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Resident assistants and police: illustrating the subculture of authority

Angela D. Hultz
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Resident Assistants and Police:
Illustrating the Subculture of Authority

by
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B.A., The University of Montana, 1998

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Master of Arts
The University of Montana
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Approved by:
Chairman
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Date

11-26-02
Using participant observation and questionnaire data of an eight-member RA staff at the University of Montana and an extensive review of literature on police subcultures, the two occupational subcultures are compared. The common element of authority leads to solidarity and isolation being themes in both subcultures. Consistencies (selection process and training format, solidarity, isolation) and inconsistencies (role conflict, cynicism, lesser external isolation, danger, use of force, student role) between the subcultures are identified and discussed. Survey data gathered from a small sample of Resident Assistants on the University of Montana campus is used to measure the levels of solidarity, isolation, cynicism, and role conflict. Demographic information, such as age, sex, employment length, and GPA are used to explore the composition of the RA staff. Income and political view are used to look at middle-class conservatism in the subculture. The amount of discipline, or write-ups, is used to measure the effect of the enforcement role on the attitudes and behaviors of RAs.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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I am grateful to my parents and friends for being patient supporters of me while I have been working towards my goals – especially Erica Chvilicek, for vernacular inspiration and gracious shelter during my defense. Finally, this document would not be quite so coherent without the efforts of Megan McIntyre who went above and beyond the duties of a friend by editing early versions this document.

You each hold my eternal gratitude, thank you.
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INTRODUCTION

Goals of an RA

If you enter my room feeling lost,
My hope is to show you direction.
If you enter my room full of tears,
My hope is that you will leave with a smile.
If you enter my room feeling like a stranger,
My hope is that when you leave, we will know each other.
If you enter my room full of happiness,
My hope is to share your excitement.
If you enter my room bothered by worry,
My hope is that you will leave feeling at ease.
If you enter my room glowing with love,
My hope is to share in your warmth.
If you enter my room bubbling with dreams,
My hope is to watch them develop for you.
If you enter my room with a troubling problem,
My hope is that you can confide in me.

- Author unknown

(http://www.residentassistant.com/advice/goalsoftra.htm)

UM Goes Public With Spring 2001 Misconduct Report

...Two hundred fifty-four UM students were cited for 571 violations last spring. Brunell said that was average to below average, compared to years past. Couture said he thought last spring yielded a low number of violators, when compared to more than 12,000 students attending UM.

...The most frequent misconduct listed in the report was “violation of published rules,” which accounted for 221 infractions. This is a very broad category, and Couture said that most offenses stemmed from violating quiet hours in the residence halls. Brunell said many of those incidents were coupled with drug and alcohol violations.

Alcohol violations tallied 108, the second most common in the report. Violation of previous sanctions for past infractions weighed in third at 89, failure to comply violations rated fourth with 52 and drug infractions came in fifth at 37 violations.

The penalties for violating student conduct codes vary with the seriousness of the crimes and is different in each individual case, Couture said.
Most students violating drug and alcohol codes are placed in the Self Over Substances program in conjunction with any number of other sanctions including: expulsion, suspension, warnings, evictions from residence halls or other penalties, Couture said.

Brunell said other actions for various infractions include having students write letters of apology or submit academic progress reports. Couture said that Public Safety is responsible for dealing with many of the incidents, but some are taken care of “in-house” by Resident Assistants.

Couture said this comes into play with many drug-use reports, because Public Safety cannot always find evidence, but Resident Assistants usually witness things first hand, or have strong reason to believe that violations occurred.

“With Public Safety, there is not always enough evidence to convict,” Couture said. “But RAs have a lesser burden of proof.” (O’Connor, Montana Kaimin 12/5/01)

The preceding poem and article illustrate dichotomous snapshots of the occupational world of a Resident Assistant (RA). Distinct characteristics make this an occupational subculture with unique manifestations that will be explored further in this report. Stretcher (1999:203-204) defines subculture as,

A part of the population which subscribes to and participates in the broad outlines of the social system but whose concepts, beliefs, habits, art, apparel, dwellings, or institutions exhibit characteristic patterns which distinguish it from others. A subculture has the attribute of persistence; it reproduces itself through the generations.

Furthermore, “when subjected to the same scrutiny, all professions demonstrate distinctive cognitive and behavioral responses that tend to become institutionalized” (Sewell 1999:155). Crank (1998) describes institutionalization as shared belief in the ways of doing things. Institutionalization of attitudes and conduct is synonymous with culture. Each culture is made up of individuals who are members of smaller groups, which deviate in various levels from the main culture. These subsets are subcultures.
In some aspects a RA is a cop in student's clothing. The roles of a RA, both within the residence hall that they live and work in, as well as the greater campus community, serve as divisive factors, setting this segment apart from the student body of which they would normally be members. Each year at The University of Montana, more than seventy people voluntarily assume this position that, in some respects, alienates them from their peers. This separation results in a subculture. Similar to other occupational subculture studies, particularly those of the police, this study seeks to discover and measure character elements that emerge as part of the occupational socialization of an authority figure.

The role of a Resident Assistant is multifaceted. First, one is a full time student. Every RA must be registered at full time status and be of high academic quality, having achieved a minimum grade point average of 2.5 on a 4.0 scale. Secondly, one is expected to be able to create and maintain a sense of community and an academic environment within their floor and the entire building. The official role contains two conflicting functions. In one respect, the RA needs to be able to connect with the residents and be someone they respect and trust and feel comfortable talking with. The other side of this role is that of the disciplinarian. RAs must be able to prevent and correct violations of the Student Conduct Code. This may be as simple as asking people to turn down their television, or it may be a more complicated drug and alcohol violation. The apparent role conflict between being the friend and being the enforcer is an additive factor in the distinction of a RA subculture.
RESEARCH QUESTIONS

We live in a diverse society. Sociology is the study of societies. Part of sociology is criminology and a segment of criminology looks at police subcultures. Through my interest in police subculture I was able to draw parallelisms from police subculture literature to what I was observing and experiencing in another position of authority, as a Resident Assistant.

Initially, I reflected on the existence of a RA subculture. Through my experiences within the organization, it became apparent that the subculture is substantive. The shared element of authority allows the RA subculture to be compared to the substantial literature on police subculture. Police subculture studies have shown that authority leads to solidarity within and isolation of the subculture, various forms of cynicism, and potential role conflict.

Chapter One of this report includes a review of police subculture literature and dramaturgical sociology and begins to apply them to the RA subculture. Chapter Two utilizes a single residence hall staff at The University of Montana to explore the themes identified through participant observation and questionnaire data, primarily those of isolation and solidarity, but also including language, group dynamics, and role conflict. Consistencies and inconsistencies between the RA subculture and the body of literature on police subcultures are addressed. Chapter Three reports the findings of a follow-up study using a survey of all Resident Assistants employed at The University of Montana. Along with general demographic information, the survey allows more objective measurement of the variables of solidarity, isolation, cynicism, and role conflict.
The research questions and the methods of evaluation for each are as follows:

1. Is the RA occupational group at UM a subculture?
   - Addressed through an exploration of the defining characteristics of the group
   - Specialized language

2. Does the RA subculture exhibit characteristics similar to another well-studied subculture of authority; the police?
   - Literature review – subculture theories (models) and Goffman's dramaturgical sociology (performances, team building, impression management)
   - Identifying the themes of the study: Authority, solidarity, isolation, cynicism, and role conflict
   - Qualitative methods: Participant observation of the subculture and an open-ended questionnaire administered to a staff of RAs

3. What levels of solidarity, isolation, cynicism, and role conflict do RAs express: How do the levels compare to police subculture? What are the demographic characteristics of RAs at UM? Do RAs represent the middle-class conservatism associated with police?
   - Develop measures based on previous research (solidarity scale – Wheeless and cynicism scale – Niederhoffer)
   - Survey all RAs at UM
• Illustrate the RA subculture through descriptive statistics of variables
• Relate data back to theories discussed in the literature review

4. What elements or variables affect the level of each test variable and are otherwise related?
• Factor analysis/Reliability analysis
• Correlations between variables
• Correlations of variables and amount of discipline, years of employment, gender, and age

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

This study seeks to add to the body of literature and knowledge on occupational subcultures and present an illustration of dramaturgical sociology. The conclusions will increase the evidence for the preexisting theories about subcultures of authority. Additionally, the findings will inform campus communities of the characteristics exhibited by one of the most influential student groups in the higher education system. This understanding may lead to more effective job training and improvement in other aspects of RA concern. Most importantly, the study will address the effects of socialization on student staff members when they are put in a position of authority over their peers. The working personality of Resident Assistants is an area of study that has been relatively neglected by researchers up to this point.
The descriptions drawn from this research provide a snapshot of the RA subculture at The University of Montana, a contemporary subculture of authority.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Culture

The term *culture* is often used to describe differences among large social groups. Social groups differ in many aspects, and people from different cultures have unique beliefs, laws, morals, customs, and other characteristics that set them apart from other groups. These attitudes, values, and beliefs are transmitted from one generation to the next in a learning process known as socialization (Kappeler et al. 1999:242).

Another important component of culture is a shared language. Though not essential, the element of shared language is normally part of a culture because it allows communication between members. For this study, the culture is the on-campus (residential) student population at The University of Montana.

Subculture

The definition provided earlier by Stretcher talks about the institutional persistence and replication of subculture. Other researchers, such as Kappeler and Trice, offer helpful definitions that add to this explanation.

There can also be cultural differences among people who form a single culture or social group. People who form a unique group within a given culture are called members of a *subculture*. The difference between a culture and a subculture is that members of a subculture, while sharing many values and beliefs of the larger culture, also have a separate and distinct set of values that set them apart (Kappeler et al. 1999:242).

"A basic ingredient for the development of a subculture is differential interaction, either on or off the job or both. Subcultures form because their members interact
face to face more frequently with one another than with other people” (Trice 1993:143).

Specialized language, including technical or secret vocabulary that is only used or understood by a group, is another defining element of a subculture. The subculture examined here is the occupational group of Resident Assistants.

**Solidarity**

Solidarity is high levels of loyalty, mutual trust, and bonding within the RA subculture. Solidarity is a defining element of the RA subculture.

References the affective nature of interpersonal relationships. “Solidarity is often talked about in terms of being close or remote, near or far, the in-group versus the out-group.” “Solidarity relationships refer to those in which ‘closeness’ derived from ‘similarity’ finds expression in sentiments, behaviors, and symbols of that closeness.” As such, it reflects the degree of psychological, social, and perhaps even physical closeness between people. A highly solidary relationship is characterized as a *generally symmetrical* relationship which is derived from five subrelations: (1) relations involving similarities in personal characteristics such as age, attitudes, occupation, etc.; (2) relations involving closeness in physical space and social space (status); (3) relations involving pleasant sentiments such as liking, loving, attraction, sympathy, trust, etc.; (4) relations involving behaviors such as cooperation, frequent interactions, confiding in one another, beneficent actions, etc.; (5) relations involving symbolic expressions of similarity, proximity, or intimacy such as wedding rings, secret symbols, secret handclasps, etc. The characteristics, sentiments, behaviors, and symbols of closeness expressed in these five subrelations appear to constitute criterial attributes of interpersonal solidarity (Wheeless 1978:145).

**Isolation**

Isolation indicates high feelings of separation from the larger society or culture. It may involve areas such as daily activities, social relations, preferential treatment, being different from others (older, higher GPA, more dedicated to
school, etc.), and even occupying separate geographic space. The reality of police isolation is shown to be partially self-imposed and partially an effect of the occupational experiences. Somewhat the opposite of solidarity, isolation may include divisive feelings concerning at least one of the subrelations described under solidarity. Isolation is felt between the RA subculture and the on-campus population (residents), whereas solidarity exists within the RA subculture.

**Cynicism**

In the police system the typical adaptation to *anomie* [lawlessness] is cynicism. Like *ressentiment* [resentment] it consists of diffuse feelings of hate and envy, impotent hostility, and the sour-grapes pattern, and is used in this study to refer to a state of mind in which the *anomie* of the police organization as a whole is reflected in the individual policeman (Niederhoffer 1967:93-94).

Cynicism is a negative attitude directed towards any number of the following: RAs' perception of human behavior, supervisory staff members, residents, training, or the disciplinarian function.

**Role**

A role is personification of the various functions one serves: being a RA, a student, a friend, etc. Also, the various functions of a RA are considered roles: student, peer, advisor, mediator, disciplinarian, etc. Goffman (1961:87, 93) defines role as the “basic unit of socialization. It is through roles that tasks in society are allocated and arrangements made to enforce their performance.” A role is “the typical response of individuals in a particular position.” Further defining role, Goffman (1958:9) explains that,

When an individual or performer plays the same part to the same audience on different occasions, a social relationship is likely to arise. Defining social role as the enactment of rights and duties
attached to a given status, we can say that a social role will involve one or more parts and that each of these different parts may be presented by the performer on a series of occasions to the same kinds of audience or to an audience of the same persons.

According to Goffman, there are two main areas within a role. 1) Front stage – that which is projected to the audience (residents) and is consistent with the image of an ideal RA. 2) Back stage – those characteristics which are hidden from the residents and represent the real person behind the RA title, that person who the RA is when he or she is away from residents and the dormitory and just socializing with friends and family or even co-workers.

**Role Conflict**

This concept is explored two ways in this study. One aspect examines accepting a number of roles that do not work well together, such as friend and authority figure, causing frustration for the actor (the RA) who is trying to balance the roles. As Goffman describes, “since fronts tend to be selected, not created, we may expect trouble to arise when those who perform a given task are forced to select a suitable front for themselves from among several quite dissimilar ones” (1958:17-18). Another aspect investigates acting in a role, such as enforcing rules, that RAs may not completely agree with, or may not always follow themselves, creating feelings of doubt in the job and feelings of a hypocritical self.
The concept of a police subculture was established in the first study of police officers, conducted by William A. Westley in 1950. His study "sought to isolate and identify the major social norms governing police conduct, and to describe the way in which they influence police action in specific situations. He found a distinct subculture among police officers that still exists and emphasizes secrecy and violence" (Walker 1999:325). Westley found that group solidarity, or a "code of silence," was a formidable presence within the subculture. Westley's concept of the police subculture was furthered by studies conducted by Jerome Skolnick (1994) and Arthur Niederhoffer (1967), among others. Skolnick focused on the "working personality" and its defining elements of danger and authority, while Niederhoffer argued that cynicism and authoritarianism were the key characteristics of the police subculture. The varying perspectives of these pioneering researchers are reflected in the theoretical paradigms that are presently used to look at police subcultures.

Generally, three prominent theoretical perspectives are utilized in the police subculture literature: psychological, sociological, and anthropological. The psychological and sociological perspectives may be presented in a dichotomous manner. Psychological is an individualistic approach, in contrast to the group approach of the sociological. The anthropological is an integrative approach that attempts to merge the competing paradigms. "We use 'police subculture' then, as a kind of shorthand term for the organized sum of police perspectives,"
relevant to the police role" (Stretcher 1999:211). Each perspective is presented here, but because of the group analysis of subculture, more focus is placed on the sociological and anthropological ideas. Following a discussion of the main models of subculture theory is an introduction to the cultural themes in policing: isolation and solidarity. Next, several elements of police subculture are presented which translate to other authoritative subcultures. And finally, an exploration of Goffman's dramaturgical sociology (presentation of self, front stage and backstage roles, and role conflict), that is readily applicable to the RA subculture.

The sociological and anthropological subculture models are applied to the preliminary research findings on the RA subculture presented in Chapter Two (qualitative study). These conclusions are tested further through a survey (Chapter Three). This quantitative instrument allows the variables identified through previous research to be measured empirically. In addition to subculture models, Goffman's dramaturgical analysis of team interactions is utilized to provide the theoretical support of the research presented in Chapter Three.

MODELS

Psychological Model

The psychological model examines the personalities of the individual members of a subculture. A person's "behavior is structured by preexisting personality traits that are fixed early in life and remain intact" (Kappeler, Sluder, and Alpert 1999:239). In general terms, certain personality types are naturally
more attracted to a law enforcement career. Some research (Carpenter & Raza 1987; Rokeach, Miller, & Snyder 1971) offers support for this perspective and has led to the scholarly adoption of the idea of an authoritarian personality. First introduced by Theodore Adorno (1950), this “is characterized by conservative, aggressive, cynical, and rigid behaviors” (Kappeler et al. 1999:240). Many researchers (Putti, Aryee, & Kang 1988; Bahn 1984; Adlam 1982) have challenged the conclusions of the psychological perspective by arguing that personality is not static, but dynamic and changing with life experiences (social psychological). Though researchers who focus on individual socialization processes still fall under the psychological perspective, those who look at the group socialization process are in the sociological paradigm.

**Sociological Model**

Under a strict sociological perspective, the idea of personality predetermining behavior, or career selection, is rejected. Rather, the researchers “adopt the perspective that behavior is based on group socialization and professionalization. *Professionalization* is the process by which norms and values are internalized as workers learn their occupation” (Kappeler et al. 1999:241). Thus, the training and occupational experiences of police officers, including the interactions with fellow officers, shape the personality of people who are involved in law enforcement. Skolnick (1994) argues that police learn their occupational personality from training and through exposure to the unique demands of police work. Under the sociological paradigm, it is the group
socialization experiences that ultimately produce people with similar
personalities, values, and ethics within the police organization.

"Research findings support the position that recruit and probationary
officers are profoundly affected by their training and socialization. The
socialization process experienced by the police affects their attitudes and values" (Kappeler et al. 1999:242). Thus, if officers do develop the aforementioned
authoritarian personality, those of the sociological perspective would conclude it
is because characteristics develop in the course of occupational socialization and
not because it is an intrinsic feature of the individual.

**Anthropological Model**

This model defines many of the terms under investigation in this paper.
Culture is the shared set of norms, symbols, values, customs, and beliefs of a
population. Culture is reflected in the attitudes and behaviors of its members.
The unique aspects of a culture set it apart from other cultures. In a subculture,
members share most of the attributes of the encompassing culture, but are
distinguished by variation that makes them a separate and unique group.
Likewise, police share many characteristics and goals with the general
population, but there are things besides the uniform setting them apart from
society. “The occupational culture provides police with a unique working
personality” (Kappeler et al. 1999:259). The police play a unique role in society
and are given a particular social status because of their occupational position.
Because of this, “some scholars have adopted a culturalization perspective of the
police as a unique occupational subculture” (Kappeler et al. 1999:243). A more
detailed look at this perspective presents the complex relationship between socialization and the development of character.

"The concept of worldview refers to the manner in which a culture sees the world and its own role and relationship to the world. This means that various social groups, including the police, perceive situations differently from other social or occupational groups" (Kappeler et al. 1999:243). This phenomenon, which is also referred to by Kappeler et al. as a "working personality," is cultivated through socialization into police work.

The first step for police socialization is inherent to the selection process employed by police departments. This serves to funnel applicants down to a relatively homogenous group. Importantly this step explains how an occupational subculture is passed on through generations. "Persons who can demonstrate characteristics and traits like those possessed by the officers already on the force stand a greater chance of being hired" (Harrison 1998:3). Trainees are selected on the basis of conformity to "a select set of middle-class norms and values" (Kappeler et al. 1999:243).

Obviously, a criminal history or substance abuse problems are not attractive features for someone expected to enforce laws and maintain peace. Deviance from the norm is seen to compromise an applicant's ability to perform the job, whether or not in reality it would affect job performance. Illustrating the mainly unwritten norms represented in the police subculture, many pre-employment "tests are designed merely to determine applicants' physical
prowess, sexual orientation, gender identification, financial stability, employment history, and abstinence from drug and alcohol abuse” (Kappeler et al. 1999:243).

The next stage of socialization is under the constraints of the paramilitary structure of the police academy setting and the probationary field experience. As formal training begins, it becomes obvious that those who do not conform to the physical and mental rigors of training are not going to complete the program. Accordingly, those who do not meet official standards are subject to termination. Also, both instructors and fellow trainees frequently ostracize those not following the unwritten codes of conduct. The training devotes much time to group activities, which fosters a sense of camaraderie and teamwork among the police recruits.

Skolnick (1994) found, as socialization continues so does the development of a police worldview. A key component in the development of the working personality for police is the danger, or perceived danger, found in police work. This element is perpetuated in the academy by the telling of “war stories,” which are usually extreme and unusual cases experienced by other officers. These are told and retold so many times they create misleading typifications of the everyday experiences of police. Also, “most police training curricula overemphasize the potential for death and injury and further reinforce the danger notion by spending an inordinate amount of time on firearms skills, dangerous calls, and officer survival” (Kappeler et al. 1999:246). With danger being such a focus in training, recruits typically become suspicious of others outside of the police force and develop an "us versus them" mentality. “Emphasizing danger
fosters the we/they worldview and focuses police attention on selective behaviors of certain segments of society" (Kappeler et al. 1999:248). An officer's basic duty equipment includes a gun, collapsible baton, pepper spray, and handcuffs. Few carry reference material about constitutional and civil rights protections. This is an illustration of what the officer sees as the focus of their job and is a manifestation of the working personality.

A second component important in developing the working personality is authority. "The law shapes and defines interactions between people and grants social status to members of society. The police, by virtue of their social role, are granted a unique position in the law" (Kappeler et al. 1999:249). Police may issue citations that impose legal sanctions on individuals for something as small as failure to comply with the directive of an officer. Police also have discretion in applying the law and choosing the level of authority and force to use in a given situation. There are very few people who have statutory authority, backed by formal sanctions, over others in society.

The final component of the working personality, or police worldview, "is [that it is] intensified by the perception of policing as the most critical of social function" (Kappeler et al. 1999:249). There is a basic view that the laws police enforce are fair and that through their actions, justice is served. The police professionals believe that the element of the population unable to self-regulate would create utter chaos without police intervention to regulate undesirable behaviors. As an expression of the police worldview, those within the police profession see it as both noble and essential to a peaceful society. As Kappeler
et al. (1999:250) note, “police who begin to question the goodness of the profession, the equity of law, or the criticality of maintaining the existing social order often quit or are forced out of the occupation for other careers further solidifying the police social character of those who remain.”

CULTURAL THEMES

Two prominent characteristics of the police subculture, isolation and solidarity have been identified through research. These themes encompass the entire subculture and are affirmed by individual members.

Social Isolation

Social isolation is the feeling of being separated from the greater society. This theme reoccurs in many studies over the last half century (Reiss & Bordua 1967; Cain 1973; Harris 1973; Sherman 1982; Skolnick 1994; Manning 1999; Westley 1956, 1970, 1999). Police are more likely to form relationships and socialize with their coworkers than with those from outside the profession. This isolation is partially self-imposed due to the police worldview and the resulting cynicism and suspiciousness of others.

Rejection by the community stems, in part, from the resentment, which sometimes arises when laws are enforced (Clark 1965). Since no one enjoys receiving a traffic ticket or being arrested and no one enjoys being disliked, the police tend to look inward to their own members for validity and support. Therefore, the police often self-impose restrictions on personal interactions with the community (Kappeler et al. 1999:252).

Due to the unpleasant nature of most police-citizen interactions, the authority component adds to the isolation of the police from society. The
authority extends into essentially enforcing morality in some cases, such as prostitution and public intoxication.

This often leads to charges by the public of hypocrisy, as they are not always known to strictly adhere to moral norms themselves. Any profession, including teachers, ministers, and political leaders, whose employment is entrusted to the maintenance of discipline and ethics faces these same charges. The public has entrusted them with a greater responsibility to act above and beyond criticism as an essential nature of their employment. . . . Their role as the ascribed guardians of the rules automatically implies that they affirm them. To do otherwise causes a state of conflicting cognitions (i.e., cognitive dissonance), a mindset that is extremely uncomfortable if not painful (Sewell 1999:157).

As discussed earlier, authority distinguishes police from other members of society thus producing a social gap broadened by other elements of the police working personality, such as solidarity and cynicism. Harrison (1998:4) broadens the application of social isolation to other groups by stating, "some of these tendencies [to isolate] may be found in other occupations sharing similar problems [of danger, authority, etc]."

Solidarity

Solidarity is the second major theme supported by research on the police subculture (Banton 1964; Goldstein 1977; Harris 1973; Skolnick 1994; Stoddard 1999; Westley 1956, 1970, 1999). Police solidarity is also viewed as loyalty; "loyalty that is engendered because of shared experiences binds officers together. Mutual trust is a necessary lubricant to conducting business as usual" (Sewell 1999:157). Taken to its extreme, police loyalty is referred to as "the thin blue line" or "the code of silence," where partners "cover each others backs" which may include lying or refusing to "break rank" and turn in one of their own.
"Traditionally, the theme of police solidarity and loyalty was seen as the result of a need for insulation from perceived dangers and rejection by the community" (Kappeler et al. 1999:253). Researcher Susan L. Sayles states that perceived hostilities from the community tend to bring about a *bunker mentality*, a feeling that it is *us against them* (Sewell 1999). In this working environment, "the police culture offers its members reassurance that the other officers will 'pull their weight' in police work, that they will defend, back up and assist their colleagues when confronted with external threats" (Harrison 1998:7). Consequently, a high value is placed upon teamwork. Studies show that due to the nature of police work, it is imperative that they are able to rely on one another. This engenders solidarity.

Researcher Theodore N. Ferdinand (1980) asserts that solidarity is not static, but varies throughout a career depending on age and rank. Ferdinand's research describes an inverse relationship: the younger and lower in rank, the higher the solidarity. Basically, the more immersed one is in the subculture, the more apparent solidarity will be because of the freshness of the socialization experience (*i.e.*, training) and the realities of the needs of front line officers (*i.e.*, new officers are exposed to varied and dangerous work because they are initially assigned to patrol). Conversely, a study by Crank, Payn, and Jackson reports that "older officers may be more likely to have a rich family life and would have less need for the traditional subcultural practices sometimes known as *choir practice* in the popular media" (Sewell 1999:159).
These perspectives present models and themes to explore the formation of subculture based on the unique working environment of the police. Through socialization into the role of law enforcement officer and the experience of an authority figure, distinct characteristics emerge. Members of the police force are isolated from others outside the profession, exhibit intense solidarity to one another, and display cynicism towards those they are sworn to protect -- characteristics that also manifest in other authoritative subcultures. Stretcher (1999:212) identifies several perspectives, or elements, of the police subculture that are relevant to other subculture studies: responsibility for maintaining order; need for respect from others; need for control in situations; value of curiosity and suspiciousness; social appropriateness as a frame of reference; and the desire to seek out elusive crime and criminals. These are elements of the RA subculture. When exposed to the same scrutiny, the RA subculture has analogous origins and produces characteristics resembling those in law enforcement.

**DRAMATURGICAL SOCIOLOGY**

**Performances**

Sociologist Erving Goffman presents a view of life based on the elements of a performance. To simplify, life is a stage. In his writings, *The Presentation Of Self In Everyday Life* and *Encounters: Two Studies in the Sociology of Interaction*, Goffman applies dramaturgical concepts, such as front stage versus back stage behavior, impression management, and actors and audiences, to
dyadic and group interactions. Additionally, he examines the achievement of the elements required for a successful performance on an individual or team level.

People who fall along a belief continuum act out performances. As Goffman writes in *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, there are those fully consumed by their role; they are sincere. At the other extreme are those who do not have any belief in their part; these individuals are cynical (Goffman 1958:10). While both actors are able to perform the same role, the techniques one uses and the effect the performance has on each will be different. Additionally, people may evolve along the belief continuum through socialization, as described by Robert Park (1950:249, 250):

> It is probably no mere historical accident that the word person, in its first meaning, is a mask. It is rather a recognition of the fact that everyone is always and everywhere, more or less consciously, playing a role...it is in these roles that we know each other; it is in these roles that we know ourselves.

> In a sense, and in so far as this mask represents the conception we have formed of ourselves-the role we are striving to live up to-this mask is our truer self, the self we would like to be. In the end, our conception of our role becomes second nature and an integral part of our personality. We come into the world as individuals, achieve character, and become persons.

> Many times a performance is guided by tradition. Tradition is based on both the performance of the previous actors and the expectations of the audience.

> When an actor takes on an established social role, usually he finds that a particular front has already been established for it. Whether his acquisition of the role was primarily motivated by a desire to perform the given task or by a desire to maintain the corresponding front, the actor will find that he must do both (Goffman 1958:17).
The pre-existing norms of a role are generally honored by the actor and expected by the audience. Variation of the accepted role norms may be met with sanctions enacted by other actors or by audience members. In addition to tradition, the values of a specific segment of society guide performances. "Thus, when the individual presents himself before others, his performance will tend to incorporate and exemplify the officially accredited values of the society, more so, in fact, than does his behaviour as a whole" (Goffman 1958:23).

Role performance parallels stage acting. There is a discernable front stage and back stage to all interactions. Front stage is the behavior and characteristics presented for the benefit of a specific audience. For example, a twenty year-old RA witnesses an underage resident drinking a beer and writes the resident up. As discussed earlier, much of this presentation is predetermined and has nothing to do with the individual actor's beliefs.

Alternatively, the back stage is where one is out of role. No longer under the audience scrutiny, one is allowed more freedom of individual expression. For example, the same twenty year-old Resident Assistant is in his room drinking beer with his friends behind the closed door. Though this illustration presents markedly different "stages," it becomes a bit tedious to sort out the regions of back stage and front stage behaviors. Some locations can be described as one or the other, but it ultimately depends upon the audience to define the encounter. Therefore, back versus front stage becomes relative.

Interactions with those of familiarity, such as friends, family members and possibly co-workers, are where one would expect to see the real person as
opposed to the formal behavior exhibited while in character. This division leads to the certainty that some individuals would have to hide their true self in order to present the illusion that they fit the ideal type expected in the assumed role.

Goffman (1958:26) supports this division:

If an individual is to give expression to ideal standard during his performance, then he will have to forgo or conceal action which is inconsistent with these standards. When this inappropriate conduct is itself satisfying... then one commonly finds it indulged in secretly... They conform to all their customs, while they are seen, but they are not so scrupulous when in their retirement.

Once a role is impressed on an audience, it is important to be consistent in all of the future presentations made to that audience. One technique to assist the actor in preservation of the role is the segregation of the actor from the audience. A consequence of maintaining social distance is the audience viewing the actor in a single role, that is strategically only presented in their presence.

Individuals often foster the impression that the routine they are presently performing is their only routine or at least their most essential one. ...The audience, in their turn, often assume that the character projected before them is all there is to the individual... We may practically say that he has as many different social selves as there are distinct groups of persons about whose opinion he cares. He generally shows a different side of himself to each of these different groups (Goffman 1958:31).

A benefit of the separation for the actor is the opportunity to engage in behavior inconsistent with one's role without damaging their image. Goffman refers to non-conforming behaviors as "secret consumption" and claims that it is widespread. "We find that there is hardly a legitimate everyday vocation or relationship whose performers do not engage in concealed practices which are incompatible with fostered impressions" (Goffman 1958:42).
Team

Goffman applies the same dramaturgical components to group or team interactions as he does to dyads. A team is defined as “a set of individuals whose intimate co-operation is required if a given projected definition of the situation is to be maintained” (Goffman 1958:64). For Goffman it is necessary to view a team as the basic unit of analysis instead of looking at each individual actor, particularly in the study of establishments. Teammates may assert influence over another’s behavior; each serving as a reference point on how the role should or should not be played.

There are two essential components of a team. First, there is mutual reliance that each member of the team will act appropriately in the presentation to the audience. This bond links the team together. Secondly, what Goffman calls “mutual familiarity” is developed between team members. This is a result of each member knowing that their role is merely an act and that it is meaningless to attempt to maintain that act in front of each other. For example, during the staff meeting the twenty year-old RA will talk to the other RAs about his alcohol write-up and then tell them about drinking with his friends. “Team-mates, then, in proportion to the frequency with which they act as a team and the number of matters that fall within impressional protectiveness, tend to be bound by rights of what might be called ‘familiarity’” (Goffman 1958:51).

Teammates tend to develop a shared definition of the reality experienced in interactions and to agree on the basic fundamentals of their performance. This unity represents the solidarity of the team and may be used, in some instances,
as a show of force when interacting with the audience. This is often part of an
unwritten code of conduct for the team. "The (professional) etiquette is a body of
ritual which grows up informally to preserve, before the clients, the common front
of the profession." (Goffman 1958:56).

When selecting teammates, "it is apparent that if performers are
concerned with maintaining a line they will select as team-mates those who can
be trusted to perform properly" (Goffman 1958:56). Thus, it is logical to think that
teams would recruit members who are like-minded and exhibit characteristics
consistent with the other team members. It is generally necessary for the old
team members to trust the new members to carry on the impression built with the
audience.

Furthering the group analysis of interaction, a distinction must be made
between teammates and colleagues.

Colleagues may be defined as persons who present the
same routine to the same kind of audience but who do not
participate together, as team-mates do, at the same time and place
before the same particular audience. Colleagues, as it is said,
share a community of fate. In having to put on the same kind of
performance, they come to know each other’s difficulties and points
of view; whatever their tongues, they come to speak the same
social language (Goffman 1958:201).

Here, the origins of professional courtesy are discovered. A visiting
colleague may be afforded temporary, honorary membership by teammates.
This allows for someone outside the team to enter into a position not given to
those of the audience, even though they have more daily social contact with the
team than the colleague. This distinction may be applied to the RA population by
looking at the interaction between staffs from different buildings, or, on a grand scale, looking at RAs from other campuses.

**Discrepant Sentiments**

Backstage interaction among teammates presents the opportunity for communication inconsistent with the image presented while engaged in the front stage role. Talking about the audience in their absence is what Goffman calls "derogating the absent." Goffman describes two common techniques of derogation. One behavior is teammates engaging in "mock role-playing and uncomplimentary terms of reference" (Goffman 1958:110). Backstage, RAs refer to residents in language that would not be used in their presence (slang, derogatory words, nicknames, etc.). Attitudes and behaviors of residents are mocked by RAs while relaying stories about interactions while in an official capacity (working the desk, doing rounds, disciplinary confrontations, etc.). Another important way actors derogate their audience is "when no member of the audience is present, the members of the team may refer to aspects of their routine in a cynical or purely technical way, giving forceful evidence to themselves that they do not take the same view of their activity as the view they maintain for their audience" (Goffman 1958:111).

As illustration, each RA staff meets weekly behind closed doors to discuss scheduling and concerns that affect the residence hall. Many times these discussions turn to talking about residents "behind their back" and making fun of responses to disciplinary confrontations. Not only does this represent
“derogating the absent,” it also presents an opportunity for expression of
“familiarity” among teammates.

**Impression Management**

In order to protect the image presented by teammates, there needs to be
an agreement among the members about what sorts of defensive measures will
be taken, particularly if their role is ever challenged by the audience. The most
important defensive technique is “dramaturgic loyalty,” which represents the bond
within the team. This research measures loyalty with solidarity. Solidarity
includes the elements of trust and caring for others. Also implicit are
understanding one another, influencing each other’s behavior, having things in
common, interacting and communicating often, helping one another, liking one
another, and feeling close to others. For a team to be continually successful, this
loyalty needs to be preserved. Other defensive techniques are used to affirm
solidarity.

A technique for solidarity maintenance is separating the team from the
audience so that they will not develop social ties. Any outside loyalties that could
conceivably compromise the in-group solidarity is viewed as disloyalty.

One basic technique the team can employ to defend itself against
such disloyalty is to develop high ingroup solidarity within the team,
while creating a backstage image of the audience which makes the
audience sufficiently inhuman to allow the performers to cozen
them with emotional and moral immunity (Goffman 1958:135-136).

Defensive techniques also increase the probability of having teammates
who will respect the existing loyalty of an establishment. Through hiring
practices, a team can search for those individuals that will add to the strength of
the team performance and will protect the integrity of the role. Goffman views
loyalty and discipline as attractive to teams for impression management.

Dramaturgical sociology, as presented by Erving Goffman, offers a “way of
ordering facts,” according a way to understand interactions. Using the theatrical
world analogy helps to illustrate the various social roles that people assume and
the extent to which they will go to preserve the integrity of those roles. The
elements of social interaction, as developed by Goffman, are clearly illustrated in
occupational subcultures of authority. The occupational group is a team or, at
minimum, colleagues. The application of dramaturgical theory to subculture
theory strengthens the explanatory power of each, creating a useful research
base for the current study.
CHAPTER TWO: QUALITATIVE STUDY

BACKGROUND

This study began as part of a qualitative research methods class at The University of Montana in the Fall of 2001. At the time, I was a RA and was very interested in studying the distinct subculture that surrounded me in my daily life. Through participant observation of my immediate staff, a literature review of police subculture studies, and a self-reflection of my RA experiences, I identified several themes to pursue in my study. With this initial research, I attempted to show that the RA occupational group was indeed a subculture. Evidence was gathered of a specialized language and the presence of other group-shared characteristics such as solidarity, isolation, role conflict, and cynicism of the RA staff.

METHODOLOGY

The Subjects And The Setting

The subjects for this study were seven (originally eight) RAs on a single residence hall staff (K-Town) at The University of Montana - Missoula. I was also a Resident Assistant on this staff (see Appendix 5). My position on the staff allowed broad access to the site and each participant gave verbal consent to be observed as part of the study.

K-Town was a four-story co-educational residence hall. Each floor was divided in half by a central lobby and the two resulting wings were single sex, one wing male and the other female. Each wing housed approximately 34 students.
and an RA was located in the middle room of each wing. One wing of male residents had a female RA, while the other seven were gender matched. Individual staff members involved in the study (excluding myself), five females and four males (one male was removed from the study when he left the position and was not included in the questionnaire data), ranged in age from 19 to 26 years and included five Montana residents, one from Idaho, and one from Missouri. Academic majors were Pharmacy (2), Recreation Management, Psychology, Business, Pre-Nursing, Liberal Studies, and Geography.

**Data Collection**

Participant observation was employed, primarily in the weekly staff meetings (approximately one hour), over the course of two months, with the goal of identifying elements of the RA subculture. The effect of authority on student staff members presented itself early in the observation. Using observations and police subculture literature as guides, a lengthy open-ended questionnaire (Appendix 1) was developed and administered to the RAs. The themes of interest were authority, isolation, and solidarity. In addition, my own self-reflection, as a member of the subculture under investigation, was key to data development in this project. Other applicable data sources were newspaper articles and employment advertisements from the Montana Kaimin and information provided on the website [www.residentassistant.com](http://www.residentassistant.com).

Analysis of the data was achieved through coding (and re-coding) of my field notes and questionnaires to identify apparent themes. Limitations of the methodology follow:
1. **Small Sample:** It would have been ideal to include all RAs from The University of Montana. The results are not generalizable to other staffs because it is expected varying levels of cynicism, solidarity, and isolation existed. The amount of discipline, the extent of staff bonding, and the group dynamics may effect these levels.

2. **Study Time Frame:** As a course project it was required that this research was completed in two months of the Fall Semester 2001. This prevented "saturation of data." More time was needed to do further follow-up on many issues.

3. **Insiders v. Outsiders:** This study focused the RA subculture from the inside. Feedback from the residents of K-Town and university administrators would have been useful and informative.

4. **Objectivity:** As a researcher, I was challenged to be self-reflective in this study. I was immersed in the subculture about which I wrote. Though it offers positive insight into the topic, possible bias may lead others to question the validity of the results.

**RESULTS**

The field notes primarily revealed the group dynamics -- how the RA's of K-Town related to one another and the specialized language somewhat unique to the group. Though these themes were virtually absent from the literature reviewed on police subcultures, the concept of language is traditionally part of the more general definition of culture and subculture. The response rate for
questionnaires was 100%. Questionnaire responses illustrated the language of the subculture, as well as provided the bulk of the evidence for the corresponding themes of authority, solidarity, and isolation. Role conflict was an additional theme apparent in the questionnaires, though this theme was barely mentioned in the literature on police subcultures.

**Language**

“Occupational language and argot are even more common than either uniforms or titles, constituting a unique form of language – a special, almost secret language, that is often unique to a single occupation or work setting” (Trice 1993: 99).

Resident Assistant language contains many acronyms foreign to those outside of the Residence Life Staff or from outside the campus community. The following discussion attempts to share the specialized language shared as part of the subculture. Resident Assistants are called **RAs**. The Residence Life Office is **RLO**. **SOS**, to the RA, refers to the Self Over Substance program for residents caught violating the alcohol and/or drug policies. RAs are also familiar with, and frequently use, acronyms of student resource groups on campus. For example, **SARS** (Student Assault Recovery Services) and **CAPS** (Counseling and Psychological Services).

RA training begins at “**camp**” (*Camp Paxson on Seeley Lake*). Time is spent in meetings/seminars and in informal interactions with each other over volleyball, canoeing, and swimming. The finale of “camp” is a banquet with various campus officials. Gourmet food is served, as well as wine and beer.
RAs are afforded the opportunity to mingle with university administrators, from the Vice President of Student Affairs to the Director of Financial Aid. Though underage drinking is not encouraged, alcohol is available and some minors take advantage of the situation. Acceptable back stage behavior (i.e. "secret consumption") is established at functions such as this.

An RA is either "in" or "out" for the night/weekend. "In" means being physically present in the building from 7PM to 7AM and able to respond to situations as needed. "Out" does not require being physically in the building and there are no written expectations to provide assistance to residents or fellow staff members. Having the "weekend out" simply means being "out" on both Friday and Saturday night. Each RA is allowed three "weekends out" each semester, one of them being a "three-day weekend," or three nights "out" in row. A "staff night out" is one night a semester where the entire staff of a building is "out" together and the building is supervised through reciprocal coverage of another residence hall. Many staffs use this time to spend a night outside of Missoula in places such as Spokane or a cabin on Seeley Lake.

The jobs that a RA does are referred to in somewhat unique language. When a RA is "on duty" (person primarily responsible for the building for the night) they take "the master" (key ring with approximately twenty keys on it, including the master key that opens most of the locks in the building) and "do rounds" (systematically walking through the public areas of the building, both checking for safety and security issues and watching for violations of the student conduct code) after working "the desk" (the front desk where a cashbox,
equipment and mailboxes are located) and then are required to be available to “nightwatch” (an hourly paid position filled by a full-time student who works “the desk,” in K-town the shift begins at 9PM and goes until 3/4AM, does rounds, and calls the RA “on duty” for problems). If residents are being loud during “quiet hours” (those hours set aside for special consideration for persons sleeping at that time and also allows an atmosphere conducive to studying, Sunday through Thursday, 8PM to 8AM and Friday and Saturday, 11PM to 9AM), the RA has the discretion to use their authority to do a “write-up” (an in-house procedure that includes completing paperwork detailing the situation and identifying those involved, usually leading to adjudication and formal sanctioning).

An essential part of the RA job is “programming” (planning activities) and that includes “quality programs” (activities encouraging interaction among residents, usually limited to a floor or wing of residents – requires more than just a “floor snack”), “all dorms” (events that involve residents from throughout the hall), “promote and attends” (publicizing and attending activities planned by other RAs), and “floor snacks” (food and beverages provided by Dining Services). The “supervisory staff,” which includes the Head and Assistant Head Resident, is responsible for “doing discipline,” which means anything from assisting in “write-ups” to conducting the resulting meetings with students. They also organize the staff’s ongoing training, which is called “RA in-service.”

RAs tend to use possessives where others may not see how it is appropriate, for example, “my staff,” “my floor,” “my residents,” “my girls/guys,” and “my dorm.” These expressions are somewhat reflective of a
hierarchical power structure, which manifests itself through language as well as action. The use of possessive vocabulary implies that the RA has some sort of power, or influence, over the subject, whether it is an individual resident or the activities of the entire building. It also implies that there are shared experiences or characteristics about the subject.

Insiders identify other RAs by their location of residence rather than by whom they really are (i.e. “She’s in Craig,” and “I’m from Aber”). To an outsider it may seem that these residence halls are towns, not simply buildings. It becomes part of an identity that can separate residents of one building from another while at the same time, bring them into common identity with others living there. The buildings have unique character and those who live in them are assumed to be similar in character. For example, it is assumed that a resident living in a building without discipline problems is “good.” It would be more shocking to a RA if that resident ever caused a problem than it would be if the resident was from a building with more discipline issues.

**Group Dynamics**

For this staff, humor presented itself as the key element of interaction in the full group setting of the staff meeting. Though staff meetings certainly dealt with serious topics, whenever things seemed to get too tense, someone usually broke the tension with some sort of attempt at humor.

At one meeting C asks why we can’t use our Griz Card [school identification card] to access the computer lab [in K-Town]. A few people make comments about how inconvenient it is on rounds and, what if someone is choking? …choking on a gold flake (reference to staff night out) and we didn’t have time to get the
master key or the access cards were all lost and the master key was dropped in the toilet. H says she will try to get us access (Field Journal, 10/21/01). Embarrassing stories about previous years have long shelf life and are passed on like urban legends, and on occasion, came up during staff meetings. For example, H was tormented about “mullet man,” a reference to a stripper who appeared at one of her programs last year, and was called “Clooney,” because of her self-reported infatuation with making George Clooney her husband. At one meeting, the internal dysfunction of the staff was joked about as the RAs discussed bringing in a psychologist to tell how incompatible they were. R stated that it would probably be the same as last year, when the psychologist told him that he “wasn’t compatible with anyone” (laughing), but claimed he wanted to know if that was still the case.

Problem solving and individual dissent were often approached with open discussion, but without any formal conclusion being developed. For example, one meeting focused on the use of Public Safety (also referred to as Campus Security) to administer breathalyzers to persons claiming that they had not been drinking, but who have been discovered in the presence of alcohol. H relayed that the procedure had changed from last year. R and M presented conflicting opinions.

R states that Campus Safety is just being lazy and that students should not be written up for alcohol if they were truly not drinking. M presents an alternate view that the act of being in the presence of alcohol is a violation of the Student Conduct Code and the people should be written up regardless of whether or not they were actually drinking. [There would be no need to call Campus Safety under these types of incidents]. The issue, as explained by H, is that traditional RA practice of moving persons from the scene to the office for a breathalyzer
allows a person to show his/her innocence while avoiding the possibility of legal citations going to those who were drinking in the room.

Researcher Comment: Residence Life procedure is to send alcohol write-ups to SOS counseling. If Public Safety is called, officers may issue Minor In Possession citations (MIPs) at their discretion. R exhibits the tendency to "put himself in their shoes," showing empathy for those in the situation. M seems to look at the situation from the viewpoint of enforcement of the Student Conduct Code to "the letter of the law" (Field Journal, 10/14/01).

Other members of the group stayed essentially silent. H stated that the fact was, we could not "move people to give them breathalyzers." Though this statement did not quell the dissenting opinions of R and M, it was the end of the conversation.

The group dynamics of the K-Town staff showed elements that would not be replicated on all residence hall staffs. The effect of individuals who do not agree on the ways of doing things is an area that Goffman would have found interesting. Although group dynamics are not evaluated further, this illustration was presented as a descriptive portrait of RA life in K-Town.

Authority

Though the role of enforcer and the use of authority were talked about in staff meetings, the theme was most evident in the questionnaire responses. Six of seven respondents identified one of their roles as being that of an authority figure (the most popular response, followed by "friend" in three of the seven questionnaires). In response to being asked to describe the various roles they assume as an RA, answers included, "rule enforcer," "the authority" (twice), "enforcer," "disciplinarian," and "to keep peace." One respondent identified to "regulate the happenings of the floor and dorm" as the major part of their job.
Additionally, this respondent and three others felt that the residents viewed the main job of an RA as “disciplinarian,” “enforcer,” and “to discipline them.” The effects of authority were apparent in police subculture literature. It tends to produce staff solidarity and social isolation. These themes correspond with many responses offered on the questionnaire.

**Solidarity**

Solidarity was explored among the RA staff of K-town by asking a series of questions concerning the importance of “bonding,” the importance of trusting staff members to “back you up,” and the common characteristics of the staff members of K-Town.

All but one of the respondents felt “bonding” was important, “very” and “extremely” being the common adverbs. People assigned different meanings to the term “bonding” when asked to define it how it has helped or hindered their job. The one RA who did not say that bonding was important wrote, “it is nice if a staff bonds, but for the most part I think a staff mainly needs to be able to get along. Bonding could possibly play a role of favorites and overlooking certain things that need to be brought to life.” More commonly, bonding was associated with “communicating” with others and “getting to know and understand” coworkers. Two RAs stated that “feelings” might get in the way of “business or conflicts/problems.” Two other respondents addressed the issue of ways that “bonding” helps and/or hinders them in performing their job. One stated that, “it helps us work better as a team – but can also hinder if people develop partial attitudes towards individuals.” The other stated, “this relationship can only help
you because even if you have problems, you should feel comfortable enough through bonding to work them out."

Every RA said that it was "very important" to trust staff members to back them up (one said "extremely"). When asked a follow-up question of what type of support they expected, responses centered on support in "discipline," "problems," and "confrontations" associated with performing the RA job. Related comments included, "If I'm writing someone up I don't want another RA telling the resident 'it's no big deal' or something" and, "I expect full support in front of residents and others [with problems]." One K-Town RA was very detailed in describing the ways they expected support. In "confrontational situations...our job also requires some difficult decisions (especially if disciplining a resident you like) and you need support. I expect complements, support and actually saying 'I've got your back'." Other responses identified non-confrontational areas in which support is expected: i.e. "programming," "if we have time conflicts and can't make it to work at the desk," "administrative problems," and "just knowing that if I needed anything they would be there."

Most respondents developed an extensive list of characteristics they felt were shared by members of the K-Town staff. Examples included, "hard workers," "willing to cooperate/help," "dependable," "respectable," "involved," "sincerity and compassion," "kindness," "leadership," "communicators," "flexible," "open-minded," "energetic," and "a little zany." The first two descriptives were the only characteristics appearing on multiple questionnaires.
The follow-up question, "What are some of the differences and how do you react to those differences?" brought up a couple of interesting responses: "I think that we all try to make everyone like ourselves and when we can’t we become upset" and "discipline differences: they often frustrate me but I can’t change everything; just recognize differences and tolerate them.” Others generally saw the differences between individuals on the K-Town staff as beneficial to the overall dynamics.

The importance of bonding, or solidarity, within the sample was evident in questionnaire responses and in observations of group interaction. Additionally, solidarity with one group likely led to isolation from other groups.

**Isolation**

In this staff, isolation assumed at least two forms. One was internal, or a gap between the RA and the residents. A second form was external, such as the gap between the RA and the greater community, including other dorms, other RA staffs, friends, and family.

I attempted to look at these forms of isolation in a number of ways. One approach looked at isolation as internal (the in-house separation of the RAs and the residents of their floor/building). Another approach explored external socializing (with those outside of the building or outside of RLO). An additional question asked the ways in which RAs felt separated from the greater dorm community. Finally, each staff member was asked to identify elements of the RA job that separated him or her from the average resident.
When isolation was looked at from the perspective of the differences that set RA’s apart from residents (internal isolation), the two primary reasons specified were the amount of college/life experience and the added responsibilities of a RA. One RA touched on authority being an isolating factor, “we have to enforce rules and are held to a higher standard.” Age and maturity, greater campus involvement, and having a different approach to school were also mentioned as differences between RAs and residents.

The theme of external isolation (separation of building staffs or between the RA and those outside of RLO) was relatively muted as it related to isolation from friends, but was more apparent applied to isolation from other dorms. Though most staff members stated that they were “friends” with their coworkers (one even stated that it is “sort of like a little family”), the strength of the relationship was not detailed, nor did the socialization seem to extend outside of the job. Most people claimed that they did not really socialize with members of the K-Town staff outside of the building. Responses included: “Outside of the job I don’t do much with them;” “I don’t socialize much with any [staff members] outside of work, but that is simply how it works out. Not due [to] personality conflicts;” “It seems that we aren’t able to socialize outside of the building that often, mainly because of time conflicts;” “I feel that we could socialize more, but people have different interests and habits so sometimes that’s difficult. Plus, we are all pretty busy with school.” One RA specifically referred to having friends from outside of the RA subculture, “I do socialize outside of the job. Since I didn’t
start [being an RA] right after my freshman year, I have been able to expand [my] horizons and meet other people through different groups.”

When asked about the ways in which the RA felt separated from the greater dorm community, four RAs focused on external isolation and three focused on the idea of internal isolation. The external isolation was primarily perceived as a result of having to spend so much time in K-Town. The four statements providing evidence of external isolation were: “I feel separated on my floor, because they are the only people I see,” “[I] feel separated most of the time because [I] mainly interact with [K-Town] staff and residents,” “…I feel separated sometimes having to be in [K-Town] so much and mainly meeting freshmen,” and “I feel separated in a way because we have all become so busy we don’t really interact with other dorms.” The evidence of internal isolation varied more: “Being responsible for discipline separates me a little from my residents,” “A slight age difference, different approach to school/homework, etc.,” and “They are going through different things in their lives than I am – so in that sense I feel separated.”

The K-Town RAs identified elements that caused internal isolation. Adding support to the theme of authority, having authority over residents was identified by six of the seven RAs as the element responsible for separating them from the average resident. The following is a list of the specific language, used by the respondents, which were generalized to the element of authority. “When we do discipline and enforce policies.” “[Residents] depend on you and expect more. [They] look to us as superior to them. Some are scared to be friends
because we are authority figures.” “I have to be able to discipline them so I am automatically above them.” “Being responsible for discipline.” “Rules do, but that is our job; it is a natural division. We can be friends but there are things I can’t do with them or share with them (without compromising my job).” All of these responses added to the validity of authority and isolation as themes of the RA subculture.

The last statement represents an idea reflected in the literature, that social isolation of the subculture was partially self-imposed. Some other reasons that RAs may have imposed isolation on themselves were also consistent with the police subculture. The social status conferred upon the authority figure increased the chances and risks of being charged with hypocrisy. For example, an RA who was not 21 and wants to drink is more likely to feel safe doing it around other RAs than among those he could write-up for engaging in similar action. In fact, an RA is strictly prohibited from drinking with underage residents. Drinking with underage residents is grounds for termination, but one will probably not be negatively sanctioned for drinking alcohol with other RAs.

Self-imposed isolation from residents is synonymous with the separation of the actor and the audience previously described by Goffman (1958). In addition to the separation that results naturally from authority, self-imposed isolation is a defense mechanism that actors use to preserve their role. Role conflict results from front and back stage attitudes and behaviors not reconciled by the performer.
**Role Conflict**

The concept of role conflict emerged from the data through inquiry about how various roles made the RA feel. Four of the seven responses expressed cynical feelings about being "the authority/the enforcer," while one indicated that being the "disciplinarian" was a "power trip." Negative responses clearly illustrated role conflict. The self-described feelings included "aggravated with being the authority," "hate being a rule enforcer and would rather they monitor themselves," "sometimes you have to be the authority which I do, but I do not enjoy," and "[being an enforcer is] not my favorite, but it is very important."

Though the literature on police subculture suggested that role conflict, or dissonance, would be decreased or even eliminated by members of the group believing that their function was essential to a peaceful "society," this did not seem to be the case within the RA subculture. Every RA in K-Town identified the RA function as essential to the functioning of the residence hall; they did not believe that self-regulation was possible.

**DISCUSSION**

The results of this study add to the body of information on subcultures of authority by supporting previous findings and identifying the strong presence of role conflict experienced by RAs. Through a review of the literature on police subcultures and subsequent research and analysis of the RA staff of K-Town, I conclude that the staff of K-Town represents a subculture.
Inconsistencies

Inconsistencies between police subculture literature and the results of this study include the presence of role conflict for RAs and a general lack of the expressed cynicism directed against the public (residents) usually found in police work. When asked how they felt about their residents, not a single RA answered anything in the least bit negative or cynical. In fact, RAs were more likely to express positive, optimistic, and even doting views of their residents. This difference may be related to the deeper and sustained relationships that develop between RAs and residents (as opposed to the limited unpleasantness of the typical police-citizen meeting). Questionnaire responses included, “Really like – most of the residents seem to be sincere and passionate people,” “Most of them are stand-up good guys,” “My guys are the greatest. K-Town overall is pretty good,” “I love them! They are really talented, intelligent, funny and caring people which I appreciate,” “I love my floor and K-Town,” and “I really enjoy them all. They make the job!”

The descriptions given in the questionnaires did not always correspond with statements recorded in my field notes. For example, one RA stated in conversation, “my girls are bitches,” but this sentiment is not completely reflected in the questionnaire response of “Some students still have the attitude they can do everything now that they are ‘on their own’. Overall, the residents are pretty friendly.” Perhaps cynicism is kept underground in the RA subculture, partially accounting for its absence in this study.
Further inconsistencies between the police and RA subcultures may be explained by looking at what is missing in the RA subculture. There is little perceived danger, there is no permitted use of force to accompany the authority, and the RA is a student first and a RA second, so the occupational effects of the RA role may be muted by the role of the student.

Consistencies

This subculture shares themes with the police subculture: the primary binding element of authority and the resulting themes of solidarity and isolation. There are similarities in the selection process and training of police and RAs.

Steps in the RA selection process are reasonably analogous to the police. An initial application is filed and those who do not meet the written qualifications (GPA, full-time student, etc.) are eliminated from the pool. The next step is a series of panel interviews, comprised of current RA staff members and the directors of Residence Life. Here the applicants are rated on general professionalism standards such as knowledge of the position, ability to communicate effectively, and related experience. Current RA staff members are asked to submit comments on any applicants with whom they are familiar. The pool is funneled down further by a final presentation by the applicant. The new staff members are selected during a group meeting of the new student supervisory staff and the directors.

As in the police subculture, this hiring process is an attempt to funnel the applicants down to a relatively homogenous group, where middle-class values and behaviors are rewarded with employment. It may be argued the people
hired represent conventional ideals, or middle class norms, within the RA subculture. Observations reveal that the RAs in K-Town are generally able to project a professional image to the public, even if it is not reflective of their own beliefs. Those people with extreme beliefs, a history of discipline problems, poor communication skills, and other unconventional characteristics are likely to be passed over for hiring or are eliminated as the characteristics present themselves. Illustrating the cohesive, “All-American” nature of RA employment and the like-minded sentiments of the subculture, this year the advertisements used to recruit new RA staff members refers to joining “UM’s Residence Life Family.”

Formal training for an RA begins with bonding time at camp and, in my experience, is full of “war stories.” Examples include, one RA’s door being set on fire by his residents, a female RA physically assaulted while doing a round on a male floor, and another RA chasing down occupants of a room after they fled the scene of an alcohol write-up. Though these events occurred, the average RA will not encounter circumstances such as these. Representing extreme and unusual cases, these stories give a new RA the wrong idea about normal duties because the stories usually revolve around a discipline event or pranks directed at the RA. In reality, a greater proportion of time is spent in roles such as programmer, socializing, and working desk hours.

Team building also begins at camp. On a micro-level, staffs form volleyball teams, are allowed time to do activities and meet as a staff. On a macro-level, all of the staffs integrate through the sharing of cabins (mixed
Additionally, most of the general meeting sessions are done in a large group setting. Mixed activities allow bonding to be achieved on varying intimacy levels among members of a staff and also between staffs.

As in the police subculture, the element of occupational authority puts the RA in a unique social position. It automatically puts the RA higher on the hierarchical ladder than the residents left under the constraints of their regulatory power. Like the police, the RA maintains power over others due to the threat of disciplinary action in response to the violation of rules under their jurisdiction. The authority given to the RA while in their role of “University Official” is found in the Student Conduct Code of The University of Montana (2000:2,17). In part, it reads,

Generally, The University of Montana jurisdiction is limited to conduct occurring on University premises or at University-sponsored activities. While the laws of the larger community and the Student Conduct Code may overlap, they operate independently and do not substitute for each other.

General misconduct is subject to University disciplinary actions(s), and includes: ...

8. Failure to comply with the directions of University officials, including Resident Assistants and University Security Officers, acting in the performance of their duties within the scope of their authority.

9. Violation of published University regulations or policies. Among such regulations are those pertaining to student housing...

A RA also has discretionary power to choose when and where to use their authority and how seriously to react to a situation. For example, one night a RA may warn a person that their stereo is too loud, but the next night, the same RA may write a person up for the same act without warning. Though consistency is

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stressed during training, it does not eliminate RA discretion. Just as within the police subculture, the law shapes and defines RA interactions.

Findings in this study illustrate that solidarity and social isolation are key components in RA life. As in policing, RAs value teamwork. They expect other RAs to “have their back” in difficult situations. They develop solidarity based on mutual trust and shared experience. As a result of the divisive element of authority and as a self-induced defense mechanism, social isolation occurs. This study shows internal isolation to not be as pronounced as expected or implied by the police literature. The virtual absence of expressed cynicism in the RA subjects and the effects of the relationships that develop as a result of the RA and the residents living together partially explain why this difference exists between the subcultures.

The consistent characteristics of the RA and police subcultures emerge as compelling evidence of the effects of occupational socialization of authority figures. It is acceptable that there are also inconsistencies. The richness of depth in each of the subcultures presents many avenues for future study.

Conclusions

This analysis is important in informing the Residence Life Office of the presence and possible implications of an RA subculture. In addition to the key aspects reflective of the substantial literature on police subculture, role conflict has presented itself as a significant presence in the RA subculture and it is advised to address it further in training. Finally, the study participants were asked to voice concerns and suggestions that RLO may be able to implement in
future years that would make their job better. Three staff members were satisfied or offered no specific suggestions. Following is a consolidation of the responses from the other four staff members:

- "Some training seemed like common sense and I would have liked more staff bonding before and during RA camp."
- "As far as training goes, I think that less time needs to be spent on familiarizing the RA's with the offices on campus and more time should be spent on teaching skills such as conflict negotiation, stress management, and how to engage residents during a write-up situation."
- "I feel that some RA's are better than others. I think that Residence Life overlooks some of the good things being done and focuses on the bad. This is smart for business but hard on employees. I think the way to make people perform better is to offer more perks and bonuses. We perform a very challenging service for the school and I feel that we are overlooked a lot."
- "Need to train instead of leaving it up to returning [staff] to help us out. Selection of RAs needs to be based on qualifications and not on opinions or hearsay of others. Should have more RLO events so we get to know other staffs better and then we can feel more connected to each other."

This preliminary research leads to further questions about what influences levels of solidarity, isolation, cynicism, and role conflict. Broadening the sample to include the entire Residence Life Staff at The University of Montana and developing a survey to empirically measure the test variables and allow statistical analysis of the data may best address these questions.
CHAPTER THREE – QUANTITATIVE STUDY

BACKGROUND

Building on the conclusions contained in Chapter Two, this portion of exploration looks at group characteristics and levels of solidarity, isolation, cynicism, and role conflict within the RA subculture and the effects of amounts of discipline encountered. Additionally, the possibility that members of the RA subculture are similar to those in law enforcement will be examined with demographic questions. They will discern whether RAs are from middle-class households and if they are more conservative than the general population, as patterned by police subculture. Evidence is offered in support of an integrated theory, combining elements of the psychological, sociological and anthropological models described in Chapter One and Goffman's dramaturgical sociology.

METHODOLOGY

A description of this study and the survey (Appendix 2) were submitted as part of a human subject research application to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) in April 2002. Approval was received on April 5, 2002 and administration of the survey began. Additionally, the Director of Residence Life granted permission for use of the RA staffs as the sample population in this research.

This research summary builds on existing knowledge of authority subcultures (as illustrated in police subculture studies) and the conclusions drawn in the preliminary research on the RA subculture (Chapter Two). A data
set compiled from a survey of all Resident Assistants currently employed at The University of Montana measures the variables identified in Chapter Two: solidarity, isolation, cynicism, and role conflict. For this research, dramaturgical sociology and subculture theory are integrated and applied to quantitative results.

**Survey Administration**

Each of the seventy-two Resident Assistants at The University of Montana received a survey with an explanation of the research (Appendix 2) and an envelope to return the completed instrument. The surveys were delivered to the front desk of each residence hall and placed in individual RA mailboxes. In accordance with IRB standards, the cover letter included the standard voluntary and anonymous participation statement, as well as a brief explanation of the research. The envelopes allowed a degree of confidentiality for the respondents and the ability to return them through campus mail delivery at no cost and at their convenience.

**Survey Design and Coding**

The survey (Appendix 2) for the present research was designed to specifically address the themes identified in subculture literature and in the previously mentioned qualitative study. The survey included five separate dimensions. The survey questions concerned demographics, solidarity, isolation, cynicism, and role conflict. Each response was coded (Appendix 3) and entered into a SPSS (Statistical Product and Service Solutions, formerly known as Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) database. Demographic information included age, gender, family income, political position, major, GPA, year in
school, length of employment, number of write-ups, and current dorm assignment.

The variable of solidarity was measured through the use of an adapted and shortened form of a solidarity scale developed by Lawrence R. Wheeless (1978). Wheeless (1978:143) developed a twenty-item solidarity scale “as a criterion for assessing the impact of communication-related variables on interpersonal relationships.” The Expanded 20-Item Solidarity Scale tapped various components of solidarity, including self-disclosure and interpersonal trust (Wheeless 1978:147). The full scale was modified and collapsed for this research. Instead of measuring trust in dyadic relationships, the items were changed to reflect group feelings. For example, the statement “I feel very close to this person” was adjusted to “I feel very close to these people.” This allowed measurement of the staff solidarity and campus-wide relationships. Using the unrotated single factor loadings provided by Wheeless (1978:147), eight items were selected on the basis of their relative strength and to provide a mixture of negative and positive sentiments. Two identical scales were offered and the RAs were asked to record their level of agreement with the statements when applied to their own building staff and then to all RAs campus-wide.

Elements of isolation were assessed through statements reflecting divisive and integrative components described in subculture literature and in dramaturgical sociology. This section focused on what Chapter Two called “internal isolation” or separation of the RA from residents. Nine related survey statements ranged from self-imposed isolation to separation resulting from the
innate differences between RAs and the dormitory population. Respondents were asked to indicate the frequency (from all the time to never) of thoughts or behaviors that denoted emotive or tangible separation. Variety of items allowed for the measurement of various forms of isolation and the items were offered as a possible construct measure.

Various types of cynicism, particularly when directed at subordinates (residents), were measured through the use of selected, adapted items from Arthur Niederhoffer’s Police Cynicism Index (1967). This original twenty-item index was the only established instrument designed to measure attitudes in law enforcement. Though the index was constructed as a scale measure of cynicism, further testing found that it had “both low validity and reliability” (Regoli 1976: 236). Regoli and Poole’s (1979) attempt to revise Niederhoffer’s scale resulted in the development of a revised Police Cynicism Scale (47-49) that was shortened to thirteen items. Their research found multiple components, or factors, contained in the original index. Regoli and Poole (1979:46) concluded, “Niederhoffer’s cynicism index does not represent a unidimensional construct and should not be assumed to be logically or empirically valid”. Based on the earlier results, this research did not view cynicism as a unitary score. It was likely that one would feel negative towards one aspect of the job and not others. Therefore, cynicism was approached as separate components.

Six items from Niederhoffer’s original index, representing five dimensions of cynicism, were incorporated in the RA survey. Four of these selected items were statements included in Regoli and Poole’s revised scale (two items
concerning supervisors and public opinion were eliminated from their scale, but were deemed appropriate for this research). Items were selected on the basis of their logical validity as single item measures of directed cynicism and for their applicability to RA duties. Accordingly, they were offered as individual measures of elements of cynicism, not as a unitary cynicism score. The questions were modified to be applicable to RA lifestyle. The language adjustments were, "policemen" to "Resident Assistants," "police superior" to "Head/Assistant Head Resident," "public" to "residents," "police academy" to "RA training," and "arrest" to "write-up." The revised cynicism index developed by Regoli and Poole was not used in this survey because many of the questions were not applicable to the RA population.

Role conflict was explored primarily in conjunction with dramaturgical sociology, but was also developed as an element of the occupational subculture. Survey statements attempted to elicit comments about a RAs feelings and behaviors concerning their performance. Components included acting differently in front of residents, comfort level as an enforcer, following the rules one enforces, and viewing the RA function as essential. Respondents were asked to reveal the prevalence of role conflicting emotions and actions in order to illustrate the effects of occupying a role of authority. Items were offered as individual measures and also as a possible construct.

Limitations

There are significant differences between the jobs of the police and the RAs, which led to an expectation of different levels of the identified variables.
Several facts limited encompassing occupational comparisons: law enforcement is a career whereas being a RA is a job (officially part time) in addition to being a student; RAs live and work in the same living space as their subordinates – which allows for much more sustained and varied contact versus the police who have brief encounters with negative implications; RAs do not carry weapons nor do they have the power to arrest or use force and RAs lack the element of danger in their job (which in combination with authority has been shown to greatly increase the level of some of the test variables). Additionally, the population that RAs interact with is filtered by the fact that the residents have attained a high school education and have the economic backing to afford higher education.

Using the idea that these occupational differences exist between RAs and police it is possible that the emerging character differences between RA staffs may be partially reflective of the degree of the police function they serve in their dorm. Those dorms with more discipline problems and RAs who have been involved in many write-ups should show higher levels of the test variables when compared to those dorms with low discipline and those RAs with little write-up experience.

The sample used for the initial portion of the study was small (seven RAs) and was drawn from a single staff. The themes of study were identified in this stage. However, due to the small sample size it is plausible that other variables are important, but will not be discovered with this research. Additionally, the entire sample of RAs in the final analysis is from The University of Montana.
Residence Life Staff so the conclusions will not necessarily be generalizable to other universities.

Certain omitted factors listed as limitations in Chapter Two continue to limit the study at this stage. The extent of staff bonding and the characteristics of the group dynamics of each staff were not directly measured in this study. The amount of staff bonding varies by residence hall and is logically connected to the solidarity level of that staff. Additionally, this research continued to explore the RA subculture from within, neglecting valuable feedback from the residents.

Administering a survey to the entire population of RAs assisted the issue of a questionable sample size. The resulting self-selected sample is relatively representative of the population. A certain amount of sample bias is assumed. Those who had strong feelings (positive or negative) about being an RA would be more likely to respond. My association with RAs (as my co-workers, colleagues, and even friends) may have induced some to complete the survey while it may have made others uncomfortable in expressing their opinions. Additionally the respondents are quite identifiable through the demographic information requested by the survey. Though the explanation of research stated that participation was anonymous, it was more accurate to say the identities of individuals would be kept confidential. The responses were analyzed as group averages and were based on current dorm and employment level, but some individuals may not have responded out of fear of being singled out.

The researcher's inclusion in the subculture continued to present unique research issues. My experiences as a Resident Assistant prevented me from
being a completely neutral observer. I chose to study RAs using the models and themes of the police subculture because I have been a member of both groups and could not ignore the similarities in the occupational bonding that occurred. More than a guide to my research, my experiences as an insider were certainly reflected in the information and conclusions presented in this research. This insight may be viewed as advantageous, or as deleterious, to the integrity and validity of the study. This aspect is explored further in the self-reflection contained in Appendix 5.

DEMOGRAPICS

The survey response rate was 72%, allotting a sample size of 52 RAs. Of the sample, approximately 60% were female, compared to 53.4% on the complete RA staff (UM Residence Life Office Staff Listing, 2001-2002) and 52.5% of the student body (UM Graduations Office, Spring 2002). The response rates for the residence halls ranged from 38% - 100%. The relative distribution of each dormitory in the sample (N = 52) and their individual response rates are listed in Table 1.
Table 1. Current Dorm Assignments For The RA Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent of Sample</th>
<th>Response Rate (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aber</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craig</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>21.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elrod/Duniway</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jesse</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowles</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miller</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pantzer</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turner</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Residence Halls and Fall 2001 Discipline Numbers

- **Aber Hall** is an eleven-story dormitory. It is somewhat geographically isolated from the other residence halls. Aber Hall has 11 staff members and a resident capacity of 384. 61 write-ups.

- **Craig Hall** is a four level, T-shaped structure with thirteen staff members and 327 residents. It forms “the complex” with Elrod and Duniway Halls. 125 write-ups.

- **Elrod Hall** is the male dormitory. It is attached to **Duniway Hall** which, for the 2001-2002 school year is all single rooms (no roommate). Each building is four stories. There are eight staff members total and 256 residents. 90 write-ups.

- **Jesse Hall** is structurally identical to Aber Hall. It also houses 384 residents and employs eleven staff members. 185 write-ups.

- **Knowles Hall** is four stories and contains the “substance free” and “honors college” living options. There are eight staff members and 268 residents. 29 write-ups.
Miller Hall employs ten staff members and houses 314 residents on its five levels. 87 write-ups.

Pantzer Hall is limited to upper-classman (over 30 credits) and offers four bedroom suites with semi-private baths and common living areas. There are six staff members and 199 residents on four stories. 6 write-ups.

Turner Hall is the female dormitory. It is four levels and houses 115 residents with six staff members. 3 write-ups.

Approximately 38% of the sample were nineteen and twenty-year olds, 50% were twenty-one through twenty-three years of age, and approximately 12% were twenty-four years or older. Employment length with Residence Life varied from as little as three months (Spring “new hire”) to four years. Three individuals, or 5.8% of the sample, were “new hires” while 42.3% of the sample were in their first full-year as a RA. Returning RAs comprised 51.9% of the staff: 26.9% in their second year and 25% in their third or fourth year.

Consistent with high employment standards, most (approximately 82%) RAs self reported a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher (on a 4.0 scale). RAs reported varying education levels beginning with sophomores through graduate and professional school: sophomores – approximately 31%, juniors – 25%, seniors – approximately 29%, and graduate and professional students (i.e. pharmacy and physical therapy) – approximately 15%.
RESULTS

Middle-Class Conservatism

Although this research does not attempt to distinguish between character traits that may draw an individual into an occupation and those that result from occupational socialization, the variable of “family income” is a pre-existing element unaffected by occupational socialization. Arguably, one’s political view is established independently from an occupation. When taken together, a composite measure of middle-class conservatism is valuable for evaluating the “types” of people in positions of authority.

Previous studies have concluded that, as a group, law enforcement officers are more conservative than the general public they serve (Niederhoffer 1967, Crank 1998, Klockars 1999, Walker 1999). Klockars (1999) defines conservatism as traditionalism stemming from defending the status quo. Crank (1998) views police as moral guardians of traditionalism. Niederhoffer (1967:110) notes that “political conservatism has been highly correlated with authoritarianism, and the police usually occupy the conservative band of the political spectrum”. Although the idea of an “authoritarian personality” is generally not supported by contemporary criminology research, Klockars (1999:392) maintains that, “those who are attracted to police work are reasonably likely to begin with a traditional political orientation”.

To determine if relative conservatism was applicable to the RA group, respondents were asked to describe their political views. The results are illustrated in Figure A.
The largest single bar represents those with "somewhat liberal" views. However, when compared to the student body population at The University of Montana, RAs were more likely to label themselves as conservative. Nearly 30% of RAs reported that they were "somewhat" or "very" conservative. Compared to a representative sample of UM students (McBroom et al., N=748), which found that approximately 17% of UM students were "conservative," the difference between conservatism in the RA subculture and in the student body they serve is meaningful.

Approximately 25% of RAs reported their views as "moderate" in contrast to approximately 40% of the campus. Liberal views were similar between the groups, with approximately 45% of the RAs (reporting "somewhat" or "very" liberal) and approximately 40% of the student body.

Research has shown police officers are drawn from the working-class, blue-collar segment, and middle-class of society (Niederhoffer 1967, Crank 1998, Walker 1999). One is challenged to discover a substantive definition of these
classes within the literature. Though not useful in this analysis of college students, Niederhoffer (1967:241) used the “extent of education” to divide persons into classes where, “two years of college education is established as a not very firm dividing line between working and middle class”.

A trend in law enforcement is an increase in the education level of police applicants. Better pay and job stability are attracting recruits from middle-class backgrounds. In an attempt to simplify analysis, family income level was used to measure the socio-economic status (class) of each RA. It was found that most RAs were socialized in, what this research defines as, “lower middle-class,” “middle-class,” and “upper middle-class” environments. As illustrated in Figure B, the extreme low and high ends of the income scale (under $20,000 and $90,000 and over) were occupied by 18.4% of the sample; leaving 81.6% in a middle-class range.

What have been described as middle-class norms and values are those attitudes and behaviors institutionalized within the middle-class life style, which
are attractive characteristics for one to possess, especially in a position of authority. These norms offer broad appeal to a greater number in society. Few are offended. They represent American traditionalism, or conventionalism.

Conventionalism is defined as "the rigid adherence to conventional middle-class values." Although the typical policeman has a working-class background, the occupational role requires that he display a middle-class behavior and ideology partially because he is supposed to keep the public conduct as nearly conventional as possible (Niederhoffer 1969:108).

The political view response and the family income scale add evidence to the parallelisms involved in law enforcement and Residence Life. Evidence of relative conservatism in these results supports the psychological model and the idea that certain personalities are drawn to authoritarian roles. Regardless of the timing of its development, the RA subculture at The University of Montana is predominantly middle-class and exhibits relative conservatism when compared to the student body.

Solidarity

Solidarity was measured on both the individual residence hall staff level and the campus-wide level (among all RAs). Factor analysis revealed a single component and reliability analysis produced high alphas for the staff and campus-wide scales, .8891 and .8858 respectively (Appendix 4). A summated average score was computed using the eight item adapted solidarity scale described in Chapter 6. This seven-point scale allowed the respondents to indicate their level of agreement with eight statements. A score of six indicated "very high" solidarity, five – "high," four – "moderately high," three – "neutral," two – "moderately low," one – "low," and zero indicated "very low" solidarity. The
values of each response were added together. The sum was divided by eight and rounded to the nearest whole number to produce the mean score for each RA. The same scoring continuum was used to assign labels to these summated means.

Figure C illustrates the mean scores for each element of entire solidarity, while Figure D contains the scores the same elements applied to staff solidarity. Using these charts, some interesting comparisons can be made.

Figure C: Elements Of Entire Solidarity

Figure D: Elements Of Staff Solidarity
Not surprisingly, the element with the highest mean for group and staff analysis concerned the amount of member interaction. Naturally higher for staffs because they live and work in the same space, the closeness established at RA camp also crosses campus and encourages interaction between staffs. The element with the lowest mean score for both group and staff closeness was the coworkers’ influence on one’s behavior (2.8 and 3.7 respectively). The element most similar at both levels of analysis was in response to the statement, “I like these people much more than most people I know.” Mean scores of 3.3 and 3.8 revealed that respondents tend to feel “neutral” to “moderately high” closeness with staff members and other RAs as compared to others.

Group means for the survey items ranged from 2.8 to 3.9, translating to slightly below “neutral” to near “moderately high” closeness when the elements are applied campus-wide. When asked to apply the same statements to staff members within their building, the scores were markedly higher. Means ranged from 3.7 to 5.2, indicating slightly below “moderately high” to slightly above “high” levels of solidarity.

Factor analysis showed, as in Wheeless’ testing, the elements to be one component - solidarity. The distribution of solidarity scores from low (1.0) to “very high” (6.0) is illustrated in Figures E and F. Note that there were no respondents with a solidarity score of zero (which would be “very low”), yet there was one RA with a group score of 6.0 and eight RAs with staff scores of 6.0.
The mean level of esolid (campus-wide solidarity) was 3.5 (neutral/moderately high) and the mean level of ssolid (in-building staff solidarity) was 4.6 (moderately high/high). The distribution of campus-wide solidarity was relatively normal, while staff solidarity was negatively skewed. This indicated that, in general, RAs expressed higher solidarity with their staff than with other buildings.
By Current Dorm Assignment

Though not statistically significant, each staff's level of staff solidarity in relation to their campus-wide solidarity is interesting. Figure G shows Knowles, Miller, Pantzer, and Turner staffs had little difference (1.0 or less) in the group mean scores of their staff and campus-wide (entire) solidarity. These dorms also had the four lowest discipline numbers for Fall 2001 as reported by the Residence Life Office.

Figure G: Solidarity By Staff

![Graph showing solidarity by staff](Image)

Figure H shows greater differences, larger than 1.0, between the group levels of staff and campus-wide solidarity assigned by RAs from Aber, Craig, Elrod/Duniway, and Jesse. Incidentally, these dorms all had ninety or more write-ups during Fall 2001.
The staff expressing the highest campus-wide solidarity was Pantzer (4.7) and the staff with the lowest was Elrod/Duniway (2.3). Staff solidarity was highest in Pantzer and Knowles (5.0) and lowest in Turner (3.3). The largest difference between mean levels of solidarity was found in Craig ($SSolid - ESolid = 1.9$). Turner RAs averaged the same level for campus-wide and staff solidarity, indicating closeness was not reserved for teammates.

**Isolation**

Nine survey items were used to measure physical and emotional elements of isolation between RAs and residents. RAs were asked to indicate how often they engaged in divisive behaviors and how often they felt separated from others. Continual isolating behaviors or thoughts were assigned a value of four while the scale allowed for variation down to complete absence of the behaviors or feelings which was assigned a value of zero. The coding scale was reversed for statements that reflected integration of the RAs and residents. As the mid-point of the scale, two always signified "sometimes." When coded to levels of
isolation, zero = “very low,” one = “low,” two = “moderate,” three = “high,” and four = “very high.” Table 2 contains the mean scores for the nine items used to measure the prevalence of isolatory behaviors and emotive factors of isolation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements of Isolation</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Isolation (Authority)</td>
<td>2.31</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isolation (Viewed)</td>
<td>1.78</td>
<td>.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isolation (Get Away)</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isolation (Same)</td>
<td>1.49</td>
<td>1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isolation (Hang Out)</td>
<td>2.16</td>
<td>.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isolation (Better)</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td>.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isolation (Fit In)</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isolation (Associate)</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isolation (Separate)</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>.90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The highest mean (2.59) was in response to the statement, “During my personal time (nights out, etc.) I prefer to get away from my residents” (iso3). Other statements that had a mean of higher than 2.0 (moderate) were “I mainly associate with other RAs” (2.33), “Being an authority figure separates me from the residents” (2.31), and “I hang out with residents at least as much as I do with other people” (2.16). The lowest mean (1.45) was for, “Generally, I choose to separate myself from my residents to make my job easier.”

Although the items produced a poor alpha in reliability analysis for an isolation construct, a six-item isolation construct (excluding iso2, iso4, and iso6) produced a higher, yet questionable, alpha of .6429 (Appendix 4) and was included in the analysis to offer another illustration of the data.
Table 3. Isolation Construct

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>low</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>15.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>moderate</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>55.8</td>
<td>56.9</td>
<td>72.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>high</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>98.1</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>System</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The mean score of the isolation construct was 2.12, slightly above "moderate," with a standard deviation of .65. None of the respondents scored at either end of the continuum, leaving the measurements of RA isolation in the low, moderate, and high categories.

Cynicism

Cynicism was explored using six items that asked for the respondent's opinion of residents, training, write-ups, RA perception, and supervisors. Responses were coded in accordance with Niederhoffer's analysis. Cynicism was ranked as high, medium, and low and assigned scores of 5, 3, and 1 respectively. Table 4 contains the means and standard deviations of the items that measured the various types of cynicism.

Table 4. Forms And Levels Of Cynicism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cynicism of Supervisors</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cynicism of Residents1</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>2.31</td>
<td>1.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cynicism of Residents2</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>1.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cynicism of Training</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>1.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cynicism of Discipline</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>1.68</td>
<td>1.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cynicism of RA Perception</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>1.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid N (listwise)</td>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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The highest cynicism was directed at the RA's perception of human behavior (2.63), followed by training (2.53), residents (2.35/2.31), write-ups (1.68), and supervisors (1.47). Using Niederhoffer's criteria, RAs would not be considered cynical, as none of the elements measured here have a mean of 3.0 or higher.

**Role Conflict**

Nine items were used to measure individual elements of role conflict. The questions concerned feelings, beliefs, and actions involved with being a RA. Topics were extracted from ideas expressed in dramaturgical sociology (front stage and back stage behavior, escaping the role, and balancing roles) and in police subculture literature (hypocritical self, comfort in enforcing, and playing an essential role in society).

Each response was assigned a value of 0 to 4. Zero indicated the absence of behaviors or beliefs linked to role conflict in a position of authority, leading to "very low" levels of role conflict. While a value of four indicated thoughts or actions contradictory to the establishment, or the presence of distinct front stage and back stage behaviors, symbolizing "very high" levels of role conflict. Two, as the midpoint of the scale, always indicated that the thought existed, or the behavior was engaged in, "sometimes," leading to a "moderate" score.
The only statement with a mean higher than 2.0 (moderate) was "I have a place to go to regularly to escape 'being the RA'" (2.3). This item was coded so that the response of "no, never" received a score of zero and "yes, all the time" was four. It was scored in this direction to indicate that those who separated themselves more often were likely to have defined front stage and back stage roles that cause conflict in some individuals. The two items with means less than 1.0 (low) were, "The RA presence is essential to the peaceful functioning of the dorms" (.5) and, "I follow the rules that I enforce as a RA" (.8). RAs tended to believe that their position was essential "all of the time" or "usually" and claimed to "usually" follow the student conduct code.

These nine elements were used to form a role conflict construct variable with an acceptable alpha of .7515 (Appendix 4). Table 5 illustrates the distribution of scores from "very low" to "high." No scores were considered "very high."
This construct had a mean of 1.4, indicating the group level of role conflict was “low” to “moderate,” and a standard deviation of .61 denoted the variability between individuals was relatively small.

**DISCIPLINE EFFECT**

Discipline was measured by asking each RA to estimate the number of write-ups they had been involved in and also by using the statistics provided by the Residence Life Office for the amount of write-ups each staff/building had during the Fall 2001. Each test variable and element was tested for association with the two measures of discipline. Three variables were found to have a statistically significant correlation with self reported number of write-ups (See Appendix 4) -- esolid (entire solidarity), cynres1 (cynicism concerning the residents’ willingness to cooperate with RAs), and cyntrain (cynicism of training). Ordinal measures of association did not find statistically significant correlations, however, nominal measures provided some information.

Lambda ($\lambda$) was used as a measure of association because of its ability to provide a proportional reduction of error (PRE) value for the variables. The data was at ordinal level, not at an interval level, and lambda merely requires nominal

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>very low</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>low</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>54.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>moderate</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>36.5</td>
<td>39.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>high</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>92.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>System</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
data. The nature of an open-ended question of the number of write-ups led to 26 categories with values ranging from 0 to 300.

Using the number of write-ups to predict the amount of entire solidarity led to $\lambda = .618$, which translates to a 62% reduction of error in predicting entire solidarity level by knowing the amount of write-ups. Once again employing the number of write-ups as the independent variable, when measured against the level of cynicism concerning residents' willingness to cooperate with a RA, the PRE was 54%. Cynicism of training (cyntrain) supplied the highest proportional reduction of error. By knowing the number of write-ups, the number of errors in predicting the cynicism of training would decrease by 68%.

Though these lambda scores were significant, the information they provided was limited. Error in predicting one variable from another with 26 categories, as in the number of write-ups, is likely to be large and the resulting lambda significance should be viewed as a product of this situation. The correlation between discipline and the test variables dissolved when tested with more appropriate ordinal measures of association.

**DISCUSSION**

**Solidarity**

Results indicate that RAs feel more solidarity towards their own staff (in their building) than towards other RAs. This finding concurs with Goffman's idea that colleagues are allotted a certain amount of privileges, but are not made full members of the team. It also supports the conclusions of Wheeless that the
amount of interaction is positively correlated with the level of solidarity. Staff members within the same building have more sustained contact with one another than they do with members of other staffs. Sharing the common experiences, training, and title of RA leads to a certain amount of solidarity, however, continued interaction is key to strengthening closeness.

In this study, solidarity levels are not significantly correlated with age, gender, discipline numbers, or length of employment. The difference between each staffs' mean levels of staff and group solidarity (Figures G and H) is greater in the four residence halls that had ninety or more write-ups than it is in the four halls with less than ninety write-ups - a result not expected in this research.

The levels of solidarity measured by this survey are moderate to high. It was expected that they would be higher for both staff and campus-wide scores and that they would be more influenced by the discipline effect. Though entire solidarity is correlated with the number of write-ups, it may be partially influenced by the length of employment.

The use of modified questions adapted from Wheeless' solidarity scale is quite effective in measuring both dyadic and group levels of closeness. Successful factor analysis and strong reliability scores found in this study strengthen and support the use of this established instrument. Modified application of the scale is helpful in allowing it to encompass group solidarity as well as the closeness of two individuals. While decreasing the number of items allows for shortened survey times without losing strength in factor analysis and reliability testing.
Isolation

The low to moderate isolation scores for Resident Assistants are not consistent with the levels reflected in the police subculture. As mentioned before, it is likely that by living with subordinates and serving many roles concurrently, the RA is generally not allowed a large amount of physical separation from the residents, yet self-imposed isolation is still evident. At a minimum, RAs more than "sometimes" feel separated because of their position of authority (2.31) and more than "sometimes" prefer to get away from their residents during their nights out (2.59). Though they indicate that they more than "sometimes" hang out with residents at least as much as with other people (2.16), they also more than "sometimes" mainly associate with other RAs (2.33). The fact is RAs live with residents. They are not able to limit interaction nor do they normally have negative relationships with the people on their floor. Unlike police, normal interaction with residents is in a rather mundane and even friendly fashion.

Factor analysis of the nine items of isolation revealed four components. Yet, with the removal of three items, “On campus, I am looked at differently because of my RA status” (iso2), “RAs are basically the same as other college students” (iso4), and, “On campus, I am treated better because I am a Resident Assistant” (iso6), an interesting construct with at least questionable reliability is formed. Most of the items that remain in the construct are behavioral components such as getting away from residents, hanging out with residents, and mainly associating with other RAs. These are also the items that tend to
present the highest means in analysis. RAs are more likely to impose physical separation than to express emotional separation from the residents, except when admitting that being an authority figure separates (in whatever form the RA interprets) them from the residents.

Cynicism

The various cynicisms measured by this survey cover five areas included in Niederhoffer’s original research and in subsequent studies by researchers such as Regoli and Poole. Table 6 presents the scores produced by Niederhoffer’s police sample and control group, and Regoli and Poole’s police sample, as well as the mean scores of the RA sample for the adapted questions. When compared to the police scores, the levels of RA cynicism are generally less.

Table 6. Elements Of Cynicism: Sample Means Compared

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>Nied. Police</th>
<th></th>
<th>Nied. Police</th>
<th></th>
<th>Regoli &amp; Poole</th>
<th></th>
<th>Resident Assistants</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Score</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Score</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Score</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Score</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residents/Public Cooperation</td>
<td>2.74</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>2.31</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residents/Public Opinion</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>2.46</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write-Ups/Arrests</td>
<td>2.01</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>1.74</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>1.68</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perception of Human Behavior</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Score above 3 indicates cynicism

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The greatest observable difference in the results is in the level of cynicism directed at supervisors. Compared to a control group of cadets on their first day at the academy (Niederhoffer's police control group) and the police samples, the level expressed by RAs is surprisingly low (1.47). RAs generally feel their supervisors are very concerned about them. The levels of cynicism of arrests are akin to the cynicism of write-ups. It is relatively low for all samples. RA cynicism concerning residents' cooperation and their opinion of RAs is lower when compared to all groups within the police studies.

Though the highest mean score for the elements of cynicism expressed by RAs is for perception of human behavior, that score is significantly lower than that expressed by the other samples. The wording of this particular question is of concern to this researcher. Niederhoffer scored the response, [Resident Assistants] "have a peculiar view of human behavior because of the negative interactions they have every day" as five, indicating high cynicism. Arguably, this response does not necessarily have negative connotations when compared to the two other possible responses: [RAs] "understand human behavior as well as psychologists and sociologists because they get so much experience in real life" (1 = low cynicism) and [RAs] "have no more talent in understanding human behavior than any average person" (3 = moderate cynicism). Unlike other items, the response choices do not appear to follow the continuum of cynicism levels established by other questions. It appears to flow from lofty arrogance to average person to odd perception, none of which necessarily indicate cynicism.
One area where RAs tend to express levels of cynicism comparable to the police is in the effectiveness of training. Though still below moderate levels, the mean score for the RA sample (2.53) is importantly higher than that of the police control group (1.54). Interestingly, RAs score slightly higher than Regoli and Poole's police sample. Generally, RAs feel that training is not able to completely prepare them for the experiences they face in practice. As in police work, much of the job knowledge is gained through experience.

Niederhoffer, and Regoli and Poole, tested a twenty-item index and many of the elements in their studies that scored higher, and lower, are not included in this comparison. The respective ranks for the included variables in Niederhoffer's full analysis follow. In the control group: 8.5 (tie), 4, 5, 15, 17, 2 and in the police sample: 3, 16, 12, 15, 20, 11.

As Regoli and Poole found, the elements of cynicism reflected in Niederhoffer's scale are not a strong factor, nor do they create a strong alpha in reliability analysis. This shows that cynicism is not measurable as a unitary score, concurring with Regoli and Poole's conclusion. However, statements concerning public cooperation (cynres1), public opinion (cynres2), effectiveness of training (cyntrain), priorities of supervisors, and the motives for disciplinary action (cyndisp) are intuitively sound and provide interesting insight of the negative feelings that are commonly directed at these specific targets.

Role Conflict

Chapter Two identifies the presence of role conflict in the RA subculture. The elements, as developed from literature topics, show that the levels are
predominantly contained within the moderate to low range as measured in the survey. Though it is evident that RAs engage in distinct front stage and back stage behavior and separate themselves from residents at least "sometimes" (role2 = 1.9, role3 = 1.9, role4 = 2.3), they are "not usually" aggravated with being the authority (role1 = 1.2), nor do they usually feel discomfort with being the enforcer of the student conduct code (role6 = 1.0). In the police subculture role conflict is minimized by a belief that the function they are serving is essential to the peaceful functioning of society. Perhaps the same is true of the RA subculture where, illustrating an important part of the working personality, respondents indicate that the RA presence is essential "usually" to "all the time" (role9 = .5). Also minimizing role conflict is the self-reported law-abiding nature of RAs. By following the rules they enforce "usually" to "all the time" (role5 = .8), RAs avoid feelings of hypocrisy.

Additionally, Regoli and Poole (1979:43-44) indicate, "cynicism may predispose police to feelings of estrangement ... and therefore, exacerbate the effects of the role conflict inherent in the occupational demands of the job." As shown in the measurement of cynicism levels, RAs are not highly cynical. Minimizing this additive factor to role conflict allows the sample to avoid high role conflict scores as well.

The item with the highest mean is interesting. "I have a place I can go to regularly to escape 'being the RA'" is analogous to Goffman's concept of separation of the audience: This statement is scored with the idea that if one feels the need to "escape" they have front stage and back stage behaviors that
may cause role conflict. However, the otherwise low role conflict scores may show that this practice allows the RA to avoid seemingly behavioral contradictions (ie. Secret consumption) and eliminates much of the stress built up in the RA performance.

**Conclusions**

Several hypotheses are tested in this research. The following is a list of those hypotheses and the conclusions supported by the survey.

1. The test variables will be issues within the RA subculture – showing consistency with police subculture.
   - Some consistency is found in high solidarity, cynicism of training, and belief that the position is essential, while generally low role conflict is expressed.

2. Solidarity will have positive correlation with discipline experience and staff solidarity will be higher than entire solidarity.
   - *Solidarity* is not strongly correlated with discipline.
   - *Staff solidarity* is higher than entire solidarity.

3. Isolation and Cynicism directed at residents will be greatest for those individuals with higher discipline experience.
   - Neither is strongly correlated with discipline.

4. Overall isolation and cynicism will be less for RAs than for police.
   - Both variables and their component elements are lower for RAs than for police.
5. Role conflict will be apparent because of the shared working/living environment.
   
   ➢ The elements of role conflict are generally low.

6. RAs will exhibit middle-class conservatism consistent with police.
   
   ➢ Middle-class conservatism is apparent in the RA sample.

7. The longer the individual has been a RA, the higher their levels of solidarity, isolation, and cynicism, and the lower their level of role conflict.
   
   ➢ An increase in employment length did not significantly affect the test variables.

**FINAL THOUGHTS**

The RA population at The University of Montana is a subculture. As with police, the basis for distinction of the group is the occupational authority and responsibility they hold for others. The discipline role they hold is dependent upon the type of dorm assignment they receive. Some RAs may serve an entire year an never have a write-up, while others have ten within the week before classes. More importantly, RAs are a team. How this team develops and interacts influences the atmosphere of the residence hall.

Kimberly S. Bell (1998:27, 42, 102-103), a fellow RA, captures some comments of past RAs in her thesis, "Order and Anomie in University Dormitories":

It's like a family. They keep saying the staff is like a family. Families fight, families argue…
Common goals: It's just a necessity and both parties have to be receptive to finding common goals.

...Supervisors must reach agreement on rule enforcement to ensure dorm order and a sense of community for the residents. Running an orderly dorm is based on the ability of the supervisors to provide leadership and consistent rule enforcement for the dorm population.

This relationship also serves to socialize students into the working personality of a Resident Assistant. Additional sentiments expressing this study's themes of authority, role conflict, and solidarity are found in RA statements recorded by Bell. The sample of RAs discuss how "at times, it is difficult to be in a position of authority when surrounded by peers" (Bell 1998:51).

Additionally, the stress of holding various roles in the dorm is evident. One supervisory staff member states:

When you're put in a position like this, I think, you know, you're required to do so many different little things within the dorm to help everything run so smoothly. You know, you have to be the leader, you have to be – you have to be the friend to the RA to hopefully help them out in situations. You have to be the advisor, the counselor. ... Someone who can't be flexible enough to do that shouldn't be in this position (Bell 1998:51).

This statement, by an Assistant Head Resident, reflects the extent to which the job can assimilate with ones personal life, solidifying the staff relationship:

Mix it, mix it, because this part of my personal life is this job, you know. I get along with everybody here I think pretty well. And since I'm stuck in the building so much, I want – I'll have friends. I don't want to be stuck in the building by myself in my room all the time, so I hang out with them. It's like they do vice versa with everybody else around here. Everybody on staff hangs out, watching movies or something like that. It's part of my personal life (Bell 1998:52).
Holding disciplinary responsibility has not created isolated, cynical, and conflicted RAs. Some campuses do not include enforcement in the RA job description, perhaps fearing the effect on other relationships the RA needs to build and maintain in order to assist their residents. At The University of Montana, RAs are monitors, policemen, and enforcers, but they are also mentors, friends, and counselors. As Elizabeth A. Greenleaf (1974:185-186) writes,

A controversial issue in determining job responsibilities centers on the decision whether undergraduate staff should have a responsibility for student conduct. On too many campuses the undergraduate staff member is still seen as a monitor for quiet hours, as a policeman to enforce drinking and drug laws, and as a person responsible for the enforcement of campus and residence hall regulations. The opposite extreme exists on some campuses; the student assistant has no responsibility for holding students accountable. Somewhere in between must lie an answer...

Seldom does the undergraduate staff member bear the responsibility for determining disciplinary action.

Perhaps through a hierarchy of authority (RA – Head/Assistant Head Residents – Director/Assistant Director of Residence Life), merely by avoiding the strongest sanctioning responsibilities, the average RA at The University of Montana is able to avoid developing traits that the police are unable to forego.

It is evident that forces beyond authority are acting to solidify RA groups. Harrison M. Trice (1993) studies organizational behavior and believes that occupations can form powerful subcultures. Certain forces influence the development of occupational subcultures. Pervasiveness is one such factor. This “refers to the number of activities inside or outside the occupation for which the occupation sets the norms” (Trice 1993:33). RAs are role models for the
residents of their building. Any interaction a resident has with a person who is a RA, on or off campus, is a reflection on the RA because that is the role that the resident has come to know. The separation between work and non-work is eliminated for RAs by the additive condition of living with their co-workers. Therefore, working as an RA permeates all levels of life, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. If you are in the presence of a resident or a co-worker, you are identified as a RA.
APPENDIX 1

1. Describe your experience of the process (from the application process on) that brought this RA staff into being.

2. Why did you want this job? How did your expectations compare with the reality of the job?

3. What do you get out of being an RA?

4. In what ways do you feel you are a part of the greater dorm community? In what ways do you feel separated from that community?

5. If you feel that there are elements of the RA job that separate you from the average resident, what are those elements?

6. Describe the various “roles” you assume as an RA. How does each of these “roles” make you feel?

7. Describe, in detail, one positive and one negative encounter you have had with a resident (what happened, how did the resident react to you, how did you feel, etc.).

8. What do you feel is the major part of your job? What do you think that the residents see as your main job?

9. Generally, how do you feel about the students you supervise (your floor) and the residents of “X” Hall?

10. Describe your relationships with the other RAs in this building (do you socialize outside of the job, how well do you work with the others, etc.).

11. Do you feel it is important that an RA staff “bonds”? Why or why not? What does “bonding” mean to you? In what ways does this relationship help and in what ways does it hinder you in the job and in your personal life?
12. What do you see as **common** characteristics of the individuals on this staff? What are some of the **differences** and how do you react to those differences?

13. What do you see as **common** characteristics between the RAs and the residents? What are some of the **differences**?

14. How important is it to you that you can trust staff members to “back you up”? In what ways do you expect support from your staff members?

15. Do you believe that you would socialize with the individuals on this staff if you hadn’t been brought together in this job? Why or why not?

16. What are your concerns and suggestions relating to the RA position (selection, training, on the job, etc.) that RLO may be able to implement in future years to make your job better?
APPENDIX 2
SURVEY GREETING/QUANTITATIVE SURVEY

Spring Greetings!

The following survey is being presented to you as part of my data collection efforts for my Master's Degree Thesis. Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary and anonymous; individual surveys will be kept confidential and will only be analyzed as part of the dorm staff. Your choice to participate (or not) will not affect your job in any way.

Survey questions relate to your experiences and opinions concerning life as a Resident Assistant as well as your background. Results of this survey will be made available through my thesis in the Sociology Department at The University of Montana.

If you choose to participate, please complete the attached survey to the best of your ability and return it (via campus mail) in the envelope provided. I will need them returned to me by Monday, April 15, 2002.

Thank you in advance for your assistance. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns about the survey. In addition, you may attach a separate sheet of comments about any of the topics covered on this survey and any suggestions you may have concerning the RA job that can be passed on to RLO.

Angela Hultz, RA
456 Knowles Hall,
X5065
Please mark the appropriate box or write in the requested information about yourself.

Current dorm assignment (2001-2002)

☐ Aber  ☐ Craig  ☐ Elrod/Duniway  ☐ Jesse  ☐ Knowles  ☐ Miller  ☐ Pantzer  ☐ Turner

Length of employment

☐ Spring semester (2002) new hire  ☐ First-year, hired for Fall semester (2001)
☐ Second-year *  ☐ Third-year *  ☐ Fourth-year or longer *

*If you have worked for RLO for more than one year, what buildings have you worked in?

Estimated number of write-ups you have been directly involved in during all of your years working for RLO: __________

Are you currently a supervisor (Head or Assistant Head Resident)?

☐ Yes  ☐ No*

*If no, please circle your response in the following question:

The average Head/Assistant Head Resident is:

A. very interested in the welfare of his/her subordinates.
B. somewhat concerned about the welfare of his/her subordinates.
C. mostly concerned with his/her own problems.

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements concerning your relationship with members of the entire RA staff (all buildings) at The University of Montana.

These people have a great deal of influence over my behavior.

☐ Strongly Agree  ☐ Agree  ☐ Moderately Agree  ☐ Undecided  ☐ Moderately Disagree  ☐ Disagree  ☐ Strongly Disagree

I trust these people completely.

☐ Strongly Agree  ☐ Agree  ☐ Moderately Agree  ☐ Undecided  ☐ Moderately Disagree  ☐ Disagree  ☐ Strongly Disagree

We do not really understand each other.

☐ Strongly Agree  ☐ Agree  ☐ Moderately Agree  ☐ Undecided  ☐ Moderately Disagree  ☐ Disagree  ☐ Strongly Disagree

I like these people much more than most people I know.

☐ Strongly Agree  ☐ Agree  ☐ Moderately Agree  ☐ Undecided  ☐ Moderately Disagree  ☐ Disagree  ☐ Strongly Disagree

I seldom interact - communicate with these people.

☐ Strongly Agree  ☐ Agree  ☐ Moderately Agree  ☐ Undecided  ☐ Moderately Disagree  ☐ Disagree  ☐ Strongly Disagree

We do a lot of helpful things for each other.

☐ Strongly Agree  ☐ Agree  ☐ Moderately Agree  ☐ Undecided  ☐ Moderately Disagree  ☐ Disagree  ☐ Strongly Disagree

I have little in common with these people.

☐ Strongly Agree  ☐ Agree  ☐ Moderately Agree  ☐ Undecided  ☐ Moderately Disagree  ☐ Disagree  ☐ Strongly Disagree

I feel very close to these people.

☐ Strongly Agree  ☐ Agree  ☐ Moderately Agree  ☐ Undecided  ☐ Moderately Disagree  ☐ Disagree  ☐ Strongly Disagree
Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements concerning your relationship with your current building staff members.

These people have a great deal of influence over my behavior.
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Moderately Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Moderately Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

I trust these people completely.
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Moderately Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Moderately Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

We do not really understand each other.
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Moderately Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Moderately Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

I like these people much more than most people I know.
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Moderately Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Moderately Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

I seldom interact - communicate with these people.
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Moderately Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Moderately Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

We do a lot of helpful things for each other.
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Moderately Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Moderately Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

I have little in common with these people.
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Moderately Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Moderately Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

I feel very close to these people.
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Moderately Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Moderately Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

In the following, please circle the description that best represents your opinion of the people or thing.

Residents:
A. are eager to cooperate with RAs to help them perform their duty better.
B. usually have to be forced to cooperate with RAs.
C. are more apt to obstruct an RA's work if they can, than cooperate.

Residents:
A. show a lot of respect for RAs.
B. consider RAs average student workers.
C. consider RAs very low as far as prestige goes.

RA Training:
A. does a very fine job of preparing the new RA for life in the dorm.
B. cannot overcome the contradictions between theory and practice.
C. might as well be cut in half. The RA has to learn all over when he/she begins working in the dorm.

The average write-up is done because:
A. the RA is dedicated to perform his/her duty properly.
B. a complainant insisted on it.
C. the RA could not avoid it without getting into trouble.
Resident Assistants:

A. understand human behavior as well as psychologists and sociologists because they get so much experience in real life.

B. have no more talent in understanding human behavior than any average person.

C. have a peculiar view of human behavior because of the negative interactions they have every day.

Please mark the box that best represents your thoughts on the following statements.

Being an authority figure separates me from the residents.
□ Yes, all the time □ Yes, usually □ Sometimes □ No, not usually □ No, never

On campus, I am looked at differently because of my RA status.
□ Yes, all the time □ Yes, usually □ Sometimes □ No, not usually □ No, never

During my personal time (nights out, etc.) I prefer to get away from my residents.
□ Yes, all the time □ Yes, usually □ Sometimes □ No, not usually □ No, never

RAs are basically the same as other college students.
□ Yes, all the time □ Yes, usually □ Sometimes □ No, not usually □ No, never

I hang out with residents at least as much as I do with other people.
□ Yes, all the time □ Yes, usually □ Sometimes □ No, not usually □ No, never

On campus, I am treated better because I am a Resident Assistant.
□ Yes, all the time □ Yes, usually □ Sometimes □ No, not usually □ No, never

I feel that I really fit in with the people on my floor.
□ Yes, all the time □ Yes, usually □ Sometimes □ No, not usually □ No, never

I mainly associate with other RAs.
□ Yes, all the time □ Yes, usually □ Sometimes □ No, not usually □ No, never

Generally, I choose to separate myself from my residents to make my job easier.
□ Yes, all the time □ Yes, usually □ Sometimes □ No, not usually □ No, never

I am aggravated with being the authority.
□ Yes, all the time □ Yes, usually □ Sometimes □ No, not usually □ No, never

I act differently in front of residents than I do when I am hanging out with my friends.
□ Yes, all the time □ Yes, usually □ Sometimes □ No, not usually □ No, never
I feel that my residents know the “real me”.
□ Yes, all the time □ Yes, usually □ Sometimes □ No, not usually □ No, never

I have a place I can go to regularly to escape “being the RA”.
□ Yes, all the time □ Yes, usually □ Sometimes □ No, not usually □ No, never

I follow the rules that I enforce as a RA.
□ Yes, all the time □ Yes, usually □ Sometimes □ No, not usually □ No, never

I am comfortable being the enforcer of the student conduct code.
□ Yes, all the time □ Yes, usually □ Sometimes □ No, not usually □ No, never

I find it difficult to balance the role of an authority figure with other roles I fill as an RA.
□ Yes, all the time □ Yes, usually □ Sometimes □ No, not usually □ No, never

I feel bad when I write someone up.
□ Yes, all the time □ Yes, usually □ Sometimes □ No, not usually □ No, never

The RA presence is essential to the peaceful functioning of the dorms.
□ Yes, all the time □ Yes, usually □ Sometimes □ No, not usually □ No, never

Please mark the appropriate box or write in the requested information about yourself.

Sex
□ Male □ Female

Age, as of your last birthday: ________

Major: ______________________________________

Cumulative GPA: ________

Class Standing (mark only one, that which BEST represents your enrollment at The University of Montana and your college credits earned)
□ Graduate/Professional School □ Senior □ Junior □ Sophomore □ Other: ________

Mark the category that best represents the income (from all sources) of the family that you grew up in.
□ $0 - $19,999 □ $20,000 - $39,999 □ $40,000 - $59,999 □ $60,000 - $89,999 □ $90,000 +

Generally, how would you describe your political views?
□ Very Conservative □ Somewhat Conservative □ Moderate □ Somewhat Liberal □ Very Liberal
APPENDIX 3

RA SUBCULTURE: CODE BOOK
(Throughout “no data” is indicated by 99, 999)

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<tr>
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<td>employ</td>
<td>0=new hire, 1=first year, 2=second year, 3=third year, 4=fourth year or more</td>
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<td>othbuild</td>
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42  role9  NS
43  sex  0=female, 1=male
44  age  1=18/19, 2=20, 3=21, 4=22, 5=23, 6=24+
45  major  Verbatim
46  gpa  0=below 2.5, 1=2.50-2.74, 2=2.75-2.99, 3=3.0-3.24, 4=3.25-3.49, 5=3.5-3.74, 6=3.75-4.0
47  class  4=graduate/professional school, 3=senior, 2=junior, 1=sophomore, 0=other
48  income  0=$0-$19,999, 1=$20,000-$39,999, 2=$40,000-$59,999, 3=$60,000-$89,999, 4=$90,000+
49  politic  0=very conservative, 1=s/w conservative, 2=moderate, 3=s/w liberal, 4=very liberal

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APPENDIX 4
Factor Analysis, Reliability, Correlation

Entire Solidarity: Component Matrix

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Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
  a. 1 components extracted.

***** Method 1 (space saver) will be used for this analysis *****

RELIABILITY ANALYSIS - SCALE (ALPHA)

Item-total Statistics

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<td>64.0102</td>
<td>.6250</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.8767</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESOLID6</td>
<td>23.8654</td>
<td>65.3737</td>
<td>.7101</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.8660</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESOLID7</td>
<td>23.6346</td>
<td>68.9423</td>
<td>.5903</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.8778</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESOLID8</td>
<td>24.1154</td>
<td>61.0845</td>
<td>.7914</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.8566</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reliability Coefficients

N of Cases = 52.0
N of Items = 8
Alpha = .8858

98

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Staff Solidarity: Component Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Staff Influence</th>
<th>Staff Trust</th>
<th>Staff Not Understand</th>
<th>Staff Like</th>
<th>Staff Not Interact</th>
<th>Staff Helpful</th>
<th>Staff Little In Common</th>
<th>Staff Close</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>.542</td>
<td>.740</td>
<td>.812</td>
<td>.789</td>
<td>.730</td>
<td>.880</td>
<td>.778</td>
<td>.836</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

a. 1 components extracted.

***** Method 1 (space saver) will be used for this analysis *****

RELIABILITY ANALYSIS - SCALE (ALPHA)

Item-total Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Scale Mean if Item Deleted</th>
<th>Scale Variance if Item Deleted</th>
<th>Corrected Item-Deleted Correlation</th>
<th>Alpha if Item Deleted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SSOLID1</td>
<td>31.8824</td>
<td>49.0259</td>
<td>.4600</td>
<td>.9005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSOLID2</td>
<td>30.8431</td>
<td>49.5749</td>
<td>.6612</td>
<td>.8758</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSOLID3</td>
<td>31.0000</td>
<td>48.4800</td>
<td>.7102</td>
<td>.8712</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSOLID4</td>
<td>31.7451</td>
<td>44.6737</td>
<td>.7215</td>
<td>.8697</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSOLID5</td>
<td>30.3725</td>
<td>50.4784</td>
<td>.6193</td>
<td>.8795</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSOLID6</td>
<td>30.7451</td>
<td>49.2337</td>
<td>.8087</td>
<td>.8659</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSOLID7</td>
<td>31.3333</td>
<td>46.1467</td>
<td>.7014</td>
<td>.8714</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSOLID8</td>
<td>30.9216</td>
<td>47.2337</td>
<td>.7492</td>
<td>.8670</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reliability Coefficients

N of Cases = 51.0  N of Items = 8

Alpha = .8891

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### Isolation: Component Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Isolation (Authority)</th>
<th>Component 1</th>
<th>Component 2</th>
<th>Component 3</th>
<th>Component 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.601</td>
<td>.136</td>
<td>-.370</td>
<td>-.436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isolation (Viewed)</td>
<td>5.224E-02</td>
<td>.815</td>
<td>3.456E-03</td>
<td>-.287</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isolation (Get Away)</td>
<td>.573</td>
<td>.357</td>
<td>-.314</td>
<td>.413</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isolation (Same)</td>
<td>.228</td>
<td>-5.87E-02</td>
<td>.751</td>
<td>-7.86E-02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isolation (Hang Out)</td>
<td>.494</td>
<td>-.123</td>
<td>4.962E-02</td>
<td>.691</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isolation (Better)</td>
<td>-.174</td>
<td>.819</td>
<td>.252</td>
<td>.204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isolation (Fit In)</td>
<td>.644</td>
<td>-.115</td>
<td>-.348</td>
<td>-.163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isolation (Associate)</td>
<td>.590</td>
<td>-.122</td>
<td>.431</td>
<td>-.308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isolation (Separate)</td>
<td>.675</td>
<td>4.945E-02</td>
<td>.326</td>
<td>5.741E-02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
4 components extracted.

****** Method 1 (space saver) will be used for this analysis ******

### RELIABILITY ANALYSIS - SCALE (ALPHA)

**Item-total Statistics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale Mean if Item Deleted</th>
<th>Scale Variance if Item Deleted</th>
<th>Corrected Item-Total Correlation</th>
<th>Alpha if Item Deleted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IS01 14.9412</td>
<td>12.1365</td>
<td>.3043</td>
<td>.4925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IS02 15.4706</td>
<td>12.5741</td>
<td>.1527</td>
<td>.5327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IS03 14.6667</td>
<td>11.4267</td>
<td>.3783</td>
<td>.4669</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IS04 15.7647</td>
<td>11.9835</td>
<td>.1512</td>
<td>.5410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IS05 15.0980</td>
<td>11.8902</td>
<td>.2220</td>
<td>.5132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IS06 15.6471</td>
<td>13.3129</td>
<td>.0116</td>
<td>.5761</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IS07 15.7255</td>
<td>11.5231</td>
<td>.2707</td>
<td>.4971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IS08 14.9216</td>
<td>11.3937</td>
<td>.3140</td>
<td>.4830</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IS09 15.8039</td>
<td>10.8408</td>
<td>.4347</td>
<td>.4436</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Reliability Coefficients**

N of Cases = 51.0
N of Items = 9
Alpha = .5365
Isolation Construct: Component Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Isolation (Get Away)</td>
<td>.629</td>
<td>.487</td>
<td>.103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isolation (Hang Out)</td>
<td>.502</td>
<td>.329</td>
<td>.637</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isolation (Associate)</td>
<td>.555</td>
<td>-.679</td>
<td>6.265E-02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isolation (Separate)</td>
<td>.671</td>
<td>-.384</td>
<td>.296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isolation (Authority)</td>
<td>.617</td>
<td>-.452E-02</td>
<td>-.566</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isolation (Fit In)</td>
<td>.631</td>
<td>.303</td>
<td>-.426</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
3 components extracted.

****** Method 1 (space saver) will be used for this analysis ******

RELIABILITY ANALYSIS - SCALE (ALPHA)

Item-total Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Corrected</th>
<th>Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Variance</td>
<td>Item-</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deleted</td>
<td>Deleted</td>
<td>Correlation</td>
<td>Deleted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IS01</td>
<td>10.0588</td>
<td>8.0565</td>
<td>.3843</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IS03</td>
<td>9.7843</td>
<td>7.6525</td>
<td>.4053</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IS05</td>
<td>10.2157</td>
<td>7.7325</td>
<td>.2986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IS07</td>
<td>10.8431</td>
<td>7.2549</td>
<td>.3859</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IS08</td>
<td>10.0392</td>
<td>7.6384</td>
<td>.3291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IS09</td>
<td>10.9216</td>
<td>7.1937</td>
<td>.4534</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reliability Coefficients

N of Cases = 51.0
N of Items = 6

Alpha = .6429

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### Cynicism (except cynsup): Component Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Component 1</th>
<th>Component 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cynicism of Residents 1</td>
<td>.704</td>
<td>-.349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cynicism of Residents 2</td>
<td>.706</td>
<td>.384</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cynicism of Training</td>
<td>9.290E-02</td>
<td>-.685</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cynicism of Discipline</td>
<td>-.660</td>
<td>.203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cynicism of Co-workers</td>
<td>.240</td>
<td>.718</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.  
2 components extracted.

***** Method 1 (space saver) will be used for this analysis *****

### RELIABILITY ANALYSIS - SCALE (ALPHA)

#### Item-total Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Scale Mean Deleted</th>
<th>Scale Variance Deleted</th>
<th>Corrected Item-Total Correlation</th>
<th>Alpha if Item Deleted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CYNRES1</td>
<td>9.1818</td>
<td>6.9429</td>
<td>.0520</td>
<td>-.2046</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CYNRES2</td>
<td>9.2273</td>
<td>7.2960</td>
<td>.1123</td>
<td>-.2604</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CYNTRAIN</td>
<td>8.9545</td>
<td>7.5328</td>
<td>-.0557</td>
<td>-.0247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CYNDISP</td>
<td>9.9545</td>
<td>9.9514</td>
<td>-.2364</td>
<td>.1807</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CYNCOWO</td>
<td>8.6636</td>
<td>7.8879</td>
<td>.0006</td>
<td>-.1094</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Reliability Coefficients

- N of Cases = 44.0
- N of Items = 5
- Alpha = -.0825

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### Role Conflict: Component Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Role Conflict (Aggravated Authority)</td>
<td>.663</td>
<td>-.260</td>
<td>-.141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Conflict (Front Stage)</td>
<td>.570</td>
<td>.458</td>
<td>-.272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Conflict (Real Me)</td>
<td>.433</td>
<td>.616</td>
<td>-.428</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Conflict (Escape)</td>
<td>.334</td>
<td>.546</td>
<td>.694</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Conflict (Follow Rules)</td>
<td>.353</td>
<td>-.549</td>
<td>-.158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Conflict (Enforcement Comfort)</td>
<td>.869</td>
<td>-.198</td>
<td>-1.26E-02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Conflict (Difficult Balance)</td>
<td>.705</td>
<td>.225</td>
<td>4.606E-03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Conflict (Feel Bad)</td>
<td>.654</td>
<td>-.243</td>
<td>-6.10E-02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Conflict (Essential Job)</td>
<td>.627</td>
<td>-.274</td>
<td>.487</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

a. 3 components extracted.

***** Method 1 (space saver) will be used for this analysis *****

---

**RELIABILITY ANALYSIS - SCALE (ALPHA)**

### Item-total Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale Mean if Item Deleted</th>
<th>Scale Variance if Item Deleted</th>
<th>Corrected Item-Total Correlation</th>
<th>Alpha if Item Deleted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ROLE1</td>
<td>11.5208</td>
<td>18.2549</td>
<td>.4646</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROLE2</td>
<td>10.8125</td>
<td>17.0918</td>
<td>.4973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROLE3</td>
<td>10.8542</td>
<td>18.7655</td>
<td>.3288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROLE4</td>
<td>10.3958</td>
<td>19.4357</td>
<td>.2309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROLE5</td>
<td>11.9167</td>
<td>20.9291</td>
<td>.1866</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROLE6</td>
<td>11.7708</td>
<td>16.5208</td>
<td>.7258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROLE7</td>
<td>11.3750</td>
<td>17.6862</td>
<td>.5784</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROLE8</td>
<td>11.0000</td>
<td>17.7447</td>
<td>.4573</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROLE9</td>
<td>12.1875</td>
<td>19.4747</td>
<td>.4749</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reliability Coefficients

N of Cases = 48.0
N of Items = 9

Alpha = .7515

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### Entire Solidarity By Write-Ups: Directional Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Asymp. Std. Error</th>
<th>Approx. ( t )</th>
<th>Approx. Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nominal by Lambda</td>
<td>.338</td>
<td>.068</td>
<td>4.411</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entire Solidarity Scale</td>
<td>.618</td>
<td>.095</td>
<td>4.902</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write-Ups Dependent</td>
<td>.116</td>
<td>.073</td>
<td>1.542</td>
<td>.123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goodman and Kruskal tau</td>
<td>.587</td>
<td>.036</td>
<td></td>
<td>.088</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cynicism of Residents</td>
<td>.542</td>
<td>.102</td>
<td>1.311</td>
<td>.196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write-Ups Dependent</td>
<td>.119</td>
<td>.020</td>
<td></td>
<td>.077</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

c. Based on chi-square approximation.

### Entire Solidarity By Write-Ups: Symmetric Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Asymp. Std. Error</th>
<th>Approx. ( t )</th>
<th>Approx. Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ordinal by Gamma</td>
<td>.150</td>
<td>.107</td>
<td>1.394</td>
<td>.163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ordinal by Spearman Correlation</td>
<td>.163</td>
<td>.127</td>
<td>1.156</td>
<td>.253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interval by Pearson's R</td>
<td>.184</td>
<td>.102</td>
<td>1.311</td>
<td>.196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
<td>51</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

c. Based on normal approximation.

### Cynicism Of Residents 1 By Write-Ups: Directional Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Asymp. Std. Error</th>
<th>Approx. ( t )</th>
<th>Approx. Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nominal by Lambda</td>
<td>.209</td>
<td>.068</td>
<td>2.737</td>
<td>.006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cynicism of Residents</td>
<td>.542</td>
<td>.102</td>
<td>4.177</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write-Ups Dependent</td>
<td>.023</td>
<td>.083</td>
<td>.278</td>
<td>.781</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goodman and Kruskal tau</td>
<td>.567</td>
<td>.042</td>
<td></td>
<td>.238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cynicism of Residents</td>
<td>.567</td>
<td>.042</td>
<td></td>
<td>.238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write-Ups Dependent</td>
<td>.040</td>
<td>.009</td>
<td></td>
<td>.493</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

c. Based on chi-square approximation.

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### Cynicism Of Residents 1 By Write-Ups: Symmetric Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Asymp. Std. Error</th>
<th>Approx. $T$</th>
<th>Approx. Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ordinal by</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gamma</td>
<td>.329</td>
<td>.132</td>
<td>2.466</td>
<td>.014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ordinal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spearman Correlation</td>
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<td>.126</td>
<td>2.320</td>
<td>.025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interval by</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interval</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearson's R</td>
<td>.316</td>
<td>.138</td>
<td>2.333</td>
<td>.024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
<td>51</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.
b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.
c. Based on normal approximation.

### Cynicism Of Training By Write-Ups: Directional Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Asymp. Std. Error</th>
<th>Approx. $T$</th>
<th>Approx. Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nominal by</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lambda</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symmetric</td>
<td>.313</td>
<td>.062</td>
<td>4.143</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cynicism of Training Dependent</td>
<td>.680</td>
<td>.109</td>
<td>4.158</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>.073</td>
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<td>Goodman and Kruskal tau</td>
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<td>Cynicism of Training Dependent</td>
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<td>.032</td>
<td>.136</td>
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<tr>
<td>Write-Ups Dependent</td>
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<td>.009</td>
<td>.027</td>
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a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.
b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.
c. Based on chi-square approximation

### Cynicism Of Training By Write-Ups: Symmetric Measures

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<th>Value</th>
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<th>Approx. Sig</th>
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<td>Gamma</td>
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<td>Pearson's R</td>
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<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
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a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.
b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.
c. Based on normal approximation.
APPENDIX 5

Self Reflection

The background I have in both law enforcement and in the residence life system are substantial influences in both my choice of research topic and in my perspective of both as occupational subcultures of authority. My experiences proved to me, before undertaking this research, that there were manifest similarities between the subcultures. So, a little bit about the researcher...

I was introduced to law enforcement at a young age. My father was Chief of Police in a small Montana town and, following his retirement, my mother was a City Judge and Justice of the Peace. My godfather is a Montana Highway Patrolman. Without even realizing it, I was an observer of the police subculture from an early age. The insider view I received shaped my feelings about respect for authority. Perhaps it made me desire a position of authority.

At the time of this study I am a third year Resident Assistant in a predominantly freshman, co-educational residence hall (K-Town) at the University of Montana. Two years ago I was at a federal law enforcement training academy receiving instruction along with 40 or so other young men and women. While in each position of authority, I was aware of the importance of teambuilding and was both enticed and intrigued by the amount of camaraderie that evolved in the occupational socialization and working
environment of the positions. As a graduate student, these observations have provided me with an avenue of study.

As an immersed participant in the RA subculture, it was difficult to narrow the study to a workable amount of variables. Attempting to adapt what I knew as an insider into measurable variables proved challenging. Using the literature themes aided this process immensely. Though I am pleased with the content of this research, the lack of meaningful correlations between the variables is nagging. Reflecting on my years as a RA has allowed other areas for future study to come forth. The memories I have are predominantly of staff relationships. The informal socialization occurring in each residence hall varies depending on the leadership style, the personalities of staff members, and many other elements of interaction. Some RAs prefer to be on a tight-knit staff that engages in many activities together, while others would rather not socialize with their co-workers during their personal time. I have seen both types function well as RAs.

What I knew about staff relationships up to the time of this study was not something I measured empirically. However, it is important to note that the staff of K-town was generally a close group. We traveled together and stayed in cabins and hotels together for staff nights out. We worked cooperatively on programming, worked together to cover many additional desk hours, and adapted to the loss of a supervisory staff member. Though not everyone on the staff was compatible with everyone else, we generally bonded and were able to build friendship relationships that are lasting beyond
the scope of the job. Some staffs did not bond excessively, as reflected in some of their solidarity scores.

This research does not pass judgment on what is best for the residence hall, the RAs, or the residents. A staff with high solidarity could be viewed negatively, as an impenetrable clique that alienates residents. The Residence Life Office attempts to measure satisfaction of the residents and the RAs through evaluations. Perhaps if an empirical measure was also taken to get a feel for the subculture (such as the variables of this study and the staff interactions mentioned here), both at the campus level and at the dorm level, the affects of the subculture could be more defined and changes could be implemented that would benefit both the RAs and the residents.
REFERENCES


The University of Montana. 2000. _The Student Conduct Code_.


