detectors (Fiedler & Walka, 1993), assumptions about an individual's disposition based on nonverbal behaviors (Gifford, 1994), dimensions of work and family (Sahoo & Bidyadhar, 1994), psychological testing and personality assessment (Loevinger, 1966), and clinical diagnosis of hyperactivity in children (Ullman & Doherty, 1984).

To summarize, there is a large body of evidence to suggest that Brunswik's theoretical and methodological formulations are of value in a variety of non-perceptual domains. In fact, it could be argued that this conceptualization applies equally well to almost any context in which a decision is made. Of course, one must carefully consider the nature of the judgment task and its ecology. Certain tasks will require use of nomothetic methods whereas others are more suited to idiographic approaches. The choice of a statistical technique should involve a consideration of the potential contributions of linear versus nonlinear sources of variance and the judgment task should ideally be representative of the organism's natural judgment ecology. It is contended that one should attempt to make research findings as generalizable and as practically useful as possible; in short, that one strive for representative design. The studies presented above provide examples of the ways in which researchers have approached the goal set forth by Brunswik. As Barker (1966) argues, it seems sensible to study behaviors as they occur in real-world contexts and to allow these behaviors to occur within the complexity of the person's natural ecology. Only then can we begin to approximate the process that occurs in real-world judgment tasks.

Having presented the theoretical and methodological frameworks of Existential-Phenomenology and Brunswik's Lens Model, I now turn to a discussion of the similarities and differences between the two systems. Although the systems differ in many regards, there are also numerous parallels. The following chapter represents an attempt to integrate

the contributions of each system in a coherent methodology for the study of judgment and choice. The goal of integration is to combine the qualitative richness and experiential relevance of the phenomenological method with the conceptual clarity and statistical measures available within the policy capturing technique. Such an integration will be used to lay the groundwork for the procedure employed in the present investigation.

CHAPTER IV

COMPARISON OF THE SYSTEMS AND METHODOLOGICAL INTEGRATION

The similarities and differences between Existential-Phenomenology and Brunswik's theory are graphically presented in Figure 3, which merges the philosophical concept of Intentionality with relevant aspects of the Lens Model. As the figure illustrates, the structure of the systems is similar, and the components of one system have counterparts in the other. Despite the structural similarity, however, there are numerous conceptual differences. In this section, I delineate the differences as well as the similarities, and offer a methodological integration that combines complementary aspects of the two systems.

One of the most obvious parallels between the two systems is that both recognize the need for research that is representative of non-laboratory experience. This similarity between the systems is represented by the ellipse surrounding the components of the model; it may be thought of as the "experiential field." Husserl contended that we must move towards analysis of the things themselves, and the existential-phenomenologists' method revolves around the contention that our research must be existentially relevant. Similarly, Brunswik advocated the principle of "behavior-research isomorphism" and suggested that "research should focus where behavior focuses."

Both systems also share the notion that one cannot approach such representativeness or meaningfulness through emulation of the natural sciences. Phenomenologists argue that phenomena, as they appear to the individual, are the data with which the human scientist must contend, as only these are accessible to the experiencing person. The emulation of natural sciences limits us to the domain of spatio-temporal phenomena and overlooks the experiential nature of the phenomena which are the data of consciousness. In a similar vein, Brunswik suggested a movement away from physics as the model for psychological science because he believed organism cannot apprehend the

Structural Complementarity of Intentionality and the Lens Model

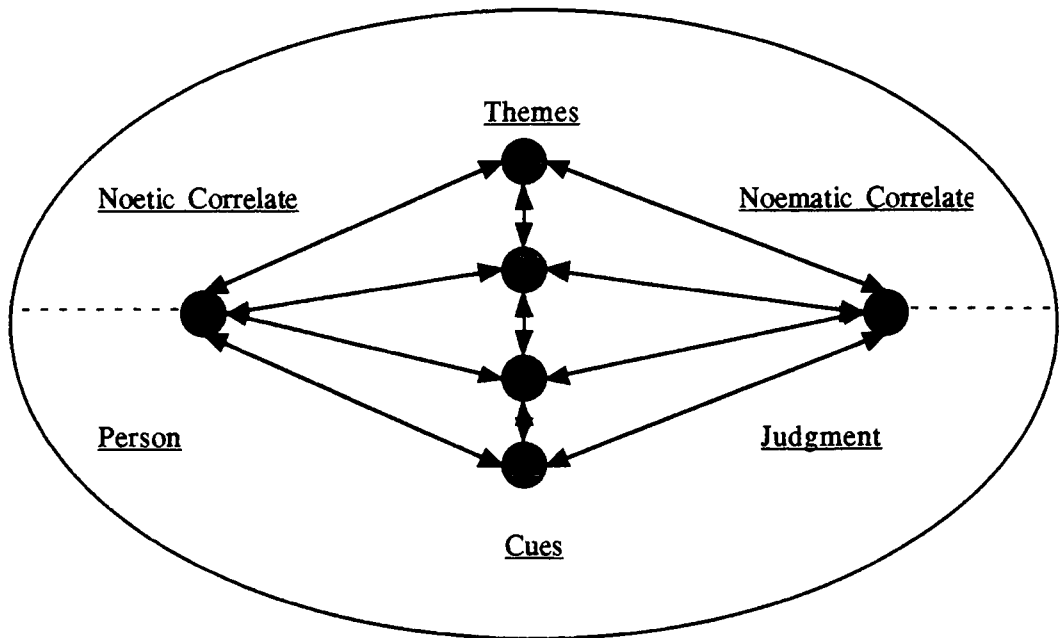


Figure 3. Structural Complementarity of Intentionality and the Lens Model

lawfulness inherent in the natural world and must deal with what is immediately available in perception. He argued that a single-variable research design does not take into account the organism's capacity for "vicarious functioning" and, therefore, does not replicate the ecology as it is experienced by the organism. Hammond expresses the limitations of the natural science methods for study of psychological processes when he paraphrases Koch's contention that "Man's stipulation that psychology be adequate to science outweighed his commitment that it be adequate to man" (Hammond, 1966, p. 65).

With these parallels in mind, however, one must note that there are essential differences between the two systems in their views of the right side of the model: the phenomenological view focuses on the noematic correlate whereas, in Brunswik's model, this focal point is represented by the judgment (or distal object, if the domain is perception). The relevance of phenomenological variables is derived from the meaning-system of the individual, and all human experience is assumed to be perspectival and limited. As Merleau-Ponty (1992, p. 61) states, "...reflection never holds, arrayed and objectified before its gaze, the whole world and the plurality of monads...its view is never other than partial and of limited power." Using Brunswik's language, the phenomenological view of the object being judged would always be proximal rather than distal. In contrast, the framework of probabilistic functionalism is decidedly influenced by evolutionary theory such that its goal is to study judgments that are salient with regard to survival and adjustment. Thus, all judgments are assumed to have biological or social relevance in some absolute sense (Petrinovich, 1979). Furthermore, Brunswik suggests distal variables in the world can and should be objectively measured and used as an index of the "accuracy" of perceptual judgment. To assert that one can determine the ecological validity of proximal cues or that one can measure achievement, or accuracy of judgment, requires that one accept the existence of some objectively measurable physical environment. As noted with regard to the theory of Existential-Phenomenology, the world cannot be

studied out of the context its relation to the person, as it is the interrelationship between the two that gives meaning to experience. Whereas Brunswik disdained the “merely” proximal, Merleau-Ponty celebrates the proximal (i.e., sensation) as one of our primary ways of connecting with being. He contends that, “My body is the fabric into which all objects are woven, and it is, at least in relation to the perceived world, the general instrument of my ‘comprehension’” (Merleau-Ponty, 1992, p. 235).

Within the phenomenological system, the “truth” of the object always transcends our experience of it; thus, the notion of “objective” measurement is never attainable. Indeed, the proponents of Brunswik’s theoretical formulations do not ever completely explain how one can obtain an accurate objective measurement given our necessarily probabilistic and limited perceptual system. To a great extent, Brunswik and his successors recognize this, yet were unwilling to discard the positivist notion of objective measurement. Given the evolutionary framework of the model, this is not surprising; psychology has a long history of reliance on biological and/or causal models of human experience. A cogent argument against the primacy of such models within the field of psychological inquiry is presented by Romanyshyn and Whalen (1989). They suggest that these perspectives offer laws of behavior and causation which may not be particularly relevant or meaningful within the context of an investigation of human experience. The argument that physiology is somehow prior to experience reflects our positivist heritage, but it seems equally reasonable to propose that psychological meaning is essential for any adequate understanding of physiological process.

Examination of the left side of the model (i.e., the noetic correlate, or the judging person), reveals further differences and parallels between the two systems. In their argument against reliance on phenomenological methods, Sarbin and Bailey (1966) state that, “Phenomenological indicators are probably the least precisely calibrated. The argument favoring the use of phenomenological reports loses ground when such reports

contradict behavioral indicators. Perhaps phenomenological reports, rather than providing indicators for general theories of behavior, will on closer inspection become an object for behavioral study rather than the criterion as proposed by the theorists asserting the immediacy of the phenomenological awarenesses" (Sarbin & Bailey, 1966, p. 177). The term "behavioral indicators" refers to any third-person observation of "objectively measurable" phenomena.

Sarbin and Bailey (1966) define phenomenology in terms of a focus on pre-reflective experience, including any meanings, associations, and qualities that appear to be a part of the phenomenon of interest. They agree that the method has some utility in that it taps into everyday experience and does not reduce the experience to artificial units, but they argue for the primacy of current observable behavior as opposed to self-reported past behavior. Basically, they argue that the third-person perspective is somehow more "valid" than the first-person perspective. Within their system, the occasional discrepancies between self-reports and observed behavior are viewed as evidence for the superiority of behavioral measures. This differential weighting of behavior and self-awareness, however, seems to reflect a value judgment, not a logical necessity. Certainly, if one desires generalization to observable behaviors, one should study observable behavior. However, if one is interested in a person's awareness of their own behavior and the meanings of their experience, it seems more reasonable to ask them to describe the experience in as much detail as possible.

Sarbin and Bailey are not alone in their distrust of self-reports. Brunswik himself was troubled by what he perceived as a tendency for an individual to be "deceived" by his or her experiences; the very notion that such deception can occur requires the belief that there is a "real" world which can be perceived with some accuracy. Nonetheless, Brunswik himself initially endorsed a more phenomenological focus (i.e., in his discussion of "intentionalistic attainment"). Although his own focus moved toward a more objective

level of analysis, it appears that Brunswik remained open to the notion that a more phenomenological type of analysis might have utility, albeit of a limited sort. He stated that, "The question as to whether intentional depth arises out of the lived-through experience itself belongs also in the realm of qualitative analysis of lived-through experience. No doubt something like a personally experienced intentional depth exists, that is, momentary consciousness of being related to this or that object layer. But this knowledge may, of course, deceive us just as we can be mistaken concerning intended or intentionally attained objects in general; the former instance is perhaps a little less blatant, because it concerns merely general phenomenal levels of objectivity of impressions and not special kinds of objects within a specific object layer" (Brandt, 1966).

Thus, the Brunswikian model is not entirely incompatible with the phenomenological perspective when one focuses on the left side of the lens model (i.e., the noetic correlate, or the judging person). The assumptions made about the perceiver, however, are often quite different. Leeper (1966) suggests that a critical examination of Brunswik's formulation (and the research conducted by his successors) typically reveals a focus on central-distal rather than distal-distal relations. Although Brunswik is typically portrayed as hostile to inferences concerning central intraorganismic processes, this is not the case. Brunswik believed that the avoidance of inferential language is a consequence of psychologists' fear of appearing too "subjective" and that this avoidance overlooks the fact that inferences about central processes are often useful. One difference between Brunswik and the phenomenologists is that Brunswik believed that the best method was to infer central processes on the basis of objective behavior. In contrast, phenomenological analysis is based on the assumption that such inferences are not required if one allows the individual to tell us about his or her experience.

More fundamentally, although one could argue that the phenomenological approach gives access to central-distal relations, there is a danger inherent in this way of thinking.

The danger is that an artificial dichotomy between “inner person” and “outer world” is introduced: a dichotomy that overlooks the co-constitution of the individual and the world within the intentional frame. Thus, although a superficial analysis of the organismic side of the model would suggest that the two systems are quite similar, the phenomenological method requires that one always keep in mind that the two sides co-create the phenomenal field. As Merleau-Ponty suggests, “The sensor and the sensible do not stand in relation to each other as two mutually external terms, and sensation is not an invasion of the sensor by the sensible...between the subject of sensation and the sensible it cannot be held that one acts while the other suffers the action, or that one confers significance on the other. The sensible gives back to me what I lent it, but this is only what I took from it in the first place” (Merleau-Ponty, 1992, p. 214).

The recognition of a necessary connection between the noetic and noematic foci of phenomenal experience leads us to the center of the model; within the Lens Model, this region includes multiple intersubstitutable cues. In phenomenological analysis, these may be viewed as modes of experiencing. Both systems posit a multiplicity of possible relationships between perceiver and perceived, between judge and judgment, and both recognize these connections afford the perceiver a rich but perspectival view of the world. Both theories require acceptance of the limitations of human experience; the existence of the natural world is not denied, but it is argued that this world is larger and more extensive than the boundaries of our experience and cannot therefore be grasped in its entirety by either the perceiving or judging subject. Brunswik states that, “...The point is that while God may not gamble, animals and humans do, and they cannot help but to gamble in an ecology that is of essence only partly accessible to their foresight” (Brunswik, 1955, p. 236). Similarly, Ihde (1986, p. 53) notes that, “First, I, the concrete observer, am not the god; and second, were such a god needed, I would still have to get access to him from the limits of my actual situation. ...all I can assume is the stance of my actual position vis-à-vis the

world. The development of a dependable and viable distinction between “reality” and “appearance” would then have to come out of a further analysis of the experiential context itself.”

Furthermore, the phenomenological system views the connections between the noetic and noematic correlates as co-constituting person and world. Experience begins with the noema, with the mode of experiencing appearing reflexively. The noetic correlate, “I”, is given through this reflection. It is this reflection that comprises intentionality, in that “To reflect is to reflect about something, which is to say, in phenomenological language, that reflection is intentional” (Ihde, 1986, p. 51). Modes of experiencing, then, originate in the experiential dialogue between person and world. This is reflected in the bi-directional arrows that are presented in this figure; the arrows indicate that the connections between the themes (or cues; the differences between themes and cues are discussed below) result from and define the interrelationship between the person and the world and between the themes themselves. Brunswik’s system, in contrast to phenomenology, reflects the view that the connecting paths between person and judgment (or object) are derived from some distal state of affairs in the world, and are known with some level of uncertainty by the perceiving or judging organism. Connections, therefore, are viewed as existing “out there”, whether the person has proximal knowledge of them or not.

In addition, the assumption of multiple intercorrelated themes, paths, or cues reflects the fact that the goal of both systems is to capture the existential realities of the judgment situation. In phenomenological methods, it is assumed that there are many different modes of experiencing a given event, and that the individual should be allowed to tell the researcher about his or her ways of experiencing the phenomenon of interest. Similarly, Brunswik’s arguments against the single-variable research design reflect his desire that psychology be able to “deal with meaningful problems without losing the essence of human existence” (Petrinovich, 1979, p. 373). The systematic method of

controlling one variable destroys the pattern of interrelationships that exists in the organism's experience of the natural ecology. The most reasonable method is to choose a representative sample of research participants and allow them to behave as they would in a representative array of situations. Ideally, the behavior studied should be chosen by the participant him- or herself rather than by the experimenter; this, of course, is the case in phenomenological interview procedures.

Despite these parallels, there are essential discrepancies in the way proximal events are constructed within the models. For example, there are differences with respect to the ways the modes of experiencing are perceived to be related to the objects or phenomena to which they refer. Brunswik's system involves the notion of "ecological validity" which requires that one accept the idea that there is a real distal object with which the various cues are correlated to a greater or lesser degree. Interrelations across cues and between individual cues and the distal object are framed in terms of correlation coefficients. There is an assumption that an organism can obtain an objectively veridical approximation of the distal object if correct cues are utilized. A cue is therefore assumed to exist independently of the perceiver or judge; whether or not the organism attends to the cue does not affect its relationship to the object.

The notion of accuracy does not fit easily into the phenomenological perspective, but there is a rough approximation in that the phenomenologist assumes that the thematization process captures invariant or essential aspects of the phenomenon as experienced. Certainly Husserl believed that one could attain essential knowledge of the phenomenon of interest. His successors continue to utilize the method of variations as a way to uncover the "topography" of the phenomenon. In addition, as Ihde (1986, p. 95) notes, "In each case there remains an isomorphism, a strict correlation, between noema and noesis." One may strategically focus on either the noematic or noetic side of the correlation, but the other side is always assumed. For the Existential-Phenomenologist, a

phenomenal theme is assumed to emerge from the dialogue between person and world. Themes reflect an interpretation of the figural aspects of a person's experience. Dasein renders inconceivable the notion that a theme could exist independently of either person or world.

The policy capturing technique assumes that a cue has some objective correlation with the object (i.e., the cue's "ecological validity") and with the person making the judgment (i.e., the cue's "utilization"). Similarly, the phenomenological system involves the notion that a proximal sign (i.e., a sensation or perception) is related to the world and to the person. However, the latter provides additional consideration of the process of co-constitution; the proximal sign is part of being-in-the world. Merleau-Ponty (1992) addresses this specifically when he contends that the mind could not recognize the significance of a sign unless it had already constituted it as a sign. The thematic aspects of experience, then, do not somehow exit the object and impinge upon the person's proximal surface. Rather, the world and the person co-create experience and only within the present intentional field does the theme and its significance for the present project emerge.

Further, the Brunswikian model assumes that cues can be accessed adequately by simply asking participants to generate lists of potential cues; this method is typically utilized in the policy capturing procedure. In phenomenological language, one might argue that this method accesses only those cues that are available to reflective consciousness. On the other hand, the phenomenological system recognizes the possibility that the modes of experiencing might also be unreflective and, therefore, not accessible by this relatively superficial method of data gathering. By thematization of a phenomenological interview, one gains insight into both reflective and nonreflective aspects of consciousness, and the full range of possible cues are thereby represented.

Heidegger (1962) argues Western philosophy, and the science of human behavior, has overemphasized the type of thinking that is involved in organization, research and

planning. He refers to this as "calculative" thinking. He suggests that this type of thinking has a certain value but that we must also embrace the mystery of the phenomenon and contemplate the meanings that are present in our experiences of the world. This latter type of thinking he refers to as "meditative." Whereas the standard policy capturing technique relies completely upon calculative thinking, the phenomenological method opens the inquiry to the possibilities accessible only through a more meditative way of experiencing the world.

Despite the numerous conceptual differences between phenomenology and the Lens Model, the structural components appear to complement one another. It therefore seems reasonable to suggest that the methods deriving from the two models could be merged into a coherent procedure for the study of human judgment. One could conduct phenomenological interviews with individuals who have been involved in the judgment context of interest. Using standard phenomenological methodology, interview protocols would be thematized and the structure of the judgment uncovered. One could of course end the investigation at this point, having gained information about the judgment process as experienced by the individuals themselves. Alternatively, the standard policy capturing technique includes a step in which cues are generated by asking participants to generate lists of potential cues, or by culling cues from prior research. Judgment task profiles are then constructed around these cues and participants are asked to make quantifiable judgments about these profiles. Given an interest in individual decision-making processes, one would employ an idiographic method in which the goal is to capture the policies of individual participants (Stewart, 1988). The statistical analysis would then focus on the subjective components of the Lens Model Equation, and the appropriate correlation coefficients would be derived using the regression techniques outlined previously (Beal, Gillis, & Stewart, 1978; Cooksey & Freebody, 1985).

Rather than choosing either the qualitative phenomenological method or the quantitative policy capturing technique, a merger of the two techniques would begin with the standard phenomenological method and continue the investigation by utilizing the phenomenological themes as part of a policy capturing analysis. It seems reasonable to contend that the rich data obtained in phenomenological interviews are preferable to more superficial ways of obtaining information about cues. In addition, decisions described by the participants would provide real-world judgment profiles.

There are a number of advantages to this type of methodological synthesis: first, as argued previously, the phenomenological method allows access to unreflective aspects of consciousness in addition to more reflective ones. The method also provides a forum where meditative as well as calculative thinking processes about the phenomenon may emerge. Thus, phenomenological methods will allow the researcher to gain access to more levels of meaning for the participant. Second, proponents of both systems argue that the researcher's task should be to make the investigation representative of actual experience. A representative research design approximates situations the person encounters in real life, and it is preferable for judgment tasks to be based on existing, real world scenarios. Hammond (1966) suggests that our goal should be to capture and reproduce relevant ecologies (e.g., on film or through computer modeling). The narrative descriptions of experiences derived from phenomenological interviews may be considered as reproductions of personally meaningful judgment ecologies and therefore are appropriate for use as in a comprehensive policy capturing investigation. If one's desire is to approximate the situations actually encountered in the person's life, it certainly seems reasonable to begin by inquiring about situations previously experienced by the person.

Finally, profile construction within the policy capturing technique requires that cue intercorrelations within profiles match the judges' subjective cue intercorrelations (Stewart, 1988). There are two ways in which the matching process can occur. Ideally, one would

utilize samples of real cases, which, by definition, contain subjective cue interrelationships. If real cases are not available, hypothetical profiles may be generated and atypical profiles deleted from the sample of cases presented to participants. By beginning with in-depth phenomenological interviews, one gains access to a wide variety of actual cases that can be used as case profiles. In addition, the thematic structure will provide information about subjective cue intercorrelations and typical cue combinations. The phenomenological interview process will enable the investigator to construct increasingly representative judgment profiles. The richness and experiential relevance of the research can be increased dramatically by the phenomenological component, while the policy capturing component adds conceptual clarity and statistical control.

In summary, investigations of human judgment may benefit from considering the ways in which qualitative and quantitative research methods can be used as complementary components in a single design. There are areas of structural overlap between phenomenological analysis and the model presented by Brunswik. The areas of divergence are in many ways complementary; it is not necessary to place them in opposition to one another. By opening a dialogue between the two systems of thought, we may begin to move closer to a fundamental understanding of the decisions, judgments, and choices that people make every day of their lives. Allowing ourselves access to the information obtainable by these diverse methods of investigation, we will perhaps be in a better position to "capture" the full experiential richness of the process of human choice.

Intention of the Current Study

The present investigation is intended to provide a rich description of women's experience of making a choice about whether or not to become sexually intimate with a new partner. As has been noted, the extant literature on this topic has rarely allowed women to give voice to their own experience of making choices about sexual intimacy. The present study represents one attempt to hear that voice and to describe women's experience in an

experientially clear way. To attain this description, a specific procedure has been developed to combine the phenomenological method, and its assumptions, with the policy capturing technique derived from Brunswik's Lens Model.

In the previous chapter, it is suggested that there are numerous similarities between the Existential-Phenomenological system and Brunswik's theory of probabilistic functionalism. There are, however, a number of discrepancies between the two systems. Most notably, the Lens Model assumes that judgments or choices are based on cues that derive directly from objectively measurable distal phenomenon whereas the phenomenological system rests on the assumption that a person's experience of the world, and hence the choices made by that person, originate within the co-constitution of the person and the world. This project is based on an acceptance of the tenets of Existential-Phenomenology. Therefore, although the study utilizes the policy capturing technique, it begins with a phenomenological analysis of women's narratives regarding sexual choice. The themes derived from the narratives comprise the "cues" that are employed in the policy capturing technique. The women's experiential world is given primacy throughout. The policy capturing technique, along with the phenomenological interview, are employed as methods of interpreting that experiential world. The integrative method, described in the next chapter, offers a reasonable and dynamic way of illuminating the process whereby women make choices concerning sexual intimacy.

CHAPTER V

METHOD

Introduction

The current investigation has two related goals. The primary purpose is to describe women's experience of making a choice about whether or not to become involved in a sexual relationship with a new partner. The second goal is to develop a procedure for studying decision-making in general which includes both qualitative and quantitative components. The qualitative component is comprised of an in-depth phenomenological interview and hermeneutic analysis of women's narratives. The quantitative component involves the "policy capturing" technique derived from the Lens Model. There is a direct link between the phenomenological interview data and the policy capturing technique since the experimental stimuli used in the latter were derived from the hermeneutic analysis of the former. The purpose of such linkage is twofold: first, the rich data gleaned from the interview protocols provides an experientially-based set of ecologically valid stimuli. Second, the policy capturing technique allows for statistical evaluation of the phenomenological analysis. Utilization of this method provided a detailed description of the process by which these women make choices about sexual involvement.

Participants

Participants in this project were adult women who volunteered for participation. They were recruited from local women's health clinics and from the Knoxville community. A cover letter describing the project (see Appendix A) was placed in the lobbies of several women's clinics, and women interested in participation (both staff and patients) were encouraged to phone the primary investigator for further information. Other women learned of the study by word of mouth, and interested women were contacted by the primary investigator. A total of fifteen adult women participated in the project. Before being interviewed, the women signed an Informed Consent Form (see Appendix B) and

were assigned a participant number to protect confidentiality. This number was used to identify audiotapes, interview transcripts, and the vignette packets employed in the second half of the study. The master list containing the names and phone numbers of the participants was stored in a fireproof combination lockbox which was kept separate from the project data. Participants were treated in accordance with the ethical guidelines set forth by the American Psychological Association.

Procedure

In the third chapter, the phenomenological concept of epoche was discussed, in which the investigator attempts to "bracket" her assumptions and preconceptions of the phenomenon under examination (Valle, King, & Halling, 1989). As the primary researcher and interviewer, I thus began by participating in a "bracketing interview", designed to increase my awareness of preexisting assumptions concerning the topic of sexual choice. The interview was conducted by a fellow member of our phenomenology research group at The University of Tennessee (see Pollio, Henley, & Thompson, 1997, for further description of the nature and role of this group in phenomenological research). The transcribed protocol from the bracketing interview was then analyzed and thematized by the research group. This process allowed me to become more sensitive to my assumptions about the experience of sexual choice and to become aware of the ways in which these assumptions might influence interviews with participants. For example, I learned that I needed to bracket my interest in contraception and condom use by avoiding leading questions about these issues.

Phase I

The first phase of the project involved audiotaping in-depth phenomenological interviews with the fifteen women in the sample. The interviews began with the instruction, "I would like for you to think of some times when you have made a choice about whether or not to become sexually involved with someone with whom you have not yet been

sexually intimate. When you have thought of some times, I'd like you to describe them in as much detail as possible." The women were therefore free to choose those experiences they wished to relate, and were free to discuss times when they had either made choices to become sexually intimate or not to become intimate. After providing the initial focus, I allowed the women to guide me to those aspects of the experience that were most salient for them. I avoided leading questions and did not attempt to "steer" the interview toward specific aspects of the phenomenon. Primarily, I asked the women to give me specific examples and to describe their experiences in detail. My questions and comments were intended either to promote dialogue about or to clarify understanding of the woman's experience of making choices regarding sexual intimacy. Duration of the interviews ranged from 45 minutes to 2 hours and were conducted at locations chosen by the participants to insure optimum levels of privacy and comfort.

After the interview was completed, I transcribed the audiotape and deleted all identifying information. The transcribed protocol was given to the participant, and she was asked to review the protocol and make any corrections, additions, or deletions that she wished. Only two women asked that portions of their narrative be deleted or edited: in both cases, the changes were intended to protect confidentiality. When the transcript was approved by the woman, she then signed a consent for publication form (Appendix C) so that portions of the narrative could be reproduced in the dissertation manuscript and/or other published reports.

Transcribed protocols were then analyzed using a phenomenological method derived from hermeneutic interpretation procedures detailed by Pollio and his colleagues (Pollio, Henley, & Thompson, 1997). In this method, the interview protocol is analyzed in parts and as a whole, with the various parts always being related back to the narrative in its entirety. Specific segments of the narrative are examined to determine their dominant meaning(s), but their meaning is never taken out of the context of the narrative as a whole.

The participants' own words are employed whenever possible in the extraction of units of meaning.

Most interview protocols were analyzed by the primary investigator alone; five protocols were analyzed in the phenomenology research group. These protocols, from which identifying information had been deleted so as to insure anonymity, were read by members of the group and analyzed aloud for units and patterns of meaning. No identifying information was provided, except for the age of the participant. Prior to reading the protocols, each member of the phenomenology laboratory signed a confidentiality statement (Appendix D) in which they agreed to protect the anonymity of the participant, not to discuss the protocol outside the confines of the laboratory setting, and to excuse themselves if they believed they could identify the participant.

Following thematic analysis of each interview, meanings were synthesized into a smaller number of themes common to all interviews, again using words of the participants to describe the themes. The point of this procedure is to preserve the unique personal nature of meaning for each woman while attempting, at the same time, to discover themes common across experiences. Attention was given to interrelationships and patterns across themes, and to elucidation of the overall structure of the experience of sexual choice.

Phase Two

Participants from the first phase also participated in the second phase. Following thematic analysis of their interviews, themes were used to construct vignettes. The vignettes depicted a hypothetical situation in which a woman has to make a choice about whether or not to engage in sexual activity with a potential partner. All vignettes were constructed around thematic elements obtained from the protocol analyses of Phase One. Themes were first manipulated so as to provide differing levels of each theme across the vignettes. For example, the theme of "attraction" was manipulated so that some vignettes

depicted a high level of attraction whereas others depicted a moderate or low level. An sample vignette is given below:

“After a dinner date with this man, he suggests that you spend the night together. You have known him for awhile, and you find that you are highly attracted to him. He has never given you any signals that he finds you attractive. The two of you seem to have a great deal in common, and you feel very close to and connected with him. He does seem like a trustworthy and safe person. When you think about it, the idea of sex with him feels comfortable and right to you. You can’t think of any negative consequences that would arise from having sex with him. You are both in control of the situation; it feels mutual.”

It is always preferable (Stewart, 1988) to use real cases in the construction of vignettes because they present actual rather than estimated cue intercorrelations. Toward this end, I examined interview protocols for illustrative narratives in which all themes were present. Unfortunately, I could not locate any narratives that included all of the themes; typically, women would emphasize one or two themes in a given narrative, and discuss new themes in later narratives. As no complete “real cases” could be located, and as there was no rationale for implementing any specific set of theme intercorrelations, I chose to utilize a set of vignettes in which themes were orthogonal. The overall set of themes was intercorrelated at less than .10. Because of the orthogonality of the themes, some of the resulting vignettes included atypical, or incomprehensible, theme profiles and were therefore discarded from the final set of vignettes. The removal of atypical cue profiles is a standard procedure in the construction of policy capturing stimuli (Stewart, 1988).

To construct an orthogonal set of vignettes, the following procedure was utilized: first, a random number table was employed to generate combinations of values for sets of all seven cues. Each of these combinations comprised a single cue profile. Second, a set of 75 novel cue profiles (with atypical cases deleted) was tested for degree of correlation of each pair of cues. Third, successive subsets of five novel cue profiles were deleted, and

new subsets added, until the resulting correlation matrix contained no cue pairs that were correlated at greater than .10.

A set of 100 such vignettes was given to the participants, who were asked to read each vignette and give a numerical ranking of how likely they would be to engage in sexual activity given the particular levels of the themes present in that vignette. In accordance with Stewart's (1988) suggestions, the first 50 of the vignettes were novel (that is, no vignette was repeated), followed by 25 novel "holdout" vignettes that had not yet been presented (for purposes of crossvalidation), then by 25 repeated vignettes (to measure reliability).

For each vignette, the women were asked to respond to two questions. The first question was, "How likely would you be to engage in sexual intercourse given the situation depicted in the vignette?" The second question reflected the existential ground that emerged in the protocol analyses (to be discussed in the following chapter). The question was, "At this point in your life, how well would sex under these conditions fit with the way you see yourself and the way you want to live your life?" For each question, the woman was asked to give a ranking on a 5-point Likert type scale. This portion of the data collection took approximately two hours. Once completed, the investigator collected the sets of vignettes from the participants. At this time, participants were offered the opportunity to receive results of this study once it was completed.

Analysis of the vignette data involved stepwise regression procedures. The rankings on the first question for each vignette served as the dependent variable, whereas the theme, or cue, levels served as independent variables. Rankings on the second question provided an additional independent variable. As discussed in Chapter III, the regression analysis applied to such data has been referred to as "policy capturing" within the social judgment literature. The regression equation for each participant reflects the weight she gave to each theme in arriving at her choices. Thus, for each woman's ranking of her likelihood to engage in intercourse, one is able to determine the proportion of

variance accounted for by each of the themes illustrated in the vignettes. The multiple regression coefficient provides data concerning the power of the themes in combination.

The data were analyzed for each individual participant (an idiographic approach) and for the sample as a whole (the nomothetic approach). For the nomothetic analysis, mean values for the two questions (both the sexual choice question and the question reflecting the existential ground) were employed in the regression equation. By utilizing both the idiographic and nomothetic approaches, the policies of individual women were identified, as was the policy for the group of women as a whole. Finally, I included a cluster analysis of the data to allow for the identification of groups of women with similar decision policies and for an elaboration of thematic patterns across and within these groups.

CHAPTER VI

RESULTS

Introduction

In this section, the results of this study are presented. The section begins with a description of the participants, including demographics and information pertaining to sexual experience. Next I discuss the themes deriving from phenomenological analysis of interview data and present a thematic structure for the experience of sexual choice. This structure provides an experientially-grounded description of the meaning of sexual choice within the lives of the participants. The results of the policy capturing portion of the project are then presented. Finally, I detail the ways in which the qualitative and quantitative data complement and support one another.

Description of the Participants

Fifteen adult women participated in the project. The mean age for the sample was 36.3 years ($SD = 8.2$), with an age range from 24 to 51 years. All participants were of European American descent. Three of the women were single and had never been married, one woman had been divorced for 13 years, and the remaining women were married. Their mean number of years of marriage was 10.6 ($SD = 11.3$), with a range from 5 months to 32 years. All women self-identified as solely or primarily heterosexual. Ten of the women had no children; the five remaining women had from one to three children. All of the women had received some college or technical training; the majority (93%) had at least a Bachelor's degree and ten (67%) had Master's degrees or the equivalent. The women's careers were diverse and included a variety of clerical, technical, administrative, and professional pursuits; four (27%) of the women were students (2 graduate, 2 undergraduate) and one woman was a homemaker.

In addition to demographic questions, the women provided information pertaining to their level of sexual experience. First, the women indicated the age at which they first

had intercourse. The mean age at first intercourse was 17.9 years ($SD = 3.5$), with a range from 13 to 27 years. Second, the women were asked about their lifetime number of sexual partners. The mean number of partners was 13.9 and the median was 39 ($SD = 24.97$), with a range from 1 to over 100 partners. A summary of the demographic data is provided in Table 1.

Phase I: Phenomenological Analyses

Thematic analysis of participant experiences of making choices about sexual activity revealed a thematic structure that consisted of five themes: Not Right/Right, Attraction, Intimacy, Control, and Anticipations/Consequences. All themes except Control appeared in all interviews, whereas Control was explicitly discussed by 11 of the 15 participants. Themes were discussed against the ground of participants' experience of themselves as changing and developing over time, in the context of social expectations and relationships with others. This ground is reflected in the words of the participants, who often spoke of "Who I am", "Who I was", or "Who I want to be."

Themes

Each of the five themes is described below, along with illustrative statements from the interviews. Although each theme is presented separately, it is essential to remember that they are interrelated with one another and with their experiential ground. Specific relationships between themes will be discussed following presentation of individual themes. At that time, the overall thematic structure will also be described in greater detail.

Not Right/Right

This theme reflects participants' awareness of whether or not intercourse with a particular man felt "right" to them. Most frequently, this theme was discussed in a context of experiences in which participants noticed that sex did not feel right. Participants described this "not right" feeling as an "intuition" or as a "warning bell" signifying danger

Table 1. Demographic Information

AGE: Mean = 36.3 years	SD = 8.2 years	Range: 24 - 51 years
MARITAL STATUS:	Married: 11 Single: 3 Divorced: 1	
YEARS OF MARRIAGE: Mean: 10.6 years	SD = 11.3 years	Range: 5 mts - 32 years
CHILDREN:	None: 10 One Child: 1 Two Children: 3 Three Children: 1	
EDUCATION:	Some technical or college: 1 Bachelor's degree: 4 Some post-graduate: 1 Master's degree or equivalent: 9	
OCCUPATION:	Clerical or Labor: 3 Technical: 1 Administrative: 1 Professional: 5 Homemaker: 1 Student: 4	
AGE AT FIRST INTERCOURSE: Mean: 17.87 years	SD = 3.5 years	Range: 13 - 27 years
NUMBER OF SEXUAL PARTNERS: Mean: 13.9	SD = 24.97	Range: 1 - 100

or risk. Often, though not always, this absence of rightness (or presence of warning) was felt in participants' bodies. Sample excerpts from specific narratives are presented below:

P7: "And if my body tells me, like, gives me some kind of twinge, I think 'Ok, why am I feeling, you know...having sort of a stomach ache?' And then I realize what it's about, which is what happens now that I know myself a little better, then I stop having a stomach ache. It goes away. It's like, I don't know, like I sort of have a conscience in my stomach, or something."

P10: "That's like...for me that's like a, once again sort of an intuitive, sort of a feeling-thing that, I don't care what that person looks like...that could be the most handsome man in the world, and it'd be like, 'No way.' There's this wall that comes down, and I know that's not a possibility. [and later] It's been really helpful to me. I listen to it a lot. Or I respond, because I feel like some people don't listen to that at all, and it gets them in trouble. ...A gut feeling, but for me it's more in the solar plexus area. It's the tightening, and a little surge. Not a good surge, not an adrenaline rush, but a surge that's like big red lights go off in your mind."

P11: "I'm a very psychosomatic person. It's...my body is just...if I'm upset, then my stomach is upset. Just that any, any emotion comes out in me, physically. [and later] You're thinking, 'What about tomorrow?' I mean, 'Do I want to be with this person again?' And just kinda...kind of nauseous. 'I don't wanna do this. I've got to get away from here. I've gotta get out of this situation right now.'"

Although the majority of descriptions focused on this feeling of "not-rightness", most participants also discussed their experience of feeling that sex would be "right" with some potential partner. Often, "rightness" was described as feeling comfortable, safe, and peaceful. At times, it was contrasted with "not-rightness" by a description of the absence of "not right" feelings.

P1: "I have a good feel for what seems like a good thing for me to do and what doesn't. And if something feels right...things just felt right with him. [and later] It just, at that point, all of the conditions I had set forward had...had already been passed. And so that kind of felt like...I was more comfortable and more free to go ahead and explore that with him."

P5: "Just having a sense that what I'm doing is right, is true. It's not even about healthy, it's about your truth. It's about that sense of truth. And it's wrapped up in spirituality, and it's wrapped up in being true to yourself. I keep saying true, truth, but it's sort of like...it's hard to describe it, because it's more like you just know it when you're there. And you don't feel like you're paddling upstream. And you feel like you're where you need to be. You're on the track, on the course."

P11: "Like when the little voice in your head isn't saying 'No', or carrying on. You're just in the moment. And there's no guilt. And your stomach doesn't tense

up. It just feels right. [and later] You're not thinking past, present or 'What if?' or 'Am I doing the right thing?' You're just totally concentrating on what you're doing with that person. At that very second."

P7: "I just felt really peaceful about it, and just completely sure, just completely sure that this was something that I wanted to do. And there were no negative signals to me. There was no ambivalence. And I just felt really good about it, enough to be able to run with the more physical, like, attraction kinds of feeling. I don't know that I was really paying attention to positive signals that I was getting, it was more of an absence of negative physical feelings about it."

For some participants, there appeared to be a conflict since they were not sure whether or not sex felt "right" to them. These women discussed conflicts between their heads and hearts, their minds and bodies, or their personal desires and the expectations of society or family.

P15: "When my head is right and when my gut is joined together, things feel in synch. They feel very comfortable. When my, if my head is saying one thing and my gut is saying another, I find myself trying to reason my gut into believing it. But my gut doesn't, my gut doesn't take those reasons. My gut generally knows. And what I've learned to look at is, 'Why is my gut telling me this? Why is this happening?' That I feel so uncomfortable. That I feel a little nervous, or I feel uncomfortable, or something just doesn't sit right. And I have to look at that."

P7: "Intellectually I like to think of...I always tried to just be this kind of promiscuous person that I wanted to be. And I just wanted it to be based on sexual attraction. But I just always had this...my stomach...I would feel nauseous. If I tried to make myself sleep with somebody that didn't fit all these other criteria that I had. So I guess it was a deeper thing than an intellectual thing. It was just...on some other level I just couldn't bring myself to be this kind of person I wanted to be."

Attraction

This theme refers to participants' awareness of attraction; all participants described the importance of being attracted to their potential partner. Several also mentioned their awareness of the man's attraction to them or of mutual attraction. Frequently, attraction was described in terms of "chemistry" or "desire."

P2: "It's not like I look at every man who fits that description and think the same thing. I think I was thinking back to the times when there was that electricity. Like when I would accidentally touch him, or...there was some kind of sexual attraction. That you, you can't explain...just, just chemistry. And I felt it around him."

P11: "I decided I wanted to have sex with him because I just thought he was beautiful. And that was all it was, and I knew there was nothing else to it."

P12: "I had been kind of getting interested in him, because he was pursuing me, and sending me flowers and notes, and things like that. And I was a kind of horny thirteen year old."

P7: "And I decided to sleep with him, I guess, because we had this really hot chemical attraction for each other. You know, it was kinda like you walk into the room, and like, you're swooning."

Intimacy

The theme of intimacy reflects the women's experience of their overall relationship with the potential partner, and includes four interrelated sub-themes: Closeness, Compatibility, Trust, and Respect. All participants discussed at least two of these sub-themes, and many discussed all four. The first sub-theme, Closeness, refers to participants' awareness of feelings of closeness and intimacy with their potential partner. Often, closeness was described in temporal/historical terms, as something that gradually deepened over time.

P8: "We did a lot of things that didn't have anything to do with sex--had lots of conversations. We would talk about not just trivial things, we would talk about things that seemed important. And we would go and we would do things together. And it just seemed very...close."

P3: "The intimacy with him provides the safety for me to want more...I know he won't leave me. He cares about what I think. He sees me; he's concerned about how I feel and see and think. [and later] The capacity for intimacy is what I've always been unreflectively drawn to."

P13: "I think it just...naturally, communication draws people closer. So we, I don't know. I don't know where you kind of start to feel that commitment or whatever, but I'd say pretty quickly on. Because we both really fell into synch with each other, and like I said we shared a lot of thoughts and feelings, so we...became pretty close, you know, right away."

The second sub-theme, Compatibility, involves participants' awareness of having something in common with their potential partners, be it interests, values, or ways of living. When participants discussed experiences of having nothing in common with a man, this was either in the context of a decision to not become sexually involved, or of a sexual relationship that turned out badly.

P9: "I wouldn't want to spend all my time with a bunch of conflict. I'd want to enjoy it, and that means there has to be some commonality, some things in common...common values about things."

P1: I think it made me ready for this relationship. I think that's why it went so fast, is we had already realized that we were really compatible. You know, we got along really well, and we have the same goals and dreams in life."

P5: "I want these long-term goals. I want a life-partner that has similar values and goals, and wants the same sort of things out of life that I do, and sort of at the same developmental place that I'm at. You know, I've worked a lot on myself, and I want somebody that's either, you know, worked a lot on themselves or are willing to do the work. [and later, in describing another experience which the participant now regrets] I didn't feel connected to him. I had nothing in common with him."

Trust, the third sub-theme, reflects the importance participants placed on the experience of trusting a potential partner. Trust was often described as being related to feelings of safety and comfort. Again, when participants described an absence of trust, this was typically in the context of a sexual relationship that had not been a positive experience. The meaning of trust or safety depended, in part, on the woman's desires regarding the continuation of the relationship: trust within the context of a one-night stand was different than trust within the context of a committed relationship.

P8: "And it seemed very close and very personal. And very trusting, and that was very important to me, to feel that sense of trust. And I think, to me, that was always important in a sexual relationship, to be able to trust someone. [and later] It was a relationship that was exciting to me, at the same time as being...it seemed to be safe. Where the last relationship I'd been in, had been a real mess. And there was no safety or security in it at all."

P10: "It might be that I felt that that person couldn't be trusted. That has a lot to do with it, just trust in general, whether that means trusted for 24 hours, or whether that means trusted for a long time. [and later] Because honesty, to me, is like on the long haul. That you see that this person is consistently honest with you. But with somebody that you knew that you didn't especially want to have a real long-term relationship with, it would be more of that intuitive, once again...that thing inside, that this person is trustworthy enough...if I want to have a one-night stand, he's not gonna talk about me to everybody. Or he's gonna understand what this is about."

P4: "I felt comfortable with that guy. You know, and the fact that he was so open with me, and I knew right up front what was going on."

Finally, the fourth Intimacy sub-theme is Respect, which involves the woman's awareness of feeling respected by the potential partner and of respecting him. This sub-

theme also reflects the woman's perception that the man values her and believes her to be important or special.

P14: "So I guess maybe the experience of having somebody accept me as being different or strong-minded and maybe...respectful. Respectful of my opinions, and not having to steamroll over them."

P7: "I didn't want to sleep with him because I thought he had a drug problem. And, I guess, I just didn't really respect that. [and later] And I knew that he was a jerk because of that. That was like the beginning of the end of the relationship. But, um, he certainly wasn't a person that I wanted to be much closer to. Even though I thought he was very sexy. He didn't treat people well. And he didn't treat me very well."

P2: "It made me feel special, that he would ask me. [and later] I was really respectful of him and how smart he was, and how successful he was."

Control

This theme presents participants' awareness of control and power in the relationship. For most of the women, this was discussed in terms of the importance of feeling in control of their own behavior or feeling in control of the outcome of the sexual encounter. Other women described experiences in which they had not felt in control, either because of use of drugs or alcohol, or because of being "caught up" in their own romantic feelings. A few women also talked about experiences of sexual coercion, in which the control over the sexual experience was forcibly taken from them.

P10: "I think both people ought to have some control. But I certainly don't wanna not have any, or feel that I don't. That 'swept away' stuff? I don't like that. [and later] I guess as a woman I like to feel like I have some power in a relationship. I don't want to feel like the power is all in the hands of the male. And so, maybe for me, that's the way I deal with it...that I do sometimes pursue because that gives me a sense, 'Well, I'm not totally at this person's mercy.'"

P12: "I kind of knew that I needed to keep an eye on what was happening with me. And be in control over myself and my decisions."

P2: "The drinks made me forget about the consequences for the moment, and just go for the impulse. And worry about it later. Which is what I did...I worried about it later. [and later] It's letting yourself get carried away and enjoying it. I knew what could happen and what I wanted to happen. And I was the one who suggested, 'why don't we not go back to work.' I said, 'I don't want to go back to work.' You know, and so, in that way, I was in control."

P3: "If somebody wanted me, it was not my choice. That's how I kind of resolved that. It was like, it was ok to do, but it was not based on what I wanted, but one some guy wanting me. [and later] And there was very little decision that I'm conscious of. And some of that was because of a lot of drug use, and...you know, it was just the times."

Anticipations and Consequences

The fifth and final theme reflects participants' anticipation of potential consequences (negative or positive) of sex with a given partner. Negative consequences included unwanted pregnancy, sexually transmitted disease, feelings of guilt or shame, and loss of the relationship or rejection by the partner.

P15: "When I was younger I didn't think about those consequences. I always used birth control. Always used birth control. Not necessarily condoms, but I always used birth control when I was sexually active. I was always on the Pill, or something, before. But now there are other risks that occur, and you've got to be cautious of those as well."

P12: "But it was a choice of...it was a matter of worrying about pregnancy, worrying about...both of us were virgins, so I didn't have to worry about like, AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases, and things like that. But it was a matter of, 'This is a big step. It's gonna completely change your relationship.' You know, 'I could get pregnant.'"

P15: "Things had been so good, and that we were both afraid that it.... What if the other one wasn't ready, and what if there's rejection? I mean, there's always that fear of rejection, you know, what if we both make the...what if I make the overture and he was not ready?"

P3: "And even if he wanted to have sex with me right now, I wouldn't, because it would end the relationship. He couldn't do it."

Positive consequences described by participants included deepening of intimacy or increased commitment in their relationship with a partner. For participants who described experiences in which they had desired a "one-night stand", positive consequences involved the partner's understanding and agreement that the relationship would not progress, along with the partner's willingness to not "tell tales" about the woman.

P11: "I always thought sex would be a way to start a relationship. It...was my attitude then. [and later] I guess it's always I wanted...I never wanted to have sex just once. I don't want to have a one-night stand. I want to have...even if it's just purely a sexual relationship, and there's no...the guy doesn't care for me and I

know it, I guess I always want...a continual relationship. And maybe in the back of my head I always, like, think he'd end up caring for me."

P2: "I know the kind of person that he is. The kind of person that he is is attractive to me. And there's potential for it to be...something long-term. [and later] What's attractive to me, about him, is the idea of how life would be with him."

P8: "All of my friends had these permanent-looking relationships...and I started to think, in a backwards kind of way, that the reason they had those relationships was because they were having a sexual relationship, too. That that somehow tied them together."

P4: "And I told him, 'Listen, I'm not looking for a commitment relationship, or anything like that. I just want you to make me feel good. That's all.' You know, and I guess that's where I'm at right now."

P15: "I knew I'd never see the person again, I liked the person, I knew the person liked me...I mean, we had this sexual attraction going on. It felt, I don't know, it felt safe. [and later] I allowed myself to do that. To just go with the flow...to just let your inhibitions down. They were people I'd never see again. And there's just a free time to do that."

Ground

The thematic elements of participants' experiences of sexual choice were always framed in the context of a woman's sense of personal identity and the larger social context. Women described the ways in which their choices about sexual intimacy have changed over time, and how these choices coincided with other life changes (e.g., moving away from home, going to college, getting married, breaking off relationships with prior partners, changing jobs). As women reflected on these changes, they focused on temporal/historical changes and the importance of interpersonal and social contexts.

With regard to the temporal/historical frame, participants reflected on how their perceptions of themselves and their lives had changed over the years. They described the ways they had been in the past, the ways they perceived themselves now, and their expectations for the future. They described themselves as developing over time, learning from past mistakes, and gaining awareness of their needs and desires. The following excerpts provide illustration of these concerns:

P15: "I mean, when you're 19...it's just very different than when you're 39, or when you're 35 and you're in a different point in your life...so it makes it very

different, the approach...as to what safety means. [and later] I chose that I wanted to enter into future relationships on a much more mature, healthy...what I view as a more healthy, well-rounded perspective than I was before. Kind of like looking at it from a little girl perspective to a woman's perspective. [and later] I made choices to be friends with someone, to get to know them, and to develop an interpersonal relationship before I chose to have a sexual relationship. Prior to my marriage, when I was dating before I was ever married, I didn't always do that. It was a different time. A different time in my life, a different time in my, in my maturity level and understanding what I needed from that person."

P6: "I wasn't really grounded. I wasn't operating out of a sense of, maybe, the core beliefs that I upheld throughout childhood and have upheld since then. [and later] It is really realizing that the decisions you make and the actions that you take, you're responsible for. And so you're careful with decisions, and you're careful with the way that you lead your life. And you don't try to escape or deny that things that you do are not [sic] affecting other people, that in some ways they're affecting this or affecting that, and you realize that you're operating in a larger world. And so your being makes a difference. And so you just have to be more thoughtful and more careful. [and later] This is really more the "me", you know...those 5 years were really kind of a, maybe my rebellion years. You know, it's kind of like I was throwing out and doing a lot of experimenting with a whole lot of things."

P14: "It was about determining for myself who I was and, um, the aspect of, 'Can I be different from the past and the expectations, and...' And I think the whole concept of experimentation and figuring out who I was, and did that person still fit...that I'd been...with family. [and later] I felt more...more independent, more in charge of my own decisions...as opposed to maybe a fairly automatic adhering to family standards while I lived at home. [and later] So my choices in the last 25 years have related to what I think I can live with, and what I want, and what is a realistic assessment of how I can manage that."

P13: "Understanding yourself, I think. And then, how you relate to other people. And learning that you have to be in control of yourself first. And you have to like yourself first, and just learning things through experience. [and later] I think you learn more, too, what your true values are about things. And those change, too. And I think sometimes you regret maybe not being true to those. Or not having recognized them back then, you know, as a younger person."

In addition to describing ways in which they had developed and changed over time, the women also described the ways in which their worlds had changed over time, especially with regard to changes in social mores and expectations. There were changes in the expectations and pressures exerted by family and peers. Another important way the world seemed to change over time was with respect to risk of certain consequences. For example, the risk of unwanted pregnancy was perceived as much lower than it had been in the past although the risk of HIV infection was a new and particularly troublesome danger.

P8: "This was 1972, I guess. Like the sexual revolution, and you were supposed to be free to do all these things. And so I felt a kind of pressure to do that. A social pressure to do that. [and later] Now it's like you're allowed to not have sex. And in that period of time, it's almost like you were required to. So...I didn't...particularly, certainly not to the degree that some people that I knew did. But it was sort of like I had to make a decision not to...and to stick by that."

P15: "I was having sex because it was the expected thing to do. You know, by my partner and by society. I did it because it was expected, and I did it because it was the times to do it. [and later] I grew up in an area of the country to where we were...um...you got married, you had kids, and always you.... I grew up in a household that was very traditional. You know, the husband is the head of the household.... You have to have a man, you have to do that. And I made the realization that I didn't have to do that."

P5: "I hadn't worked through coming from a devout religious background, and still, at that point I was listening to all the messages there were, you know...guilt, you know...all the guilt. Sex was bad, and no premarital sex, no birth control, and no...just that very authoritarian view of sex. You know, very rigid."

P1: "Education wasn't as widespread as it is now about AIDS. I mean, if you think about, in the early 80's, people didn't know about it. [and later] Mostly, I think it's just like everyone else in the suburban culture...you pick it up from your friends...and find out what's going on. There was that time in high school where you think all of your friends are sexually active...they're actually not all, but you just think that they are."

Thematic Structure of the Experience of Sexual Choice

The thematic structure of the experience of sexual choice is graphically presented in Figure 4, on the following page. The ground of "Who I Am" provides the context for the five figural themes: Not Right/Right, Attraction, Intimacy, Control, and Anticipations/Consequences. The dashed lines linking the themes represent mutual interrelationships among themes. Any specific experience described by a participant typically included two or three themes in relation, along with some attention to the temporal/historical and social or interpersonal context. The reader should note that, although Anticipations and Consequences has been placed in the center, there are also direct interrelationships between Not Right/Right and Control, and between Attraction and Intimacy. The theme of Anticipations and Consequences has been placed in the center of the diamond, since participants frequently described interrelationships among themes in terms of the actual consequences, or anticipated consequences, of any specific sexual encounter. Participants

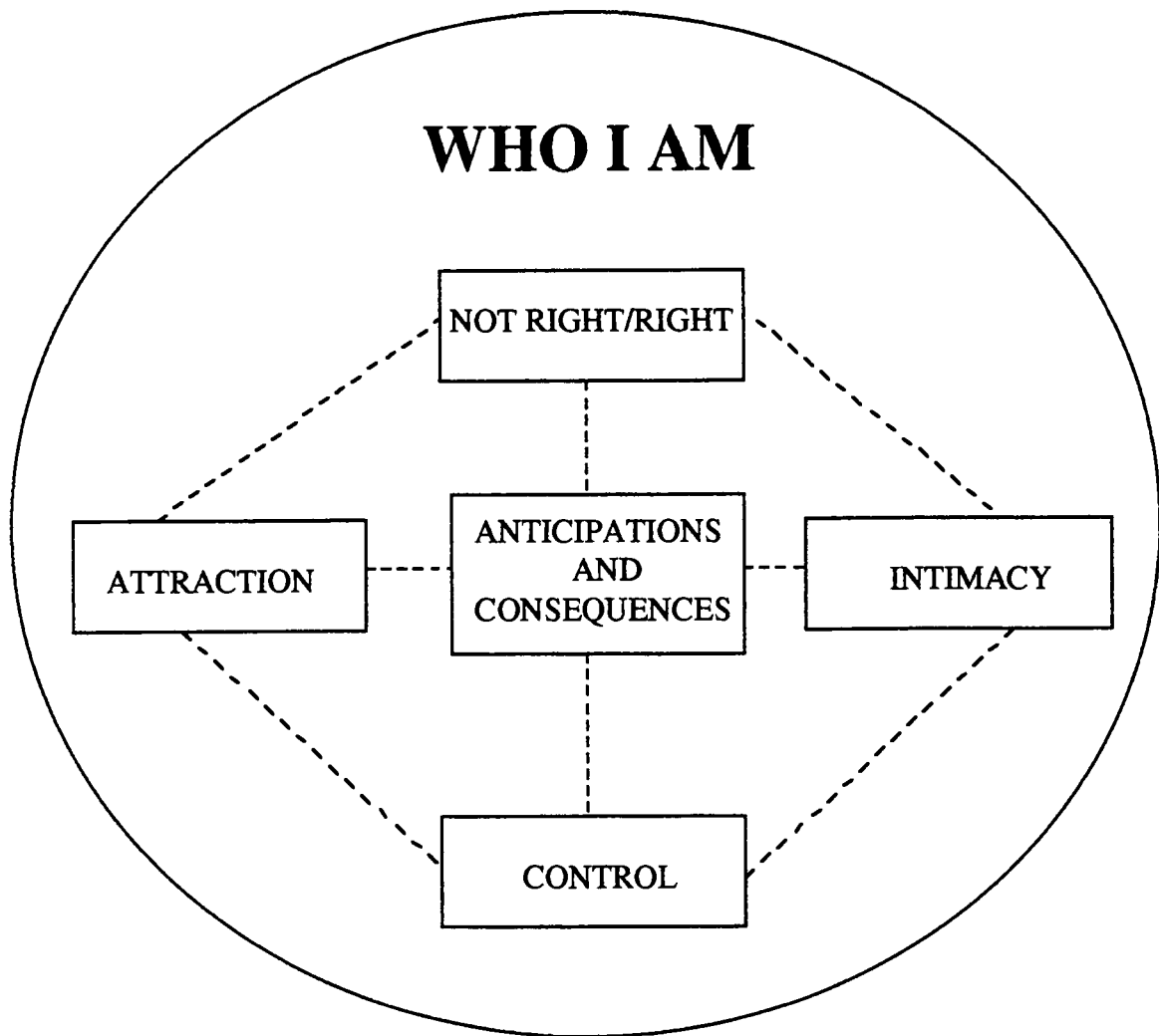


Figure 4. Thematic Structure of the Experience of Sexual Choice

frequently stated that they believed that emphasizing and/or de-emphasizing certain themes (e.g. strong feelings of attraction in the absence of intimacy) influenced the outcome of their sexual experiences (and their anticipations for future sexual relationships). Likewise, consequences experienced in the past influenced participants' awareness of the importance of other themes.

For example, many participants noted their belief that negative consequences could arise if they didn't pay attention to their "intuition" or the "warning bells" that let them know that sex did not feel "right." Often, this awareness was based on past experiences in which they had not attended to their "gut feelings" about sex with a potential partner.

P10: "I was just thinking about the times I've gotten those confused. I think probably, to be specific, the time I'm thinking of I didn't figure it out. And the relationship turned out to be a real painful experience...I have to be careful to understand that one is a danger signal and one is just this, this excitement. And not to get those two things confused."

P7: "I slept with him thinking, 'Well, you know, I find him attractive. And I don't really like him that much, but that's ok, 'cause this is how I'm gonna be now. And this'll be fun.' And it was just absolutely disgusting to me. I mean, I guess I'm glad I slept with him, just because I learned this about myself. But I knew the next day that I would never do it again. Because I felt just horrible about it, all the next day. Not guilty, but just.... 'This is a really disgusting thing, and I can't believe I slept with this person that I really think is such a...yucky person.' And the sex wasn't good, it was just, you know, it wasn't good at all."

P8: "It's like a warning bell goes off. Like something's wrong. And then I get this feeling in the bit of my stomach, like, 'Something's wrong with this guy.' And I listen to it. There was one time I didn't, and I regret it. And I really listen to...my instincts. [and later] The stomach thing is...when I get a knot in my stomach, it's really bad. That means there's something majorly wrong with this guy. And I usually back away."

P15: "There have been times when I have ignored what my gut has told me, and I went with my head. I was reasoning, and I looked at it, and I thought, 'No, I need to change this, and this is why I want to do this, and this will be just fine. And this is why it will be fine.' And reasoning, talking myself into something. And it never fails, when I do that, that I pay for doing that."

In discussing the importance of attraction, several participants noted that strong attraction was not sufficient to insure a positive sexual experience. In descriptions provided by these women, they noted that negative consequences could result if other

factors were not considered. They also described the impact of past experiences since they were less likely to allow themselves to be influenced by strong sexual desire or attraction in the absence of intimacy or rightness.

P6: "I was aware that this was a little bit sick. That, you know, it was just more absolute sexual...you know, magnetism, between us, rather than any kind of real relationship at all. Because he was such an...asshole. And that's why, I mean, that's really the reason why that didn't last at all."

P3: "There was a lot of chemistry, and a lot of real desiring...uh, that had very little to do with intimacy. And it wasn't safe, and I did get very hurt. [and later] I knew I never wanted to be hurt like that again. So, much of this growth has come from pain."

P12: "I was attracted to him, and thinking he was really cool. And then...he essentially assaulted me. And so I would have had a choice at that point to either have sex with him or fight him off. And I fought him off."

In a similar vein, participants described the ways in which level of intimacy affected the anticipated consequences of a sexual relationship. For most of the women, there was a perception that an absence of intimacy could potentially result in loss or rejection. Some women, however, described times in which they "just wanted sex", and mentioned their awareness that intimacy could actually interfere with their desire.

P12: "I wasn't gonna start sleeping with somebody that...the relationship was gonna end at the end of the semester. I mean that was not gonna happen. If our relationship was not gonna go past the school year, I would have started backing off then. And it just wouldn't have happened."

P8: "And so, for all these reasons, not the least of which being that I was always aware that...something could happen, like you could get pregnant. And so, you want to be having sex with someone that you could have a long relationship with, because having a child is a long thing!" [and later] It was just like, 'Now or never.' And I knew we were going to be apart, and I thought, if we were apart and something could happen, I might regret not (having had sex)...they might die not knowing you really cared."

P4: "I feel vulnerable with him. And I feel, you know, there's just that possibility (of falling in love and then losing the relationship). And I don't want to get hurt, and I don't want him to get hurt. And I'm really scared of that. I'm really really scared of that. But with these other guys that I'm having sex with, there's no possibility of that."

P7: "My whole decision about whether or not to sleep with him was about...I really liked him, and I really respected him, and so I didn't want to sleep with him. Because I didn't want to be in a long-term relationship and I didn't want to fall in

love with him. And the reason I did finally decide to sleep with him is that I figured that I didn't really like him that much and I didn't know him that well."

Finally, participants described ways in which they perceived a connection between control and consequences. Some participants discussed the ways that their awareness of potential consequences increased their desire for control. Others mentioned times in which negative consequences had resulted from loss of control.

P14: "I had a sorority sister who got pregnant, and all of the heartache and confusion around that, I think really scared me. And made me realize that there are consequences to this that I didn't want to deal with at that point in my life. And if I had been sure that there was a way to keep that from happening, I probably...I know I would have gone ahead. [and later] I remember thinking, at one juncture, particularly in college, that if I could be guaranteed that pregnancy would not result, that...how do I describe this? That I could stay in charge of how far I wanted the relationship to go, and all of that could be very clear and precise, and I would be very sure...then, on one occasion that I'm thinking of, anyway, with one person, I probably would have been sexually active."

P12: "We were both going into it with eyes wide open. Deciding that, you know, we knew we were gonna sleep together. I was just a matter of, 'Under what circumstances?' And we were gonna control those circumstances. [and later] These things (coercive sexual experiences) had happened when I was thirteen and fourteen, and I had thought a lot about them. And because I didn't date much in high school, I didn't really have to deal with all the sexual decisions that friends were going through. I kind of sat back, and I was the one that friends confided to, and I saw a lot of mistakes that other people made. And I knew that when it came time for me, that I was gonna be doing a lot of things way out in the open."

P5: "We would drink a lot, and I think about a week after we were going out, we ended up having sex. And it wasn't something I felt good about, you know. And it was more out of, why I made that decision was sort of like, out of, you know, it was unhealthy. It was out of an altered state. [and later] I feel myself, I mean I'm still just at the beginning stages, but I feel myself just going back into that, you know, the possibility of starting to drink a lot, starting to just do things, you know...not from a real healthy place, a real centered place. Well, if I could do that...if I could have casual sex and just enjoy it from a healthy place, I think that would be ok. But that's the struggle. I don't want to do it from that altered...state."

The following longer excerpt illustrates the ways in which various themes and their experiential ground may be interrelated within the framework of a specific sexual choice. Thematic elements are marked in brackets following relevant statements.

P10: I mean, I think that can happen in a split second. Now, you can...somebody can walk through the door, and for me, I can be physically attracted [Attraction

theme] to them before I know them. I'm kind of contradicting myself, because I said I wasn't always just attracted to the physical...but I think it isn't just the physical, I think sometimes it's just a certain kind of person, and I just sort of sense that. So...

Interviewer: And...it seemed like you were saying before that it goes in the other direction, too?

P10: What do you mean?

Interviewer: Like, where you know that they're not that kind of person.

P10: Oh yeah. Definitely.

Interviewer: What's that like?

P10: That's like...for me that's like a, a, once again a sort of intuitive, sort of feeling-thing that, I don't care what that person looks like, that could be the most handsome man in the world, and it'd be like... "No way." [laughs] I mean, it, it's like a, you know, it's just like there's this wall that comes down, and I know that that's not a possibility. It's, it's really hard to explain, anymore than that. For me, it's an emotional sort of thing, that's... unspoken, I guess. **[Relationship between Attraction and Not Right/Right themes]**

Interviewer: Um...so there's an emotional component to it, and it sounds like you're also thinking some...in there, too.

P10: Yeah, it's almost like I'm...maybe I'm thinking that I'm...it's like I may draw on experiences from the past, really quickly, and in a split second [snaps fingers], I make that decision, whether this person is a possibility. And, in my current relationship, the decision would be that I want to remain faithful to my husband, so it wouldn't be a.... But when I was single, **[Consequences theme within Historical context--"who I am now versus who I was then"]** the decision probably would have been made, drawing on past experience of certain

men that I had had relationships with before, or something. So I would either decide or not decide whether that was even a possibility.

Interviewer: Ok. And these past experiences would inform you in what way?

P10:You mean, how they inform the decision?

Interviewer: Yeah.

P10: Um, well, if I'd had a.....it's really hard to say. I think it's, I don't think it necessarily has to do with having a relationship with somebody that...someone who...um, might have hurt me, or.... [**Consequences theme**] It's more... maybe that's part of it. That is part of it. But also, just that feeling with somebody that they're not gonna be somebody that you're, that, that, sometimes it's that feeling that that person's not gonna, uh, that person's gonna pursue you too much. That, that would have been, as a single person, I probably would have made that decision. "I don't want this guy to be pursuing me. I don't want that kind of relationship." [**Relationship between Consequences and Control themes, grounded by historical context**] But um, and then in another situation, it might be that I felt that that person couldn't be trusted. That has a lot to do with maybe, just trust in general, whether that means trusted for 24 hours, or whether that means trusted for a long time [**Intimacy theme-Trust sub-theme**].

Interviewer: Ok. So trust is important whether or not there are more long-term plans for the relationship.

P10: Right. Yeah. And for me, I gauge my experiences of trust with people pretty quickly. I mean, I just make that decision with somebody, and it's just an intuitive thing for me, I guess.

Interviewer: I notice when you say "intuitive", you keep kind of [demonstrates with hands] doing something around your...your solar plexus area [**P10:** Yeah.] Is that something that you feel going on inside of yourself?

P10: Yeah. But I can't explain what that is. It's just a, a tightening, maybe, if there's someth--, somebody that I just, you know...even sometimes a little surge that says, "This person is not a real trustworthy person." And I don't know any other way to describe it. [laughs] **[Relationship between Not Right/Right theme and Trust sub-theme]**

Interviewer: Ok. But it sounds like there's the emotional component, there's more of a cognitive component based on your experiences in the past, but it might be something that just happens real fast. **[P10: Uh huh.]** And then, maybe kind of a physical component that has a surge, or a tightening, if there's a feeling that it's not gonna work out. **[P10: Yeah. Right.]** What does it feel like when it feels like it would be ok?

P10: It feels, uh.....it's kind of a, adrenaline...rush. And.....a little nurturing. There's some nurturing in there, from that person, like that person could nurture somebody. They're capable of that. I like that part of...of a, physical closeness.I think that'd probably be it. **[Relationship between Not Right/Right and Intimacy themes]**

The purpose of this section was to describe themes figural in the experience of sexual choice and to delineate the contextual ground within which these themes are experienced. The words of the participants were used to illustrate each theme defining the structure. The following section presents the results of the policy capturing phase of the project. I will end with a comparison and integration of the results from the phenomenological and quantitative analyses. This integration provides support for the contention that phenomenological and policy capturing methods provide complementary avenues for the study of sexual choice.

Phase II: Policy Capturing

Vignette Construction

The first step in policy capturing is the construction of vignettes. In the present project, the cues utilized in vignette construction were based on themes revealed during the phenomenological analyses. For each theme, one or more statements were constructed that were similar to statements found in interview protocols but were general enough to permit "quantification" of the theme. The specific levels of each cue were designed to reflect the variance described by participants in their descriptions of sexual choice. For most themes, this simply required construction of statements in which there was a high, moderate/mixed, or low level of the cue. One cue required five levels of differentiation to capture nuances described by participants. These cue levels were then coded for use in the regression analyses (e.g., a cue with three levels was coded as either 1, 2, or 3). The quantification of each theme is described below, along with the corresponding statement from the vignettes.

For the theme of attraction, women described the importance of being attracted to their potential partner. Some women also mentioned their awareness of the man's attraction toward them, and others described mutual attraction. Thus, for this theme two statements were constructed, one of which described the woman's level of attraction and one which depicted the woman's perception of the man's level of attraction. For the first statement, the woman's level of attraction was either high ("You find that you are highly attracted to him."), moderate/mixed ("You find that he has some attractive qualities, but he also has some qualities that you do not find particularly attractive"), or low ("You do not find him particularly attractive."). For the second statement, the woman perceived the man's attraction to her as high ("He has made it very clear that he finds you attractive."), moderate/mixed ("He has given you some mixed signals, and up to this point, you haven't been sure whether or not he finds you attractive."), or low ("he has never given you any signals that he finds you attractive.").

To represent the theme of Intimacy, three of its sub-themes were chosen for use in the vignette construction. These sub-themes, Compatibility/Closeness and Trust, were described with greatest frequency by participants. In the narratives, Compatibility and Closeness were typically described as corresponding with one another, therefore compound statements were generated that included similar levels of these themes. They were depicted as either high ("The two of you seem to have a great deal in common, and you feel very close to and connected with him."), moderate/mixed ("The two of you have some things in common, although in some ways you are quite different; and you feel somewhat close to and connected with him") or low ("The two of you don't seem to have much in common, and you don't feel particularly close to or connected with him."). For Trust, cue levels were high ("He does seem like a trustworthy and safe person."), moderate/ambiguous ("You aren't completely sure if he is a trustworthy and safe person."), or low ("There are some things about him that make you think that he may not be trustworthy or safe.").

For the theme of Not Right/Right, participants often mentioned comfort or discomfort in relation to whether or not sex felt "right" to them. Since not all participants mentioned bodily sensations, the term "comfort" was used without further elaboration, as it could then refer to either physical or emotional comfort/discomfort. For this theme, cue levels were right ("When you think about it, the idea of sex with him feels comfortable and right to you."), moderate/conflicted ("When you think about it, you have some conflict about whether the idea of sex with him feels comfortable or right to you."), or not-right ("When you think about it, the idea of sex with him feels uncomfortable and just doesn't feel right to you.").

The theme of Consequences required five levels to reflect the possibilities mentioned by participants. As with all cue statements, those depicting consequences were kept quite general; introduction of specific consequences would have made the number of

levels rather unwieldy due to the numerous types and combinations of consequences described by participants. Thus, the cue statements reflecting this theme included unambiguous positive ("So far as you can tell, the only consequences that would arise from having sex with him would be positive ones."), ambiguous positive ("You can't think of any negative consequences that would arise from having sex with him."), mixed ("You can think of both positive and negative consequences that could arise from having sex with him."), ambiguous negative ("You have some vague concerns about the consequences of having sex with him."), and unambiguous negative ("You can think of a number of specific negative consequences that could arise if you have sex with him.").

Finally, for the theme of Control, the cue levels were high personal control ("You feel completely in control of the situation."), mutual control ("You are both in control of the situation; it feels mutual"), and low personal control ("For various reasons, you aren't thinking very clearly about your decision, and you don't feel that you're really in control of the situation.").

After these statements were generated vignettes were constructed which included randomly generated combinations of cue levels. Two sample vignettes are given below, with cue values specified in brackets following the statements reflecting each cue:

Example 1: "After a dinner date with this man, he suggests that you spend the night together. You have known him for awhile, and you find that he has some attractive qualities, but he also has some qualities that you do not find particularly attractive [*participant's degree of attraction: moderate/mixed level*]. He has given you some mixed signals, and up to this point, you haven't been sure whether or not he finds you attractive [*participant's perception of man's degree of attraction: moderate/mixed level*]. The two of you don't seem to have much in common, and you don't feel particularly close to or connected to him [*compatibility/closeness: low level*]. There are some things about him that make you think that he may not be trustworthy or safe [*trust: low level*]. When you think about it, the idea of sex with him feels uncomfortable and just doesn't feel right to you [*not right/right: "not-right" level*]. You can't think of any negative consequences that would arise from having sex with him [*consequences: ambiguous positive level*]. You are both in control of the situation; it feels mutual [*control: mutual level*]."

Example 2: "After a dinner date with this man, he suggests that you spend the night together. You have known him for awhile, and you find that you are highly attracted to him [*participant's degree of attraction: high level*]. He has never given

you any signals that he finds you attractive [*participant's perception of man's degree of attraction: low level*]. The two of you have some things in common, although in some ways you are quite different; and you feel somewhat close to and connected with him [*compatibility/closeness: moderate/mixed level*]. You aren't completely sure if he is a trustworthy and safe person [*trust: moderate/ambiguous level*]. However, when you think about it, the idea of sex with him feels comfortable and right to you [*not right/right: "right" level*]. So far as you can tell, the only consequences that would arise from having sex with him would be positive ones [*consequences: unambiguous positive level*]. You feel completely in control of the situation [*control: high personal control level*].

Atypical cue profiles (vignettes which made no sense, conceptually) were deleted from the pool of possible vignettes. Following deletion of atypical cue profiles, various combinations of vignettes were tested for the degree of intercorrelation among their cue profiles. The goal was development of a final pool of 75 novel (unrepeated) vignettes for which cue levels were intercorrelated at or below $r = .10$. This level of correlation was chosen because it was low enough to suggest orthogonality of the cue set. These 75 vignettes were administered to participants, along with 25 repeated vignettes (included for purposes of testing reliability). Each participant therefore received a packet containing 100 vignettes.

For each vignette, participants were asked to respond to two questions, ranking each response on a five-point Likert-type scale. The first question represented the sexual choice, or dependent variable ("Rate how likely you would be to engage in sexual intercourse given the situation depicted in the vignette"). For this question, the rankings ranged from 1 = "Would definitely not have sex"; 3 = "Somewhat likely to have sex"; to 5 = "Would definitely have sex." The second question reflected the experiential ground of "Who I am" ("How would sex under these conditions fit with the way you see yourself and the way you want to live your life?"). Rankings ranged from 1 = "Would fit perfectly"; 3 = "Would fit in some ways, but not others"; to 5 = "Would not fit at all." Results for these questions, along with cue values, were entered as variables in a stepwise regression analysis. The results of the statistical analyses will now be presented, with idiographic data presented first, followed by nomothetic data.

Regression Analyses

Correlational Data

Idiographic analyses are one of the two methods utilized in policy capturing research, and involve analysis of data for individual participants. In the following discussion, the ranking question pertaining to sexual choice will be designated as “Question 1” whereas the ranking question that deals with the experiential ground will be designated as “Question 2.” Participants responded to both questions for each of the 100 vignettes. Participants P6 and P8 had no variance in their responses to either of the vignette questions (they responded with all “1’s” to Question 1 and all “5’s” Question 2); their data were therefore deleted from subsequent analyses. Two additional participants (P4 and P13) had no variance in their responses to Question 2; P4 gave all “1’s” and P13 responded with all “5’s”. The data for these two participants were included in the idiographic analyses, but the discrepancy between their data and data from the remaining participants should be kept in mind.

Correlations between participants’ responses provide an index of their similarity and agreement. Table 2 provides a summary of the correlations of 13 participants on Question 1. As the table reveals, correlations ranged from .04 to .69, with a median correlation of .36. Three-fourths (76%) of the correlations were significant at $p < .01$, while an additional 9% were significant at $p < .05$. Thus, there would appear to be a great deal of consistency across different individuals in the sample. However, if one considers that a correlation of .36 corresponds to a proportion of common variance of .13, the amount of disagreement across individuals is also apparent. A perusal of the table reveals that some participants tended to respond in a manner that was relatively idiosyncratic: the correlations for P4 and P9 tend to be lower than the median for the entire sample. In addition, the highest correlation (.69, between P1 and P3) corresponds to a proportion of common variance of only .48. The amount of disparity between participants judgments is

Table 2. Correlations between participants' responses* on Question 1

	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P7	P9	P10	P11	P12	P13	P14	P15
P1	1												
P2	.39 ^{**}	1											
P3	.69 ^{**}	.49 ^{**}	1										
P4	.47 ^{**}	.57 ^{**}	.49 ^{**}	1									
P5	.44 ^{**}	.36 ^{**}	.62 ^{**}	.26 ^{**}	1								
P7	.30 ^{**}	.22 [†]	.31 ^{**}	-.04	.54 ^{**}	1							
P9	.11	.12	.18	.05	.24 [†]	.23 [†]	1						
P10	.39 ^{**}	.38 ^{**}	.52 ^{**}	.43 ^{**}	.52 ^{**}	.25 [†]	.23 [†]	1					
P11	.50 ^{**}	.30 ^{**}	.42 ^{**}	.13	.51 ^{**}	.63 ^{**}	.23 [†]	.37 ^{**}	1				
P12	.18	.16	.27 ^{**}	.09	.51 ^{**}	.49 ^{**}	.35 ^{**}	.33 ^{**}	.39 ^{**}	1			
P13	.49 ^{**}	.42 ^{**}	.60 ^{**}	.27 ^{**}	.56 ^{**}	.45 ^{**}	.32 ^{**}	.35 ^{**}	.44 ^{**}	.44 ^{**}	1		
P14	.51 ^{**}	.38 ^{**}	.50 ^{**}	.19	.67 ^{**}	.48 ^{**}	.20 [†]	.36 ^{**}	.54 ^{**}	.35 ^{**}	.37 ^{**}	1	
P15	.32 ^{**}	.30 ^{**}	.35 ^{**}	.30 ^{**}	.33 ^{**}	.33 ^{**}	-.19	.17	.31 ^{**}	.36 ^{**}	.27 ^{**}	.27 ^{**}	1

^{**} p < .01 [†] p < .05

* N = 13 (participants P6 and P8 deleted due to lack of variance in their responses)

therefore quite considerable. To understand more fully the similarities and differences within the sample, I now turn to the regression analyses on these data, considering first the idiographic analyses, followed by the nomothetic analyses.

Policy Capturing

Idiographic Analyses: The values for the seven cues, along with responses on Question 2, were entered as predictor variables in a forward stepwise regression analysis of each woman's pattern of sexual choice, with responses to Question 1 serving as the dependent variable. In stepwise regression, independent (predictor) variables are added to the equation one at a time, with the order of entry determined by the amount of variance in the dependent (criterion) variable that is accounted for by each predictor. The predictor that has the highest correlation with the criterion enters first, and the next variable to enter is the one that yields the greatest increase in R^2 after having taken into account the predictor already in the equation. This process continues, with each predictor being added according to the amount of unique variance for which it accounts. At each step, tests are performed to determine how much variance would be accounted for by each variable if it was entered into the equation last. This allows any predictor to be removed from the equation at any time if it no longer accounts for a significant amount of unique variance in the criterion (Pedhazur, 1982; Tabachnick & Fidell, 1989).

The 13 R^2 's ranged from .64 (Participant P13) to 1.00 (Participant P7). The R^2 , or proportion of variance accounted for, for each participant is presented in Table 3. The table also includes Utilization Indices (UI's) for each cue; the UI is the decrement in R^2 when the cue is removed from the analysis and R^2 is recalculated, and it represents the "lower bound estimate of the importance of the cue to the person" (Ullman & Doherty, 1984). These values are found in the interior cells of the table. So, for example, the value of 8 in the first cell under P1 indicates that, for Participant 1, removal of the cue PATT (which reflects the participant's level of attraction in the vignettes) decreased her R^2 by .08, or 8% of the total

Table 3. Proportion of Variance Accounted for (R^2) and Usefulness Indices (UI) for cues.

Participants														
	<i>P1</i>	<i>P2</i>	<i>P3</i>	<i>P4</i>	<i>P5</i>	<i>P7</i>	<i>P9</i>	<i>P10</i>	<i>P11</i>	<i>P12</i>	<i>P13</i>	<i>P14</i>	<i>P15</i>	
R²	76	86	89	84	92	100	94	90	91	74	64	82	90	
Variables	UI's*													
PATT	8	3	0	0	2	0	0	1	3	0	12	1	1	
MATT	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	0	1	
COMP	3	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	
TRUST	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	7	2	0	
RIGHT	6	2	0	69	0	0	0	2	0	0	5	1	0	
CONSQ	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	6	0	1	
CTRL	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	3	1	
GRND	7	16	23	**	13	12	57	28	10	20	**	12	45	

* Decimals omitted. UI is the decrement in R^2 when the cue is removed from the analysis and R^2 is recalculated; it is a lower-bound estimate of each cue's importance. Note that the method of calculation renders UI's that do not necessarily sum to 100.

** No variance, UI not calculated

Variable labels:

- PATT -- Participant's level of Attraction
- MATT -- Participant's perception of man's level of Attraction
- COMP -- Level of Compatibility/Closeness
- TRUST -- Level of Trust
- RIGHT -- Level of Not Rightness/Rightness
- CONSQ -- Positive and/or negative Consequences
- CTRL -- Level of personal Control
- GRND -- Experiential Ground (responses to Q2)

variance in her sexual judgments. The cues include: (1) the participant's degree of attraction to the man (PATT); (2) the participant's perception of the man's degree of attraction to her (MATT); (3) the level of compatibility and closeness (COMP); (4) the degree of trust or safety (TRUST); (5) the woman's feeling that sex is either right or not-right (RIGHT); (6) the positive and/or negative consequences (CONSQ); (7) the level of personal or mutual control (CTRL); and (8) the experiential ground, or extent to which sex under the circumstances presented in the vignette accords with the participant's perception of who is she and how she wants to live her life (GRND).

Perusal of results presented in Table 3 reveals empty cells for the variable GRND for participants P4 and P13. This occurred because these two participants responded to Q2 in a manner that yielded no variance (all 1's or 5's). For ten of the remaining eleven participants, the highest UI occurred for the variable GRND (the experiential ground reflected in Question 2); UI values for GRND ranged from 10 to 57. When GRND is included in the regression equation, its UI is almost always the highest, which indicates that it accounts for the greatest amount of unique variance in sexual judgments. The exception is the data for P1, for whom the UI for PATT was higher than the UI for GRND. This suggests that, for this participant, the level of participant's attraction in the vignettes accounted for the largest proportion of unique variance, and that removal of this cue from her regression equation yielded the largest decrement in R^2 . The order by which predictors entered the stepwise regression analyses supports the contention that GRND was the most important, and most heavily weighted, of the predictor variables. For all participants for whom it was included in the equation, GRND entered first and was significant at $p < .0001$. With regard to the remaining cues, however, the findings are highly variable across participants.

For example, there was a group of four participants (P1, P2, P5, and P11) for whom PATT was the second cue to enter the equation, at $p < .0001$. The order of entry is

also reflected in the UI's for these participants, which range from .02 to .08. The remainder of the cues entered in different sequences, and at different levels of significance. For P1, the order of entry for remaining cues was RIGHT ($p < .0001$), COMP ($p < .01$), and MATT ($p < .05$), with all other cues not reaching significance. For P2, the only remaining cue to enter at a significant level was RIGHT ($p < .01$). For P5, the order of entry for remaining cues was: CTRL ($p < .01$), COMP ($p < .01$), TRUST ($p < .05$), and CONSQ ($p < .05$), respectively, with all other cues not significant. Finally, for P11, the cue RIGHT ($p < .05$) was the third to enter the equation; all other cues were not significant.

For two of the women (P14 and P15), CTRL was the second cue to enter the equation, with a $p < .01$ for P14 and $p < .05$ for P15. With regard to P15, no other cues were significant. For P14, the order of entry for remaining cues was: TRUST ($p < .01$), PATT ($p < .05$), and RIGHT ($p < .05$), with all other cues not significant. The remaining women had idiosyncratic judgment policies. For P3, CONSQ was the second and only other cue to enter the equation at significance ($p < .05$); for P9, MATT was the second and only other cue to enter ($p < .05$). The data for P10 reveal the following order of entry: RIGHT ($p < .01$), CTRL ($p < .05$), PATT ($p < .05$), and CONSQ ($p < .05$), with all other cues not significant. In addition, one participant (P12), had no other significant cues beyond GRND. An interesting result was noted for P7, for whom GRND correlated with her sexual choice rankings at a perfect 1.00; thus, for her, no other cues entered her regression equation.

As previously noted, there were two participants for whom the responses on Question 2 yielded no variance, hence GRND could not be included in their regression equations. For these two women, regression analyses were conducted with the remaining seven cues. The first participant, P4, had one significant predictor, RIGHT, which was significant at $p < .0001$. Data for the second participant, P13, revealed the following order

of entry: PATT ($p < .0001$); TRUST ($p < .01$), RIGHT ($p < .01$); CONSQ ($p < .01$), and MATT ($p < .05$), with all remaining predictors not significant.

Thus, with the exception of the Q2 -- the experiential ground-- great variability characterized the judgment policies for this sample of women. Cluster analysis was utilized in an attempt to determine patterns and identify groups of women with similar judgment policies. Results of the cluster analysis, however, were inconclusive. Two clusters emerged, one of which consisted of three women and one of which included two women. Unfortunately, individuals in these clusters did not have obvious similar characteristics, either in terms of order of entry of predictors or relative weightings of cues (UI's). Furthermore, clusters did not parallel the groupings, based on perusal of UI's and regression equations, described above.

Nomothetic Analyses: Analysis of group data allows the researcher to capture the composite policy for the group. In this portion of the analysis, data were averaged across participants to derive mean group responses to Questions 1 and 2. The mean for Question 1 was employed as the dependent variable, whereas the mean for Question 2 was included with the cue values in the set of predictors. Since several of the participants' responses yielded no variance on one or both of the ranking questions, data for these participants (P6, P8, P4, and P13) were deleted from the group regression analysis (P7's data were also deleted, due to her atypical correlation of 1.00 between Questions 1 and 2). For the reduced dataset, the R^2 was .95, and the order of cue entry and the associated UI's were: GRND (UI = .08, $p < .0001$); PATT (UI = .04; $p < .0001$); RIGHT (UI = .02; $p < .0001$); CTRL (UI = .01, $p < .01$); TRUST (UI = .01, $p < .01$); CONSQ (UI = .01, $p < .01$); COMP (UI = .005, $p < .01$); with MATT having a UI of 0 and being not significant.

Table 4 presents the correlations between all variables, means and standard deviations for all variables, unstandardized regression coefficients (B), standardized regression coefficients (β), the intercept, R^2 , and UI's. With regard to the order of entry,

Table 4. Standard Multiple Regression of Sexual Choice on Cues and Experiential Ground*

Variables**	Sexual Choice (r)	GRND (r)	PATT (r)	RIGHT (r)	CTRL (r)	TRUST (r)	CONSQ (r)	COMP (r)	MATT (r)	B	β	UI
GRND	-.89**									-.82**	-.56**	.08
PATT	-.56**	.41**								-.29**	-.33**	.04
RIGHT	-.50**	.47**	.07							-.17**	-.22**	.02
CTRL	-.26**	.21†	.03	-.07						-.09**	-.12**	.01
TRUST	-.33**	.32**	-.06	.03	.10					-.10**	-.13**	.01
CONSQ	-.08	.05	.10	-.09	.06	.08				-.05**	-.10**	.01
COMP	-.25†	.21†	.03	-.01	-.10	-.10	-.09			-.09**	-.10**	.005
MATT	-.10	.03	.03	.10	.08	-.08	-.01	.05		-.03	-.04	0
Means	1.70	3.78	1.92	2.03	1.94	2.03	3.17	1.95	1.95	R ² = .95		
Standard Deviation	.59	.44	.75	.83	.81	.78	1.36	.78	.77			
** p < .01 † p < .05												

* Note: The results of this table are based on the reduced dataset (N = 10), with P4, P6, P7, P8, and P13 deleted.

** Order of variables in table corresponds with order of cue entry in regression equation.

the nomothetic data are not considerably different from the data derived through the idiographic analyses. In both analyses, GRND was the first to enter the regression equation, and remained significant even when other variables were entered. The UI, however, was still lower than might be expected given the cue's apparent utility for individuals in the sample. This may be due, in part, to the small sample size and to the relative lack of variance in participants' responses to Q1; for most vignettes, participants tended to respond in a manner indicating that they would be unlikely to engage in sexual activity. It also appears that there is significant overlap between GRND and the other cues. That is, the participants' responses to Question 2 may have been largely determined by the cue levels of the other predictors. In addition, the high correlation between Q1 and Q2 ($r = .89$) indicates a great deal of overlap between sexual judgments and the historical/interpersonal ground of Who I Am.

To explore the relationships between the ground and the other variables, additional regression analyses were conducted. First, the stepwise regression was recalculated using Q1 as the criterion variable, with Q2 deleted from the set of predictor variables. The results of this analysis may be seen in Table 5. The seven cues in combination accounted for 88% of the variance in sexual judgments. The order of cue entry and associated UI's were: PATT (UI = .20, $p < .01$); RIGHT (UI = .14, $p < .01$); TRUST (UI = .04, $p < .01$); CTRL (UI = .02, $p < .01$); COMP (UI = .02, $p < .01$); CONSQ (UI = .02, $p < .01$); with MATT having a UI of 0 and being nonsignificant. The results of this analysis indicate that the seven cues in combination account for almost as much variance as the combination of cues and ground; adding GRND to the equation increased the overall R^2 by 7%. The order of entry of cues changed slightly, although the UI's and standardized beta weights suggest that PATT and RIGHT continued to be the most heavily weighted of the seven cues, followed by TRUST and CTRL. These results, therefore, suggest that there is substantial association between GRND and the remaining seven cues.

Table 5. Standard Multiple Regression of Sexual Choice on Cues*

Variables**	Sexual Choice (r)	PATT (r)	RIGHT (r)	TRUST (r)	CTRL (r)	COMP (r)	CONSQ (r)	MATT (r)	B	β	UI
PATT	-.56 ^{††}								-.48 ^{††}	-.56 ^{††}	.20
RIGHT	-.50 ^{††}	.07							-.37 ^{††}	-.48 ^{††}	.14
TRUST	-.33 ^{††}	-.06	.03						-.23 ^{††}	-.28 ^{††}	.04
CTRL	-.26 ^{††}	.03	-.07	.10					-.16 ^{††}	-.21 ^{††}	.02
COMP	-.25 [†]	.03	-.01	-.10	-.10				-.16 ^{††}	-.20 ^{††}	.02
CONSQ	-.08	.10	-.09	.08	.06	-.09			-.08 ^{††}	-.18 ^{††}	.02
MATT	-.10	.03	.10	-.08	.08	.05	-.01		-.02	-.02	0
Means	1.70	1.92	2.03	2.03	1.94	1.95					
Standard Deviation	.59	.75	.83	.78	.81	.78					
							Intercept = 4.84				
										R ² =	.88

†† p < .01 † p < .05

* Note: The results of this table are based on the reduced dataset (N = 10), with P4, P6, P7, P8, and P13 deleted.
 ** Order of variables in table corresponds with order of cue entry in regression equation.

Given these results and the finding of the high correlation between Q1 and Q2, it appears that there is considerable overlap between these two questions. This is not surprising, as the two are conceptually and experientially interrelated. However, the high correlation suggested that the two questions might reflect different ways of measuring the same basic construct. For this reason, an additional analysis was conducted in which GRND was treated as the criterion variable, with the seven cues as predictors. The results of this analysis may be seen in Table 6. The seven cues in combination accounted for 74% of the variance in Q2, with the following order of cue entry and associated UI's: RIGHT (UI = .16, $p < .01$); PATT (UI = .11, $p < .01$); TRUST (UI = .05, $p < .01$); CTRL (UI = .03, $p < .05$); COMP (UI = .02, $p < .05$); CONSQ (UI = .01, n.s.); with MATT having a UI of 0 and being nonsignificant. These results are quite similar to those of the regression analysis with Q1 as the criterion; again, RIGHT and PATT are the most heavily weighted cues, followed by TRUST and CTRL. That there is some unique (nonshared) variance in Q1 versus Q2 is suggested by the fact that the seven cues accounted for 13% more of the variance in Q1 than in Q2.

Reliability Data

To check the reliability of participants' responses to the set of vignettes, a reliability measure was included in the project. Fifty vignettes were presented, followed by 25 novel vignettes (holdout cases), then by 25 repeated vignettes (the even-numbered vignettes from the first 50). This procedure has been employed elsewhere (e.g. Stewart, 1988) and allows the researcher to compare responses from the first 25 even-numbered vignettes to the holdout cases (for cross-validation purposes) and to the repeated vignettes (for reliability). One would expect that the first 25 even-numbered cases would correlate highly with identical vignettes presented later in the packet of vignettes. Further, one would expect that the first 25 even-numbered cases would correlate at a much lower level with novel holdout cases. This was the case in the current project: the overall reliability for

Table 6. Standard Multiple Regression of Ground (O2) on Cues*

Variables**	Ground (r)	RIGHT (r)	PATT (r)	TRUST (r)	CTRL (r)	COMP (r)	CONSQ (r)	MATT (r)	B	β	UI
RIGHT	.47 ^{††}								.25 ^{††}	.46 ^{††}	.16
PATT	.41 ^{††}	.07							.24 ^{††}	.40 ^{††}	.11
TRUST	.32 ^{††}	.03	-.06						.16 ^{††}	.27 ^{††}	.05
CTRL	.21 [†]	-.07	.03	.10					.09 [†]	.16 [†]	.03
COMP	.21 [†]	-.01	.03	-.10	-.10				.09 [†]	.16 [†]	.02
CONSQ	.05	-.09	.10	.08	.06	-.09			.04	.13	.01
MATT	.03	.10	.03	-.08	.08	.05	-.01		-.02	-.03	0
Means	3.78	2.03	1.92	2.03	1.94	1.95			Intercept = 2.07		
Standard	.44	.83	.75	.78	.81	.78	3.17	1.95	R ² = .74		
Deviation							1.36	.77			

^{††} $p < .01$ [†] $p < .05$

* Note: The results of this table are based on the reduced dataset (N = 10), with P4, P6, P7, P8, and P13 deleted.

** Order of variables in table corresponds with order of cue entry in regression equation.

the sample was .86 ($p < .01$), with a range from .12 (n.s.) to .97 ($p < .01$). This finding suggests that participants gave similar responses to identical vignettes presented at different times. Only two individuals gave responses indicating of low reliability (P10 and P15). The overall cross-validation correlation was -.03 (n.s.), with a range from -.009 (n.s.) to .28 (n.s.). This suggests that participants responded quite differently to dissimilar vignettes. Thus, the overall reliability for the sample is satisfactory.

Comparison of Qualitative and Quantitative Results

In comparing results of phenomenological and policy capturing methods, the most obvious similarity concerns the overall importance of the experiential ground. In the narratives of the participants from the first phase of the study, descriptions were always framed against the context of the women's changing and developing perceptions of themselves and their worlds. Participants frequently described a situation of sexual choice, then qualified it with "That was when I was younger...", or "But now that I'm older and understand myself better...", or "But the world was a different place back then...." One participant (P1), after describing how her perceptions and choices had changed over time, stated "All those experiences make up who you are. That's really what we are, is the sum of our experiences." The salience of context and personal identity was also reflected in results of the policy capturing, as GRND accounted for the most variance in sexual judgments for the majority of participants in the study. The high correlation between Q1 and Q2, in combination with the regression data, indicate that there is substantial conceptual and statistical overlap between sexual judgments and the ground of Who I Am.

Interrelations between various cues and the ground of Who I Am were clearly reflected in interview data. Participants frequently noted that, while a given theme might be important, it was only meaningful when considered in its historical and interpersonal context. Likewise, participants often noted that the importance of one theme was tempered or modulated by the presence or absence of other thematic elements. The complex set of

interrelationships between cues and their ground was similarly reflected in the policy capturing data. Almost 75% of the variance in GRND itself could be predicted by the combination of other cues. This result reflected the degree of overlap or interrelationship between cues and ground. One important difference between phenomenological and policy capturing procedures involved the interrelationships among the cues themselves. Because I was not able to extract “real cases” that contained all cues, the methodological procedure required the formation of an orthogonal cue set, thereby statistically (and, one might argue, artificially) eliminating interrelationships between cues.

Further similarities and differences between the two sets of data are revealed when one compares the thematic structure (see Figure 4) with the regression equation for the group and with the regression model of sexual choice (see Table 4). As noted previously, the importance of the historical and interpersonal context is reflected in the experiential ground of “Who I Am”, and its salience is supported by the fact that GRND entered first and accounted for a substantial proportion of the variance in sexual judgments. With regard to the thematic elements in the phenomenological structure, one notes that the theme NOT RIGHT/RIGHT is at the top of the diamond. It was placed in this position of prominence because so many of the participants noted that the “warning signals” or bodily sensations of “not-rightness” were one of the most salient factors in decisions to not engage in sexual activity with a potential partner. The importance of this theme is also reflected in the regression equation for the group, in which RIGHT enters third and has a strong relationship with sexual choice. When GRND was deleted from the regression equation, RIGHT entered second. This cue also entered first when regressed on GRND (Q2); the strong relationship between rightness and GRND provides further evidence for the salience of this cue.

Further examination of the thematic structure reveals that the themes Attraction and Intimacy are placed at the sides of the diamond. This arrangement was chosen because

these two themes were mentioned with equal frequency, and often served as counterpoints to one another. For example, after talking at length about the importance of trust and intimacy, P8 laughed and stated, "There has to be love and a sense of excitement in that, too. Otherwise you wouldn't worry about those other things. Like, why would you bother? There would be no decision to make." On the other hand, several participants noted that reliance on strong attraction, in the absence of a trusting or intimate relationship, had resulted in sexual experiences that they later regretted. The quantitative results are supportive of this thematic structure, as the 2nd and 5th overall cues to enter the regression were PATT and TRUST, and both have strong and significant relations with sexual choice. When GRND was removed from the regression, PATT entered first, and both PATT and TRUST had strong predictive value when regressed on GRND. In addition, the other element of Intimacy, Compatibility, was the last cue to enter the regression equation and had a significant relation with sexual choice.

With regard to the Control theme, one might recall that it was the only theme that was not mentioned by all participants. It therefore was placed at the bottom of the thematic structure. In the regression analyses, it had 4th place of entry and a moderate (and significant) relationship with sexual choice. This variable continued to have a strong association with sexual choice when GRND was removed from the regression equation. In addition, CTRL was a significant predictor of responses on Q2. The theme of Anticipations and Consequences was placed in the center of the diamond, as it appeared to modulate relations between and among all other themes. Participants frequently described the ways in which prior consequences had altered their awareness of the importance of certain themes, and they discussed the ways they believed that the presence or absence of other thematic elements could positively or adversely affect the outcome of a sexual encounter. In the regression analysis, CONSQ entered 6th and was moderately and significantly related to sexual choice. It is possible that participants' conceptualization of

the overlap between consequences and other thematic elements may have lowered the overall utilization of CONSQ. For example, a woman who believed that positive consequences would derive from attention to a certain set of cues might overlook a negative vignette statement related to CONSQ. In their narratives, participants sometimes described situations in which they had “talked themselves into” having sex with someone despite some vague awareness of potential negative consequences.

Finally, the cue MATT did not enter the regression equation, and had a UI of zero and a non-significant relation with sexual choice. With respect to the relative unimportance of MATT in the quantitative analyses, this was reflected in the narratives as well. Only 3 (20%) of the women specifically mentioned the importance of the man’s attraction to them, whereas all of the women mentioned the importance of their own attraction toward the man. In addition, mutual attraction was described by only 8 of the 15 participants.

CHAPTER VII

DISCUSSION

The primary purpose of this study was to obtain a rich description of adult women's experience of making choices regarding sexual intimacy with a potential partner. The second goal of the project was to develop a procedure for the study of human judgment that combines phenomenological interview methods with the policy capturing procedure derived from Brunswik's Lens Model. The combination was chosen because it would seem to integrate the unique and valuable contributions of both methods: thick, rich, and experientially-relevant narrative descriptions and clear, precise statistical analysis.

The study began by allowing participants to talk about aspects of sexual choice that were important to them and avoiding the imposition of an a priori structure onto these experiences. This is particularly important given the assumptions of extant research, which has typically relied on a "factor-oriented" approach and focused almost entirely on variables associated with rational, reflective conscious processes. For the most part, context has been ignored. This project therefore provides attention to neglected aspects of research on sexual decision making since it allowed the participants to elaborate their experiences of sexual choice. These experiences included awareness of historical and interpersonal contexts and both rational and intuitive conscious processes.

In discussing results of the project, I will first summarize the major findings and then explore their connections with previous research in the area of sexual decision-making. I will next evaluate the procedure that was developed for this project, noting its strengths and limitations. Suggestions for future research will be provided, followed by a discussion of the practical applications of current findings. The discussion will end with concluding comments regarding the appropriateness of integrating phenomenological and quantitative methods in the study of human choice.

Major Findings: The Experience of Sexual Choice

Participants in this study described five major themes grounded by the context of personal identity and its development over time when discussing specific examples of choices about sexual intimacy. This experiential ground of "Who I Am" served as the framework for all five themes and concerned changes in social expectations, family and peer values and cultural mores. Participants were aware of relationships between and among various themes and between each theme and the overall ground. They described a wide variety of situations in which they had made sexual choices, including past experiences, current ones, and anticipated ones. Some of the experiences had occurred 20 or 30 years in the past, whereas others had occurred the previous year. Participants described situations in which they had chosen to have sex as well as those in which they had chosen not to have sex. They discussed choices which they later regretted, and experiences they had thoroughly enjoyed and would repeat if given the opportunity. Their narratives concerned men with whom they had one-night stands as well as men whom they married. These descriptions were quite diverse and covered a wide range of circumstances.

The Experiential Ground of Who I Am

All participants described their experiences as being grounded by an awareness of the ways in which their perceptions of themselves and their lives had developed over time. They described the ways they had been in the past, their current perceptions of themselves, and their hopes and expectations for the future. They discussed a developing awareness of their needs and desires, and they talked about the ways they had gained insight from past experiences. They also described ways in which their worlds had changed over time, particularly with regard to changes in social expectations and cultural mores. Changes in family and peer expectations and relationships provided an important context for sexual choice. In addition, many women described the ways in which they had become increasingly aware of potential consequences of sexual behavior.

In previous research on sexual decision-making, a good deal of attention has been paid to social factors that influence sexual decisions. In most cases, this has involved attention to family and peer relationships. The sexual behavior of adolescents, especially young adolescents, appears to be influenced by relationships with parents and by expectations of family members regarding sexual activity (Cobliner, 1974; DeLamater & MacCorquodale, 1979; Lock & Vincent, 1995; Miller & Simon, 1974; Pete & DeSantis, 1990; Rosenthal, Lewis, & Cohen, 1996). Research suggests that peers provide another important influence on adolescent sexual behavior (Christopher & Cate, 1984; Christopher & Cate, 1985; Herz & Reis, 1987; Shulz, Bornstedt, Borgatta, & Evans, 1977; Wyatt, 1989).

The importance of family mores and peer expectations was mentioned by many of the participants in this project, who discussed these influences as part of the interpersonal context for sexual choice. Participants described the ways in which adherence to family mores had changed over time as well as the importance of peer pressures or expectations. For example, in describing the ways in which parental influence had decreased during her early adulthood, P9 stated, "Those absolutes of right and wrong...I feel that there are some absolutes. [But] there's not black and whites like there were for my parents. [and later] It was coming from my parents, what I was taught...there was no sex before marriage. I think that's absurd now, but I certainly didn't think so then".

Other participants mentioned religious or moral upbringing, and talked about their struggle to develop a coherent sense of personal identity as they moved away from strict adherence to family values. For many participants, pressures from or expectations of peers were an important element in this struggle for self-definition: "I was trying a lot to be like my friend...I had two friends that were very promiscuous, at the time. And I was trying to be like them [P7]." Similarly, another participant stated, "Everybody was doing the same thing [having promiscuous sex], just about. It was pretty...it was back in the 70's [P13]."

With regard to larger social institutions, researchers have typically measured these indirectly, by inferring social influence from individual variables such as religiosity, personal values, and moral development. Religious values have been found to exert a powerful influence on sexual decision-making (Bayer, 1977; Herold & Goodwin, 1981; Miller & Simon, 1974; Wyatt, 1989). In addition, personal values and moral development have been fruitfully employed as variables in models of sexual decision-making (e.g., D'Augelli & D'Augelli, 1977; Driscoll & Davis, 1971; Juhasz & Sonnenshein-Schneider, 1980; Lock & Vincent, 1995; Peplau, Rubin, & Hill, 1977). Certainly, participants in the present study mentioned their awareness of personal values, beliefs about "right and wrong", and religious beliefs. For example, one participant stated, "I was always a person with a whole lot of values...I always had my own value system of what I thought was right. I was raised in [a certain religion] and a lot of that come from, you know, teachings of what a good...how a good person acts, and stuff like that. I was always kind of looking for people who were the kind of people that I wanted to be, or the kind of people that I wanted to have around me [P7]."

When speaking of these influences, however, participants tended to view them as reflective of a larger historical and cultural frame within which choices regarding sexuality took on certain meanings. They did not describe having a figural awareness of these influences *while their choices were actually being made*. Rather, it was in retrospect, when discussing the context of their choices and how they had changed over time, that these issues came to the fore. In essence, the participants were describing their "being-in-the-world": their sense of developing personal identity was not separable from changes they noticed in their worlds. Since much of the previous work derives from a logical positivist framework, it is perhaps not surprising that researchers have tried to locate these "factors"

as either existing in-the-person or in-the-world. They have thus attempted to separate out independent factors when in fact the experiential relevance of these factors *is inseparable from and dependent upon* the context of a person's life.

Larger social contexts have been studied less frequently in previous research. It has been noted that social mores and cultural values provide individuals with information regarding what society considers to be acceptable or desirable in terms of sexual behavior (Ehrmann, 1959; Juhasz & Sonnenshein-Schneider, 1980; Spanier, 1976a). Only two studies attempted to identify the ways in which women's sexuality is affected by specific societal influences such as medicine, the media, societal stereotypes, and unequal power relations (Daniluk, 1993; Wyatt & Riederle, 1994). These studies, however, did not focus specifically on sexual decision-making or sexual choice but rather on the impact of these influences on women's experience of sexuality and intimate relationships. Nonetheless, they have come closest to studying the broad experiential context that was described by participants in this study. Participants in this study did not mention specific social institutions such as media or medicine; they did frequently refer to societal expectations for sexual behavior and to the different expectations for men versus women: "This is what I was told, [that] it was ok for men, but it wasn't ok for women. Although I was sexually aroused, and I wanted to have sex...[P9]." One important finding of the current project was the degree to which participants were aware of how these expectations had changed during their lifetimes and of their awareness of how these changes influenced their sexual choices.

The salience of the experiential ground was supported by the policy capturing data, in which the question pertaining to the ground was found to be strongly associated with sexual judgments. Indeed, there appeared to be substantial conceptual and statistical overlap between sexual choice and the historical/interpersonal ground. As analyses were

conducted to investigate discrepancies in certain aspects of the quantitative data (e.g. the order of entry versus the UI for GRND), it appeared that there was significant overlap and association between the general ground of Who I Am, the sexual judgments, and the other seven cues. This is a reasonable finding, conceptually, since the ground forms the essential context of, and is experientially inseparable from, the emergent themes and the overall experience of sexual choice.

Themes

Not Right/Right

In the current study, one of the most salient themes was Not Right/Right. All participants described being aware of some "intuitive" knowledge of whether or not sex with a potential partner felt "right." Not-rightness was described as an "intuition", or as an "instinctive" or "gut" response in which "warning bells go off" or "walls come down", and the woman feels nauseated, repulsed, or uncomfortable. Often, although not always, not-rightness was described in terms of bodily sensations originating in the stomach or solar plexus. At other times, it was described as a more emotional or cognitive awareness. The feeling of "rightness" was described in terms of comfort, joy, peace, and safety. It was also described as a "knowing", in which the woman felt no pressure, and was aware of an easy and smooth flowing of emotions, thoughts, and sensations.

Descriptions of this theme were incredibly powerful, and participants frequently made physical gestures during the interview as they were describing it. When discussing not-rightness, many women held their stomachs, grimaced, stuck out their tongues, or clutched their hands over their chests. Descriptions of rightness were often accompanied by smiling, sighing, rocking movements, or closed eyes. Clearly, this theme was of profound significance for participants, since they mentioned that it was an essential part of their decisions to have or to avoid sexual intimacy. Often, however, they struggled to articulate the experience, and stated, "This is really hard to describe...", or "This may

sound weird, but..." In describing it as "intuitive", or "instinctive", participants appeared to be acknowledging that the experience was not a reflective one. Indeed, it was often only after the experience had passed that the women stopped and "figured it out." It is therefore not surprising that this experience has not been studied by previous researchers, who have focused on rational or reflective aspects of decision-making and have tended to neglect intuitions and instinctive responses. In so doing, they appear to have missed the opportunity for exploration of an essential component of women's sexual choice.

Although, on the surface, it would appear difficult to study this "rightness" utilizing quantitative methodologies, the current project was successful in doing so. The cue depicting rightness was strongly associated with sexual judgments in the policy capturing portion of the study. Interestingly, the rightness cue was also significantly associated with Q2, the question pertaining to the experiential ground. When the seven cues were regressed on Q2, rightness entered first and accounted for almost half (47%) of the variance. Thus, it is possible to study more unreflected aspects of consciousness within a quantitative methodology. It appears likely, however, that such aspects of personal awareness will more readily surface in phenomenologically-informed explorations, as in the current project.

Attraction

Participants' level of attraction or desire was found to be an important aspect of the experience of sexual choice. This finding was also supported in the policy capturing phase, as cues concerning the participant's level of attraction were strongly associated both with sexual judgments and with Q2, or the question pertaining to the ground of Who I Am. This is consistent with prior research, which has noted that sexual desire or arousal is an important influence on sexual decision-making (Carrol, Volk, & Hyde, 1985; Christopher & Cate, 1984; DeLamater & MacCorquodale, 1979; Randolph & Winstead, 1988;

Rosenthal, Lewis, & Cohen, 1996). Indeed, Christopher and Cate (1985) found that the physical arousal level of the respondent and his or her partner accounted for 42% of the variance in college students' decisions to engage in intercourse for the first time.

In the current project, women frequently mentioned mutual arousal or "chemistry" as a salient aspect of sexual choices. A few women also specifically mentioned their awareness of their potential partner's level of attraction toward them. In the policy capturing phase of the project, however, the cue depicting the potential partner's level of attraction was not a significant predictor of sexual choice. Partners' level of attraction has not been specifically studied in prior research, although many women report that they have sex out of a desire to please their partner, or because of pressure from their partner (Christopher & Cate, 1984; Randolph & Winstead, 1988; Wyatt, 1989). It is not clear why the cue depicting the man's level of attraction was not significant in this study. It seems possible that the cue depicting the man's level of attraction may have been disregarded in favor of the cue depicting the woman's degree of attraction. In their narratives, several women did make statements suggesting that, if they were attracted to a particular man, they assumed that he was attracted to them as well. Further, several women mentioned situations in which they had not engaged in sexual activity because they had not felt attraction, even though a man was attracted to them. No woman described a situation in which they had engaged in consensual sex with a man to whom they were not at all attracted. Therefore, it seems that the woman's level of attraction is a powerful association with sexual choice; the importance of the partner's attraction is less clear.

Intimacy

In the majority of previous studies on sexual decision-making, relationship factors have been found to account for the greatest proportion of variance. Relationship factors studied in previous investigations have included level of emotional commitment in the relationship, mutual affection, trust, and feeling respected by one's partner (e.g., Carrol,

Volk, & Hyde, 1985; Lewis & Burr, 1975; Kline, Kline, & Oken, 1992; Pete & DeSantis, 1990; Rosenthal, Lewis, & Cohen, 1996). These findings were supported by the current project, since Intimacy was found to be quite salient in the narratives of all participants. The specific aspects of intimacy described by participants included feelings of closeness, compatibility, trust, and respect.

Closeness, trust, and respect all have been mentioned in previous research. This project utilized cue statements depicting trust and compatibility/closeness. The cues related to trust and compatibility were significantly associated with sexual judgments and with the ground of Who I Am. In this study, many women described the importance of "having something in common" with their potential partner and feeling compatible with him. This was an interesting finding, since compatibility has not been discussed in the prior research literature. In the policy capturing phase of the study, however, the predictive value of compatibility/closeness was less than the predictive value for trust. It seems possible that the merger of compatibility and closeness into a single cue may have been premature, thereby introducing an artificial linkage between these two separable components of intimacy. Although these two sub-themes appeared to be consistently related in participants' narratives, it may have been preferable to generate two independent cue statements (one for compatibility and one for closeness), each with varying levels. This would have allowed for study of the independent contributions of each. Thus, the salience of intimacy was generally supported by the policy capturing data although trust appeared to be of greater importance than compatibility or closeness.

Control

The majority of participants described their awareness of control as an important aspect of sexual choice. For example, several women discussed their desire to feel in control of their own behavior and to have some control over the outcome of their sexual encounters. Many of these women described a process that involved planning and careful

consideration of alternatives: "It was a conscious decision, I think, on my part. Because certainly I had thought about it before, and it wasn't un-inspected. [and later] I think in each of those four times, there was some sort of mental exercise, that I went through before I decided 'yes or no' [P 6]." Other women referred to times when they had "fallen into" sexual activity, either because of alcohol and drug use, coercion by a partner, or because of having been "swept away" by strong feelings of love and desire. The salience of control was further supported by the policy capturing data, in which this cue was strongly associated with sexual judgments and with the historical/interpersonal ground.

In previous research, control has been studied indirectly as a component of sexual decision-making. For example, increased sexual activity has been found to be associated with elevated levels of alcohol and drug use (Christopher & Cate, 1985; Miller & Simon, 1974; Rosenthal, Lewis, & Cohen, 1996). In addition, unequal power relations between men and women have been suggested as contributing to a variety of negative sexual sequelae for women, including unwanted pregnancy, sexual coercion, and impeded acquisition of sexual knowledge (Wyatt & Riederle, 1994). None of the previous investigations, however, included discussion of women's desire to control (or relinquish control of) their sexual choices. This finding therefore adds an additional piece of information to our overall understanding of sexual choice.

Anticipations and Consequences

Another finding to emerge from the current phenomenological analysis of women's narratives is that prior consequences, and anticipated future consequences, were perceived as modulating the importance of other themes. Participants frequently noted that they had "learned from past mistakes" and gained insight into the importance of certain themes as a result of previous experiences. For example, women learned to pay attention to signals indicating that sex with a potential partner did not feel "right." They also learned that negative consequences could arise if they had sex in the absence of intimacy and under

circumstances in which they had low levels of personal control. In the policy capturing phase of the project, the cue depicting consequences was found to be significantly associated with sexual judgments. Thus, past consequences and anticipated consequences appear to be salient aspects of participants' experience of sexual choice.

In describing their awareness of negative consequences, participants mentioned unwanted pregnancy, sexually transmitted disease, and rejection by potential partners. These consequences have been the focus of previous research, although researchers have typically employed the notion of "consequence" as a dependent variable rather than as a predictor of sexual choice. For example, moral reasoning and cognitive development have been utilized as predictors of unplanned and unprotected intercourse (Coblener, 1974; Cvetkovich, Grote, Bjorseth, & Sarkissian, 1975; Juhasz & Sonnenshein-Schneider, 1980). The assumption here is that unplanned and unprotected intercourse is more likely than planned and protected intercourse to result in a variety of negative consequences (e.g., unwanted pregnancy or sexually transmitted disease). A few studies have focused on how individuals' assessment of risk (negative potential consequences) is often counterbalanced by a desire for sexual fulfillment (a positive potential consequence) (Kline, Kline & Oken, 1992; Pinkerton & Abramson, 1992). For the most part, however, awareness of potential negative consequences has not been employed as a predictor of sexual choice.

In addition to an awareness of negative consequences, participants also described awareness of positive consequences of sexual activity, such as deepening of commitment and increased intimacy with their partner. Perceptions of positive consequences have been found to be predictive of sexual judgments in prior research. For example, it has been found that young women view sexual activity as a way to facilitate or insure commitment in a relationship (Miller & Simon, 1974; Randolph & Winstead, 1988; Rosenthal, Lewis & Cohen, 1996). Nevertheless, none of the extant research on sexual decision-making has discussed interrelationships between consequences and other relevant factors. Results of

this study indicated that past consequences and anticipated future consequences modulated awareness of the salience of other factors when participants made choices about sexual intimacy; this would seem to be a unique finding of this project.

Thematic Structure of Sexual Choice

The graphic representation of the structure that emerged from thematic analysis of interview protocols suggests that there are interrelationships among the various themes as well as between each theme and the ground of "Who I Am." Themes were described as mutually interdependent and as meaningful only in the context of the woman's personal identity as it developed over time. Had I been able to obtain a range of specific narratives that included all themes in combination, the optimal procedure would have been to utilize real cases and actual cue-correlations in the construction of vignettes. Since that was not possible, I chose to generate an orthogonal cue set. For this reason, the policy capturing procedure introduced an artificial separation of cues. Despite this, the cues entered the group regression equation in an order that generally agrees with the thematic structure: the context or ground entered first, followed by participant's level of attraction, not-rightness/rightness, control, trust, consequences, and compatibility (partner's level of attraction did not enter).

Rather than generating a cue statement to depict the experiential ground, I chose to ask women to give rankings on a second question which pertained to the contextual elements of the ground. This procedure was chosen because it was difficult to construct a general cue statement that adequately would capture the complex nuances of the ground. As results of the policy capturing revealed, many of the cues were found to be correlated with women's responses to the ground question; this is to be expected, as themes and ground are conceptually and experientially interwoven in the experience of sexual choice.

In addition, the substantial overlap between sexual judgments and responses to the ground question suggests that the historical and interpersonal context is essentially connected with sexual choice.

Evaluation of the Procedure

In general, the procedures used in this study seem to have many strengths that render them as potentially useful for the study of human judgment. From the perspective of this project, the most crucial component of the method is a thematic analysis of the phenomenological interviews. By allowing participants to describe the phenomenon of sexual choice in an open interview format, this project addresses two of the primary criticisms of previous research: First, this method permits investigation of the phenomenon without imposition of a priori expectations and opens the research to include both reflective and non- or pre-reflective processes. This allowed some new information to emerge: most notably the importance of the historical and interpersonal context and the crucial experience of not-rightness/rightness. Second, this method allowed the women in this study to describe the phenomenon of sexual choice in their own words, which provides an opportunity to "allow the authority of women's experience to construct women's realities (Daniluk, 1993, p. 54)."

By beginning with phenomenological analysis of interview data, the emergent thematic structure was one of richness and complexity. An interpretive analysis of the interview data clearly suggested the complicated patterns of relationship among the various themes and between each theme and the experiential ground. As was noted in the review of prior research, complex models of sexual choice are quite rare. Thus, the phenomenological focus of the current project allowed for the attainment of a level of greater complexity in our understanding of sexual choice.

In addition, phenomenological analysis provided experientially-relevant quantitative data (cues) for use in the policy capturing phase of the project. The high proportion of

variance accounted for by the combination of cues is indicative of the value of the thematic analysis and would suggest that relevant aspects of the experience of sexual choice were well captured in phase one. This is to be expected, since the hermeneutic (i.e., interpretive) method utilized in phenomenological analysis requires the researcher continually to refer back to the actual text of an interview for confirmation of themes. The policy capturing procedure, however, provides a "cross-validation" of the phenomenological analysis. Of course, this is a within-subjects validation procedure, as is hermeneutic analysis. A definitive between-subjects validation could be derived from presenting vignettes from the current project to a new set of respondents; a high R^2 for the new sample would provide further evidence for the validity and generalizability of the thematic structure.

The procedure developed in the present study does have limitations. First, the complexity of nuance described by participants is extremely difficult, and perhaps impossible, to model in a short vignette. Although the utilization of actual cases would increase the degree of complexity, to do justice to the richness of the phenomenon would potentially require long vignettes with a prohibitively large number of cues. The high proportion of variance accounted for by the cues used in the current project would indicate that the study was successful in capturing the most salient aspects of sexual choice although the vignettes did not reflect the ambiguity, joy, remorse, passion, and struggle that was such an integral part of the narratives.

This deficiency was reflected in the words of one participant when she returned the packet of vignettes: she included a short note that stated, "Give me one of those I'm attracted/he's attracted, maybe we are sugar/vinegar, flashy/calm, spontaneous/deliberate, whatever, but we are connected. Maybe we're safe, maybe we're dangerous, maybe we are one of each but we aren't lying to each other, it feels right and who says what's a negative, we're both choosing to do it kind of scenario. Now that I think of it most of these sound kind of drab or sad or dreary....(permission for reproduction granted by

participant)” This was of particular interest since this woman was one of the participants whose responses to the vignettes had no variance and therefore did not yield usable data for the policy capturing phase of the study. Since several women in the study responded in such a manner, it seems possible that they, too, were aware of the artificiality of the vignettes. The relative lack of variance in responses to Q1 provides further support for this contention. The inclusion of cues deriving from phenomenological data attenuates this limitation to some degree; unfortunately it does not eliminate the problem.

A second limitation of the combined procedure is the amount of time and effort involved, both for researchers and participants. Interviews required one to two hours of participants’ time, and completion of the policy capturing phase required another one to two hours. In addition, many participants noted that they found the policy capturing task to be a bit tedious. I am certainly grateful to participants for agreeing to be part of such a time- and labor-intensive effort.

Despite these limitations, the present procedure provides a unique and useful integration of qualitative and quantitative techniques, particularly with regard to its capacity for complex modeling of figure-ground relationships. The procedure seems to approach the type of analysis advocated by Heidegger (1988), who argued that although the term “analysis” was typically used to denote a reduction to cause-and-effect elements, this was not the original meaning of the word. Heidegger explained that the oldest usage of “analysis” dates back to Homer’s *Odyssey*, “...where the Greek word for analysis, *analyein*, had been used to describe what Penelope did every night, namely, to unravel the fabric of a shroud which she had been weaving by day (p. 79).” Heidegger’s contention was that the analysis of *Dasein*, or *Daseinanalysis*, “is not a decomposing into elements but the articulation of the unity of a complex structure (p. 79).”

Suggestions for Future Research

One issue often discussed in psychological research concerns the generalizability of findings to larger populations. In phenomenological research, the aim is not to describe the characteristics of a group of people, but to describe an experience in clear detail (Polkinghorne, 1989). As Polkinghorne notes, "The point of subject selection is to obtain richly varied descriptions, not to achieve statistical generalization (p. 48)." Nevertheless, it could be argued that an absence of diversity in the research sample could result in a narrowing of descriptions of the phenomenon of interest. In this study, the historical and interpersonal context of sexual choice was found to be of particular importance. Participants were quite diverse in terms of age, sexual experience, and lifestyle. They were, however, not diverse in terms of race, number of children, and level of education. All participants were of European American descent, and all had attended college or technical school. Ten women had Master's Degrees or the equivalent. One-third of the women were actively involved in some component of women's health, family planning, and/or sex education. Comparison of present results with those obtained in previous research, some of which focused on young adolescents and/or minority populations, indicates some similarity, particularly in terms of the salience of attraction and intimacy. Nevertheless, given the importance of context for sexual choice, it would seem necessary to broaden the exploration to include women of other sociocultural and economic backgrounds and to compare the resulting thematic structures with the present one. It would also be of interest to conduct similar investigations with samples of heterosexual men, lesbians and gay men. Finally, it would be interesting to replicate the study using samples of couples, and compare the results for partners within dyads. For example, one could investigate differences in relationship and sexual satisfaction for couples with high versus low levels of agreement.

A further potential limitation to generalizability concerns volunteer bias in research on sexual topics. In this project, approximately five potential participants chose to not participate after the study had been described to them. Several of the women stated that they believed they would "feel too uncomfortable" discussing such intimate matters. Individuals who volunteer for sex research have generally been found not to differ from non-volunteers in terms of their personality characteristics although volunteers have been found to be more sexually liberal, more sexually curious, more permissive, and more positive toward erotic material (Morokoff, 1986). When compared to non-volunteers, volunteers also tend to be more sexually experienced and to report having had a greater number of sexual partners. Thus, although one might expect to find similar results for other samples of women, I would hesitate to make strong claims regarding generalizability in the absence of data from more diverse samples of participants.

To extend the current findings to a larger population, one method would involve conducting semi-structured interviews in which participants would be asked about their awareness of all five themes (and their sub-themes) as well as of the historical and interpersonal context for each sexual choice described. This procedure would allow for a subsequent policy capturing investigation in which vignettes are derived from an assortment of representative cases. In addition, it would provide an opportunity for more precise and experientially-grounded quantification of cues and for calculation of real-world correlations among themes and between each theme and its ground. This procedure would correct one of the primary limitations of the current project: namely, the artificial orthogonality of the cue set. The set of modified vignettes could then be presented to a larger group of participants, which would not only offer the opportunity for increased diversity of participant samples but would allow anonymity of response and, therefore, decrease any potential effects of volunteer bias.

With a larger sample of participants, cluster analyses could be performed to identify groups of women with similar sexual judgment policies. In addition, a larger dataset would provide opportunities for utilization of qualitative methodologies in the development of a typology of sexual judgment. Many different research projects could then evaluate between-group differences on various measures (e.g., measures of sexual satisfaction; incidence of contraceptive use and condom use; personality indices; or questionnaires regarding prevalence of sexual coercion, unwanted pregnancy, or sexually transmitted disease, to name but a few). In addition, path analytic techniques could be utilized to test specific models of sexual choice, thereby obtaining information regarding moderator- and mediator-relationships among cues.

Practical Implications and Concluding Comments

In many ways, the current project combined two different but related studies: one focusing on the content area of sexual choice and the other on the development and evaluation of a procedure for the study of choice and judgment. The following section focuses first on the implications of the findings related to sexual choice. Next, I discuss the methodological issues and their implications.

With regard to the findings related to sexual choice, there are a number of practical implications. First, one of the more unique findings to emerge from the present study is that women pay a great deal of attention to “intuitive” signals and bodily sensations that are used to inform them about whether or not sex feels “right.” When women trust these intuitions, they report suffering fewer negative consequences. In this study, women frequently mentioned times in which they had ignored “not-right” signals and later regretted the sexual encounter. Conversely, experiences in which sex had “felt right” were generally remembered as positive. Participants stated that, over time, they learned to trust these intuitions and found them beneficial.

A second finding is that trust, intimacy, and personal control were viewed as important modulators of sexual attraction. Several scenarios were described in which a woman felt attracted to a man but did not trust him or feel intimate with him. Other descriptions were given of times in which a woman had sex under conditions of decreased personal control. Often, if the woman chose to have sex under these circumstances, she was disappointed or regretful. Of course, this depended in part on her goals for the relationship (i.e., a one-night stand versus a longer-term relationship).

It seems that the present findings have implications with respect both to sex education and healthcare in young adult populations. As a society, we are becoming increasingly concerned about the high rates of unwanted pregnancy among teens and the rising levels of sexually transmitted disease (including HIV-infection) among adolescents. It has been noted that teens have the highest rates of sexually transmitted disease when compared with sexually active people of all other age ranges (Indiana University & Purdue University, Rural Center for the Study and Promotion of HIV/STD Prevention, 1994). For that reason, we need educational programs that will assist young people in making sexual choices that will reduce risks of painful consequences. Healthcare providers, including psychotherapists, are also concerned about these issues, since they are often engaged in primary prevention programs as well as in counseling for young people and their families.

As with extant research in the area, existing educational programs (and many treatment protocols) have tended to assume that sexual decisions are the result of reflective (i.e., rational) cognitive processes. Many educators seem to believe that, if we provide young people with basic information related to sexuality, they will utilize this knowledge to make well-informed and "rational" decisions. Researchers have noted, however, that people with the same level of knowledge may make radically different use of that knowledge, depending on their goals and differential weighting of potential consequences

(e.g. Pinkerton & Abramson, 1992). The mere dissemination of information, therefore, does not appear to be sufficient. If we are to provide education and treatment that will enable young people to reduce their risks, we must give them tools that will generalize to real-world settings. The results of this study suggest that it would be beneficial to include the following components as part of any educational or treatment endeavor: (1) explicit attention to non- or pre-reflective processes (e.g., helping young people learn to identify and act upon intuitive awareness and bodily sensations); (2) focusing on relationship and intimacy issues, and teaching problem-solving and negotiating skills in dyadic or group formats (e.g., role-playing or scripting of negotiations about contraceptive use and level of sexual activity; group and family therapy focusing on issues of sexual choice); and (3) implementing programs to increase young people's sense of personal control and self-efficacy (e.g., building problem-solving and communication skills, employing peer educators and counselors).

In addition, results of the present investigation clearly indicate that we must attend to the context of a person's life if we are to make sense of sexual choice. The choices people make will depend on their sense of themselves as developing and changing over time, in relationship with others and with the world; in short, choices are part of a person's being-in-the-world. For that reason, the most meaningful investigations of sexual choice must involve phenomenological methods. For researchers working in a logical positivist framework, attention can still be given to the experiential context by adopting phenomenologically-oriented methods such as unstructured and semi-structured interviews, open-ended essay questions, and focus group explorations. Furthermore, the study of isolated variables is likely to be non-productive, since sexual choice appears to involve interrelated and mutually interdependent variables. It is more reasonable, therefore, to focus on complex models of sexual choice. These complex models can be formulated on the basis of phenomenological analysis in combination with path analysis and other

statistical modeling procedures. The use of both procedures would allow for specific delineation of moderator- and mediator-variables and for greater understanding of the interactions among predictors.

These methodological issues also apply to other domains of human choice and judgment. All choices occur in the context of a person's life, and the meaningfulness of our choices derives from our understanding of ourselves as changing beings who exist in dynamic relationship with our worlds. The world constantly reveals to us possibilities from which we must choose. As Medard Boss noted, "Our very existence as perceiving and understanding beings endows us with the possibility of choosing how we will relate to what encounters us...we exist as a bundle of possibilities for relating to the world (1988, p. 68)." The study of choice and judgment, therefore, is meaningful for individuals only when the choices and judgments are framed within their relevant existential contexts. Research on decision-making has focused almost exclusively on rational thought processes and variables generated a priori by researchers, thereby limiting its meaningfulness. Certainly, statistical modeling procedures (including, but not limited to, policy capturing) can provide important information regarding interrelationships among variables that influence our choices. I argue, however, that any meaningful investigation of human choice must begin with phenomenological exploration. We must understand not only the figural elements but their experiential context: "All explorations of my conduct in terms of my past, my temperament and my environment are therefore true, provided that they be regarded not as separable contributions, but *as moments of my total being*, the significance of which I am entitled to make explicit in various ways, without it ever being possible to say whether I confer their meaning on them or receive it from them [italics added] (Merleau-Ponty, 1992, p. 455)." The addition of quantitative methodologies to phenomenological investigations may provide statistical clarity and cross-validation but cannot meaningfully be substituted for in-depth phenomenological inquiry.

The current study provided an exploration of women's choices regarding their desired level of sexual intimacy with a potential partner. It also involved the development of a procedure that offers one alternative for opening a dialogue between qualitative and quantitative research methodologies. The women in this study gave eloquent accounts of their experiences, and this richness of description allowed for the discovery of new and important dimensions of sexual choice. The language of statistics has its own eloquence, and provided substantial information regarding the complexity of the phenomenon. Although my primary allegiance is to the value of phenomenological inquiry, I believe that the integration of qualitative and quantitative methods can provide particularly vivid and meaningful explorations of human choice.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH AND
REQUEST FOR PARTICIPATION

APPENDIX A: DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH AND REQUEST FOR PARTICIPATION

I am a fifth year Ph.D. student in Clinical Psychology, interested in exploring women's decisions about whether or not to become sexually involved with a potential partner. My dissertation project will involve two stages of data collection. In the first part, I will interview women about their experience of making decisions about their level of sexual involvement with past partners. Participants will be free to choose whichever incidents they wish to relate. The interview will be in the form of a collaborative exploration to help me understand what these experiences were like for the women in my study. The second part of the study will involve reading a number of brief stories that depict situations in which a woman must make a decision about her desired level of sexual intimacy with a potential partner. After each story, participants will give a rating of how likely they would be to become sexually involved if they were placed in that situation. If you feel you might be interested in participating in this study, I encourage you to contact me (anonymously, if you wish) for more information. If you decide you are interested, the process will be as follows.

We will set up a time and place convenient for you, I will provide a consent form for you to sign, and I will fully explain the risks and benefits of your participation and provisions for confidentiality of the research. Once you sign the consent form, we will begin the interview. The interview itself should take between one and two hours of your time. Your interview will be audiotaped, with only a code as identifying information. I will ask you to review the transcribed interview for accurateness and completeness. If there is anything you wish to delete, or if you wish to withdraw your interview from the study, I will honor your request. Once you and I agree that the transcript is accurate, the audiotape of your interview will be destroyed. The transcribed interview, and the yet-untranscribed audiotape, will be maintained in a locked file cabinet in my office (215-A Austin Peay Building, University of Tennessee). Within six months of the interview, I will contact you again, and will provide you with a packet containing the brief stories. After you have made your ratings for the stories, you will return the packet to me. This part of the study should take from one to two hours of your time. If you are interested in the general results of the study, I will be happy to make these known to you upon completion of the research. Although the audiotapes will be destroyed immediately following verification of transcript accuracy, consent forms will be retained for three years, and transcripts and ratings will be retained for five years following completion of the project. This is in accordance with the standards of the University of Tennessee and the American Psychological Association.

I thank you for your consideration of this request, and will be happy to discuss the research and procedures with you. Feel free to contact me at home or at my office at the UT Psychological Clinic.

Reva Heron, M.A.

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227 Austin Peay Bldg.
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APPENDIX B
INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM

APPENDIX B: INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM

TITLE OF RESEARCH: Intuition and deliberation: A study of women's sexual choices

PROJECT DIRECTOR:

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PROJECT ADVISOR:

Howard Pollio, Ph.D.
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The topic of my research is women's experience of making a decision about whether or not to become sexually involved with a potential partner. I hope to gain a greater understanding of the factors that influence such decisions and the meaning that these decisions have within the context of women's lives and relationships.

I am asking you to participate in this endeavor by contributing the data. First, I will conduct a one- to two-hour interview about some times when you have made a decision about whether or not to become sexually involved with a partner. Since my goal is to understand as much as possible about your experience, I will ask further questions about aspects which seem unclear to me until both of us feel satisfied that I have understood you as clearly as possible. I will also record some non-identifying demographic data: your age, level of education and marital status. The second part of the study will involve your reading of a number of vignettes, or stories, depicting hypothetical situations in which two people have the possibility of choosing to becoming sexually intimate. After reading each story, you will be asked to imagine yourself in such a situation, and to give a rating of how likely you would be to engage in sexual intercourse if you were in that situation. The story and rankings part of the study will take approximately two hours to complete. You will receive the vignettes within 6 months of the interview.

All material obtained from you will be held in strictest confidence. Audiotapes, transcripts, and demographic data will be identified by code number, rather than your name. This signed consent form will be kept in a locked file separate from the file where I will store the tapes and transcripts. The location of the file cabinet will be 215-A, Austin Peay Building, University of Tennessee. Access to the audiotape of your interview will be restricted to me and to the professor who is my project advisor. Both of us promise to keep confidentiality. Any identifying information in the interview will be deleted from the typed transcript, and the audiotapes will be destroyed upon completion of the study. After the interview has been transcribed, I will give you a copy to edit. You may find that I have made an error in transcription, or that you wish to delete part of the interview from the final copy. You should feel free to make any changes to the transcript at that time. It is possible that I will analyze your interview in the phenomenology laboratory of which I am a member. Basically, this means that your edited transcript (with identifying information deleted) will be analyzed in a group setting. All of the members of the phenomenology laboratory will sign a confidentiality statement in which they agree to protect your confidentiality and not discuss the interview outside the confines of the laboratory setting. No identifying information about you will be provided to the laboratory members, save perhaps your age.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. The risks involved in participating are minimal. You will choose the incidents and experiences you wish to talk about. You are free to discontinue your participation, or withdraw from the study, at any time without question or penalty. Many people find that exploring their experiences and communicating them to another person is satisfying. While I cannot promise this will be the case for you, I hope that it will be.

If you have any questions at this time, or at any point later in the study, please do not hesitate to ask them. If you decide to participate, you will be given a copy of this form to keep, and I encourage you to contact me at the following address any time you have questions or concerns about this research project.

Reva L. Heron, M.A.
Department of Psychology
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The University of Tennessee
Knoxville, TN 37996-0900
PH #: (423) 974-2161

**I CERTIFY THAT I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THE ABOVE
AND THAT I MAY TERMINATE MY AGREEMENT AT ANY TIME. I
FURTHER CERTIFY THAT I AM AT LEAST 18 YEARS OF AGE.**

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Name (printed): _____

APPENDIX C
CONSENT FORM FOR PUBLICATION/PRESENTATION

APPENDIX C: CONSENT FORM FOR PUBLICATION/PRESENTATION

TITLE OF RESEARCH: Intuition and deliberation: A study of women's sexual choices

PROJECT DIRECTOR:

PROJECT ADVISOR:

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I have reviewed the transcribed interview contributed for the research cited above, and agree that any or all portions may be published in the dissertation reporting results of the research, or in subsequent scholarly publications or presentations. I understand that there will be no identifiable information contained in the published portion(s) of the interview.

I CERTIFY THAT I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THE ABOVE AND THAT I MAY TERMINATE MY AGREEMENT AT ANY TIME BEFORE PUBLICATION OF THE THE DISSERTATION. I FURTHER CERTIFY THAT I AM AT LEAST 18 YEARS OF AGE.

Name of Participant

Signature of Participant

Date

APPENDIX D
CONFIDENTIALITY VOUCHER

APPENDIX D: CONFIDENTIALITY VOUCHER

TITLE OF RESEARCH: Intuition and deliberation: A study of women's sexual choices

As a member of this laboratory, I understand the potentially sensitive information that might be a part of the anonymous interview transcriptions that I will help to analyze. I also understand the importance of maintaining the confidentiality of the information given in the interviews.

With this in mind, I agree not to discuss these interviews outside of the laboratory or to discuss these interviews with people who are not members of this laboratory. I also agree to excuse myself from laboratory participation if I believe that I can identify the research participant whose interview is being analyzed.

Name

Signature

Date

VITA

Reva Lee Heron was born in Farmington, New Mexico, on September 22, 1964. Growing up in the Southwest, she gained an appreciation of cultural and racial diversity, and this contributed to a lifelong interest in the varieties of human experience. She graduated magna cum laude in Psychology from the University of New Mexico in 1987. She received a Master of Arts degree in Psychology from Bowling Green State University in 1991; while there, she specialized in the study of social psychology and human sexuality. Later that year, she enrolled in the Clinical Psychology doctoral program at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville. In her fifth year at the University of Tennessee, she held the position of Coordinator of the department's psychological clinic. In June, 1997, she completed a predoctoral psychology internship at Emory School of Medicine/Grady Hospital. She is currently living in Knoxville with her husband of eight years, Derald York, and their two cats. She hopes to return to the desert Southwest and plans to work as a clinical psychologist.