Communication dialectics in a musical community: The anti-socialization of newcomers

Karen Louise Rohrbauck-Stout
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COMMUNICATION DIALECTICS

IN A MUSICAL COMMUNITY:

THE ANTI-SOCIALIZATION OF NEWCOMERS.

by

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B.A. the University of Puget Sound, 1992

presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Master of Arts

The University of Montana

1995

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August 30, 1995

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ABSTRACT

The Seattle music scene has become famous in the last five years due to the popularity of several bands whose roots are in the scene. The popularity of bands like Nirvana and Pearl Jam has brought many newcomers to the scene. With this popularity, many have not realized that the Seattle music scene has been a thriving speech community for almost 20 years. During the life span of this speech community, cultural symbols and codes have been developed. The rules and expectations of the community remained intact until worldwide fame made the scene attractive to outsiders. Many of these outsiders epitomized the values and characteristics that Seattle music members created their community in opposition to.

This community was studied using qualitative research methods. The purpose of this study was to determine how community members talk about their community and their relationship to it. From members’ talk it was evident that their talk consisted of dialectics. Dialectical relationship building research was used as a conceptual framework for data analysis. These dialectics were means to reconcile the introduction of newcomers and to assist members in helping their community adapt to change. The conceptual framework was tested and extended. One of the previously researched dialectics was not well supported in this data set, but a new category, supportive – unsupportive was identified and well supported.

It became apparent after data analysis that members were attempting to keep some newcomers from being socialized into the community. The data were compared to socialization research and a new concept is introduced, called anti-socialization. Anti-socialization can occur when a veteran of an organization does not wish for a newcomer to be socialized. The veteran can and will take steps to keep the newcomer from learning the rules of the community, building relationships, and learning implicit values of the speech community.
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Acknowledgments

This dedication will not be able to fully convey my gratitude to those who have helped me complete this work. No project is possible without the help of others and this project is no exception. They will never know what their assistance has meant to me. I cannot list everyone who has helped me with this project, but a few deserve special thanks.

I will never be able to repay Dr. Betsy Bach, my advisor and mentor, for her help. She offered her time, insights, and valuable critique as well as her continuing encouragement. In addition, I will always be grateful for her driving me to reach my potential. I also owe thanks to my committee members, Dr. Wes Shellen and Dr. Tobie Weist, for their guidance and instructive comments. They always presented helpful critique and intriguing insights that benefited this work and future projects to spring from it. Their ideas and suggestions were always helpful and my thesis is better for their presence on my committee.

I must acknowledge my gratitude and indebtedness to my informants. If I did not have their assistance, this project would be impossible. They donated their time and let me into their private worlds, for which I will always be thankful. They gave me so much of themselves for no compensation other than assisting another person, and being able to talk about a community that means so much to them. My hope is that I have conveyed their experiences appropriately and communicated the essence of their membership to the Seattle music scene.

Lastly, I need to thank my husband and family. If not for their encouragement, reassurance, and support, I could not have pursued this project. My parents’ optimism and my husband’s understanding made this project possible for me to accomplish. I also must thank my husband for his valuable insights and critiques. He patiently listened to my ideas and offered feedback, and for this, I will always be grateful.
CHAPTER 1

RATIONALE AND LITERATURE REVIEW

And while I still argue there isn’t a “Northwest sound” there is a community of musicians from the Northwest that make up the “scene.” And that community -- despite the inevitable turmoil caused when a handful became millionaires -- remains surprisingly cohesive and unified . . . There is strong local support for regional bands in the Northwest, both in the club scene and with indie labels and cheerleading local retail stores. The sign in Orpheum Records local section says “Today’s Zipgun is tomorrow’s Pearl Jam.” (Cross, C., 1994, p. 61)

The Seattle music scene is a speech community focused around the creation, promotion, and production of music known to most of the world as “grunge” rock. The people who comprise the speech community, which includes more than one type of music and many types of people, are investigated in this project. The speech community that makes up the Seattle music scene and community members’ use of communication patterns and behaviors are determined in order to understand how members reconcile their roles in a community that has been forced to adapt to change. The worldwide attention that has been paid to the Seattle music scene has impacted the community and how members within it communicate with each other. To study this speech community, methods that comprise the ethnography of communication are implemented as research tools and are discussed in this paper. These methods are implemented in order to determine how the community talks about itself. Research on relationship building, specifically dialectical contradictions, is used as a conceptual framework with which to examine community building and maintenance in light enormous change in the community.
The conceptual framework is tested and extended and the data are analyzed with the anti-socialization concept arising.

The literature and the theoretical grounding upon which this study is based is explicated, followed by a history of Seattle’s music in order to understand the culture of the music scene itself. The obstacles faced by the musicians in creating their music (which in many ways have become the defining features of the community) are expounded upon in the detailed history. The methodology implemented in this case study is examined in the third chapter, and includes discussion of the conceptual framework, data collection, and data analysis. The fourth chapter is an analysis of the data collected in light of the conceptual framework. The final chapter is a discussion of the findings, implications, and contributions of this project. This study is conducted in order to understand how members of a speech community that has gained national and worldwide attention talk about their community.

Understanding this community may also help explain the communication patterns in other communities. In addition, much may be learned from a community that has often been dismissed as “Generation X” or disregarded based solely on the type of music created by its members. In order to understand this speech community and learn from the people within it, the following research questions are posed:

RQ 1: What communication behaviors or patterns are evident in community members’ talk?

RQ 2: How do community members talk about their membership in the community?

RQ 3: How do members of the Seattle music scene talk about the changes the scene has undergone?

RQ 4: How does members’ talk contribute to or take away from community building?
RQ 5: How does members’ communication patterns model other communication patterns currently understood in communication theory?

Rationale

Studying Communication in a Community

The goal of ethnographic research is to continue building knowledge about communication in speech communities and cultures in order to better understand individual communication patterns and culture. This project was undertaken to build knowledge about a community of which little is known. Understanding the ways of speaking within a community obviously yields important information about the shared norms and values as demonstrated in communication codes. Also, the communication patterns within a specific community as well as the impact of these patterns on community building are demonstrated in this study. Similarly, communication plays a vital role in the changing of a culture. This study has been conducted in order to understand how the Seattle music members talk about themselves and their community. Examination of the Seattle music community is an exceptional opportunity for studying communication behaviors because of many changes it has seen.

Understanding Speech Communities

It is important to the study of communication that ethnographic studies of communities be conducted. Every community is unique, yet has characteristics that are similar to other communities. Studying various communities can assist researchers in studying one particular community. Saville-Troike (1982) argues that language and communication in different communities and societies “have patterns of their own that are
worthy of ethnographic description” (p. 1). These patterns are comparable to, and intersect with the “social organization” of other speech communities. While several researchers have examined communities based around music such as the Grateful Dead (Dollar, 1991; Lehman, 1994a, 1994b; Pearson, 1987) and punk rock (Fox, 1987), no studies in the communication field have yet explored patterns of talk within the Seattle music scene. Most well known music communities have been built or sustained by young adults; Deadheads, punk rock, rap, and hip-hop music. This mass-medium communicates different messages (e.g., social commentary, persona, sexuality) than other mediums, which may explain the draw to it for young people. Communities based around music are important for communication scholars to examine because the primary members of musical speech communities are teenagers and young adults. Therefore, these communities may be the first in which young people are socialized. Through identifying with a music culture, the young members may take the communication patterns they learn from their membership into their adult life.

Another means of understanding musical speech communities is to identify the different lifestyles associated with these communities. People associated with creating music often have a different lifestyle (e.g., non-conformist) than those in other types of communities. A lack of overt structure could affect the culture and communication patterns of speech community members. Music community members generally have no set work schedules and do quite a bit of traveling to play different venues and clubs. The transitory nature of this culture then impacts the cohesiveness of the community. The culture tends to be more ephemeral due to band membership and audience makeup since
bands frequently break up or are newly created, a process which can alienate audience members or attract a new and difference audience. In music cultures, the structured life of other communities is not necessarily in existence. There is not an established bar that a group consistently frequents (Philipsen, 1975), or a work place all members have in common (Pacanowsky, 1983). The creators of the music are often employed in non-music related day jobs that bring them money to fund their musical endeavors. Other membership roles are also necessary to make the community successful. Roles such as journalists, photographers, and bar owners/managers are necessary to sustain the community. The nature of a musical speech community is further differentiated from other speech communities because many different roles are required to keep the community intact.

**Communication During Community Building**

It is important to identify what communication practices occur during community building, maintenance, or change. Several researchers, such as Baxter and her colleagues (Baxter, 1988, 1990, 1994; Baxter & Goldsmith, 1990; Baxter & Simon, 1993; Baxter & Wilmot, 1983; Goldsmith, 1990) have examined patterns of talk during relationship building. They have focused specifically on the use of dialectical contradictions. They have researched the existence and impact of dialectical contradictions in romantic relationship building. There are, however, many opportunities to study communication that works to build a relationship between an individual and the community of which they wish to be a part. Communication patterns such as dialectical contradictions during relationship building could be a product of the culture with which a person identifies
him/herself. In other words, a person may learn relationship building communication behaviors through his/her culture or community membership. Examining relationship maintenance or change is important because individuals spend a great deal of time doing just that. More time is spent maintaining current relationships than trying to build new ones. Once a relationship with or membership to a community is initially built, work on that relationship must continue to maintain its stability. As each community member works to maintain stability between him or herself and the community, possibly through the use of dialectics, the community itself will be more stable. In other words, each community is really a collection of relationships between individuals and the community itself.

The Seattle music scene is in, and has been in, great flux over the last five years with the worldwide attention it has been given. In addition, the Seattle music scene yields a unique opportunity to examine a community that has gained worldwide notoriety. This attention has brought unforeseen circumstances that would make community maintenance difficult. Some of these unforeseen circumstances include the addition of an unknown number of people to the Seattle music community as well as millions of album purchases and concert goers. In just the Pacific Northwest, the community has gone from approximately one thousand members to an unknown number (Humphrey, 1995). It is most likely that these new community members are in the relationship building phase or just starting to stabilize their individual relationships with the community itself (if they are accepted into the community). This also puts previous members in a precarious position; they are no longer entirely in control of the community they created. In addition, many
new members are very different from the veteran members and may not understand the meaning behind the music or the shared group codes and norms. This may destabilize older members’ relationships with the community and make maintenance more difficult. They then must decide whether they wish to withstand the change and stay in the community or whether they wish to leave the community. The changes experienced by members of this community make it an excellent opportunity for study and for researchers to learn how these individuals withstand such upheaval and continue to communicate toward community stability.

The Impact of Communication on Culture

Since people create culture (Schneider, 1976) with communication patterns, those patterns can be altered and may change the culture. In other words, there is a cyclical nature to communication and culture; both are changed as a result of and change each other concurrently. Baxter and Goldsmith (1990) argue that it is through members’ own communication patterns and behaviors that they “construct and enact the social order and meanings of their culture” (p. 378). They argue that communication creates the rules and norms for a culture as well as the shared meanings that make a group of people a culture. Through communication individuals build relationships and through those relationships a community can then be built. Relationship and community building are impossible without communication between people. A relationship can be built between two people through communicating and finding similarities that can draw the two together. Those two can then actively seek out others with the same interests that can contribute new ideas. With the addition of new people and the relationships among them, a community is built. It is
also important to examine the maintenance of a community via communication patterns set
within a small sub-culture of the United States (Baxter & Goldsmith, 1990); there may be
interesting similarities or differences within this study that could shed light on the larger
culture United States.

Conceptual Framework

The theoretical and methodological basis for this case study is the ethnography of
communication. Ethnography of communication studies are useful in examining
communication patterns and norms and the influence of such behavior upon the culture of
a speech community. In this section, a definition and discussion of the ethnography of
communication, community building, and dialectics in relationship building and
maintenance are given.

Ethnography of Communication

Generalizing & Particularizing

Saville-Troike (1982) identifies the two foci of the ethnography of communication;
particularizing and generalizing. Communication ethnographies focus on the speech
community, explicated by Carbaugh’s (1988) discussion of the fundamental qualities of a
“culture” or speech community. Carbaugh argues that the patterns of symbolic action and
meaning must be “felt deeply,” must be understandable or commonly intelligible, and
widely accessible to those in the community. In other words, for a pattern to hold
meaning for speech community members, the communication pattern must be significant
and important and they must understand its significance. It is imperative that all members
be able to view or witness the pattern of communication. If many individuals have
similarly deep feelings for a symbolic action, all understand its significance, and the action is accessible for all individuals in the group, then that group of individuals comprise a speech community.

Romaine’s (1982) extensive discussion of previous definitions and conceptualizations of the term “speech community” helps her identify a clear definition of the term and questions that are still raised by the term. She identifies a speech community as a group of speakers who share a common set of rules and norms for language use. In other words, all of those belonging to a speech community would all be able to recognize the norms and rules that are common to their language use within the community and be able to use them adeptly. Romaine disagrees with previous research and argues that while speech community members can identify and share the norms and rules for language use, it is possible, and not necessarily contradictory, for them to use language in different ways. She argues that while individuals may be able to identify the shared rules for language within their communities, individuals may choose to use language in different ways, or may choose to incorporate or not incorporate those rules into their language repertoire. At the same time, however, community members can still recognize the language rules and not be able to fully abide by those rules. Recognition of the shared norms and rules then is key to identifying a speech community.

Determining whether a group of people construct a speech community is difficult; the concept works best when thought of as a continuum of being more or less of a speech community. A defining feature of a speech community is the common language and shared meaning. An ethnographer, using the ethnography of communication, will attempt
to understand the culture more fully by examining the common language and patterns which create the shared meaning. Within that community, the researcher attempts to examine a small pattern of talk or communicative behaviors that are indicative of the community.

The point of an ethnographic case study is to examine one small instance of an event and understand it thoroughly rather than attempting to understand a community via a cursory perusal. The researcher’s creation of “thick description” (Geertz, 1973) of a particular instance can clearly reveal how members of a culture learn to communicate, and the rules they create and follow with their communication patterns.

The communication ethnographer can then make an in-depth analysis of communication patterns in a speech community and examine other communities for such behavior. The researcher can generalize her findings to other communities enough to discern similar patterns or to some extent compare the communities. The findings can never be thoroughly compared and generalized due to extreme differences between speech communities. However, hypotheses can be derived from a case study and applied to other communities to examine the existence of similar communication behavior across cultures. The primary goal of ethnographic research is to learn what community members need to learn to be normally functioning and active members of the community. While the outcome of learning the shared codes and values may be different, it is possible that the patterns of learning the behaviors may transcend several very different communities.
Culture

Philipsen (1992) defines culture as constructed socially and transmitted over time as patterns of symbols, meanings, premises, and rules. The culture of a speech community could be defined as a meaningful system of symbols and social action (Schneider, 1976), and the study of culture to be an interpretive search of meaning (Geertz, 1973). It is through speech community members’ use of communication patterns that they can create and “enact the social order and meanings of their culture” (Baxter & Goldsmith, 1990, p. 378). As identified in the next chapter on the Seattle music scene, “culture is man’s [sic] adaptation to nature,” and nature itself exists through the creation of man (Schneider, 1976).

Schneider (1976) identifies two functions of culture within a speech community; integrative and generative functions. The integrative function is designed to maintain the culture through placing disparate parts into a meaningful whole. In other words, relating the meanings of all the system’s parts to each other can help maintain the culture. Culture is created from all of the codes and functions of talk being meaningful only in relation to all other parts of the system. The generative function assists members in adapting to change within the community which makes it easier for them to maintain stability. New roles cannot be created without some basis of comparison. These roles are created from “previous conditions;” they are created from prior roles and meanings that have been developed within the culture.

Cultural symbols are additionally important to the ethnography of communication. Qualitative and ethnographic methods enable the researcher to understand the shared
meanings that are indicative of the languages within speech communities. It is through cultural symbols that natives make meaning of their world. A researcher can better understand a culture by understanding the cultural symbols. Many cultural symbols and meanings extend beyond the speech community to pervade each speech community within a society (Geertz, 1973; Schneider, 1976). If a researcher can then understand these cultural symbols within one speech community, she may then be able to understand the larger society. Understanding one community's view of the world can assist researchers in their understanding of other communities better.

Researchers using qualitative and ethnographic methods are able to examine the essence of culture. This is essential in understanding the atmosphere in which communication takes place. By definition, qualitative methods can examine the intricacies of the culture and identify the culture itself. The intricacies of the culture can be discovered through methods such as extended time in the field conducting participant/observation, interviews, learning shared norms and values, and familiarizing oneself with the culture. Quantitative methods cannot be used to do this. In order to understand culture, members should be queried about life in the speech community, and observed in the enactment of everyday life. Little is known about the Seattle music culture academically, which means that researchers know little about the communication patterns of young adults and teens that are associated with “grunge” or alternative rock culture. Speech community members may also be unaware of their communication behavior, so using exploratory, observation based qualitative methods are best suited for attempting to identify and understand those behaviors. Observing everyday life in the
culture and acting as a participant is very effective in identifying communication patterns. Most importantly however, is the knowledge about the culture that can be gained from ethnographic or qualitative methods.

In culture studies such as this, it is important to recognize the value of qualitative methodologies such as the ethnography of communication. Basically, culture studies can be used to examine why certain norms, values, codes or behaviors are important to a community. Researchers can study communication as situated accomplishment with ethnographic methods (Stewart & Philipsen, 1985). The important benefit derived from ethnography is examining how meaning is socially constructed for members of a culture that can be carried with them outside the social network. It can also inform their talk with others. The ethnography of communication has been developed to include the necessary tools with which to discover culture and its manifestation in our talk.

**Community Building**

The overall purpose of human communication is--or should be--reconciliation . . .

In the process of community-building, for instance, individual differences must first be allowed to surface and be fought over so that the group can ultimately learn to accept, celebrate, and thereby transcend them. (Peck, 1987, p. 257)

Edwards and Jones (1976) define community as a group whose culture has distinctive characteristics yet is similar to the larger society of which they are also a part. These distinctive features arise from the geographic and demographic features and the group’s “unique cultural heritage” (p. 12). Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, and Tipton (1985) are more specific in their definition of community. They define it as a group of people that are socially interdependent, work together to make decisions, and share
“certain practices that both define the community and are nurtured by it” (p. 333). They also note that it is defined both by its past and the memory of its past.

Members’ sense of belonging will vary and some may feel alienated during periods of membership. Anderson (1993) discusses the ties that bring a collection of people together; awareness of a problem or goal that the group believes can be achieved through establishing objectives. According to Bell and Newby (1971), it is important that this group of people be relatively homogenous so that roles do not conflict or cause “human relations to lose their intimacy” (p. 24). Volunteer association is characterized by participants volunteering their services, often with personal sacrifice, to a common goal “without necessarily any expectation of return other than personal satisfaction for having contributed” (MacCallum, 1970, p. 80). These occur spontaneously and without explicit bonds between people.

Communication plays an important role in community building, for it is through communication that individuals can work together, negotiate, and join together to form a community. Whenever people with diverse backgrounds decide to build or create a community, however, there are going to be disagreements with its construction, purpose, and outcome. If the community continues to grow, those that founded it will no longer be able to control that community and may feel that it needs to change. Again, communication could instigate that change. The community members of the Seattle music scene may be creating dialectics in their talk to maintain the community of which they are a part. Bell and Newby (1971) argue that a community can take on a life of its own, including an entire life cycle with growth, youth, maturity and senescence stages. That
entity will become self-sufficient. However, creators (the initial members of the community) may begin to feel out of control and need to regain it for themselves at least, through their use of dialectics.

The history of the Seattle music scene is discussed in Chapter Two. To establish that the Seattle music scene is a community, a discussion of the history of the scene is given, especially focusing on aspects of the scene that meet definitions, criteria, and characteristics of community building theory.

**Dialectics**

Contradictory feelings about being a part of a relationship are natural to the relationship building process. An integral aspect of relationship building is going through phases of certainty and uncertainty. As a relational partner experiences a dialectic, s/he resolves it over time and moves beyond that particular dialectic to another. The term dialectic implies contradiction and change. A dialectic is present when a person expresses feelings or statements that are contradictory. The contradiction is resolved by the person over time, resulting in the achievement of synthesis. Synthesis is integral to dialectics.

With each dialectic, the “details” are “worked out” (Goldsmith, 1990, p. 540) and the individual is able to achieve a synthesis and move to the next level of dialectic.

Homeostasis is not natural for relationships, nor desirable (Altman, Vinsel, & Brown, 1981; Dell & Goolishian, 1981).

Goldsmith (1990) defines dialectical contradictions as “underlying opposing tendencies” (p. 538). These opposing tendencies “mutually exclude and simultaneously presuppose one another” (p. 538). A contradiction occurs whenever “two tendencies or forces are interdependent... yet mutually negate one another” (Baxter, 1990, p. 70). In other words, people create dialectical statements about the relationship and their role within it that are both positive and negative. These statements negate the opposing statements and at the same time presuppose those statements. “I love spending time with him, but I’m feeling suffocated because I never get any time alone or to be with friends” reflects a dialectical contradiction because the partner is expressing two opposed feelings regarding being in relation with the other. Baxter and others (Baxter, 1988, 1990, 1994; Baxter & Goldsmith, 1990; Baxter & Simon, 1993; Baxter & Wilmot, 1983; Goldsmith, 1990) use the terms dialectic and contradiction together and interchangeably. In the analysis of this study, however, only the term dialectic will be invoked. The connotation of synthesis in the term “dialectic” is important to the community building and change in this study, thus the distinction. The term contradiction does not inherently connote synthesis.

Dialectics can be viewed as a continuum between two polar opposites. “The two poles of a given continuum are in constant motion with respect to one another at the experiential level” (Baxter & Simon, 1993, p. 228). Temporary periods of equilibrium between the poles of a dialectic or disequilibrium in which the two poles struggle for dominance (Comforth, 1968). Baxter (1988) examines dialectical contradictions in relationships and finds three pairs of contradictions that move along this continuum:

Autonomy - Connection - Too much connection destroys the relationship because the individual entities become lost, while being in a relationship requires each to sacrifice
individual independence. Connections with others are necessary to identity formation and maintenance.

**Openness - Closedness** - Open disclosure between relational parties is a necessary condition for intimacy; however, openness creates vulnerabilities for self, other and the relationship that necessitate information closedness.

**Predictability - Novelty** - Excessively predictable interaction and repetition can cause emotional deadening. Too much novelty creates high levels of uncertainty and distress to a relationship.

Relational members are generally unaware of the existence of these dialectics in their talk. However, dialectics serve a purpose for the individual and the relationship. The autonomy - connection contradiction encompasses relational partners' feelings about being too connected or too removed from the other. Partners can feel they are spending too much time together and need more time alone, indicative of their feeling too far on the connection side of the continuum. The openness - closedness dialectic is used when a partner is talking about the amount and type of communication that occurs (or does not) between partners. Generally the person is commenting on whether s/he needs to talk about the relationship more or less. Lastly, predictability - novelty are discussed by partners when referring to the relationship stagnating or remaining new and exciting. A partner or the relationship may become too predictable and thus too boring for the other. The best situation would be a balance of certainty and novelty to keep the other interested. Over time, relational partners can move along the three continua without severely damaging the relationship. A partner could move toward one end of the predictability - novelty continuum and within several weeks or months move toward the other end. A relationship will remain most stable with movement back and forth along the continuum as long as the movement averages toward equilibrium.
A delicate balance is required between these dialectics to keep a relationship from disintegrating. If one of the two poles on the dialectic continuum becomes too dominant, the relationship may dissolve. In other words, if a relational partner feels too autonomous, she may want to spend more time with her partner and rebuild the connection or decide to leave the relationship. On the other hand, if the couple is too connected (e.g., not spending time with friends or time apart), a partner may feel stifled and as if she has lost her sense of self. A relationship will go through fluctuations between the dialectical contradictions naturally, however, significant changes will occur when “new modes of interaction, new areas of interaction, or new bases to a relationship” occur (Altman, et al., 1981, p. 123).

These dialectics are natural in any relationship and generally occur during the relationship building phase. Baxter (1990) found that all three types of dialectical contradictions are not found throughout the entire building phase. She found that the openness - closedness dialectic was most likely to occur in the initial stages of relationship development, while predictability - novelty and autonomy - connection occurred more often in later stages of development. Slightly lower occurrences of dialectical contradictions occurred in later stages of relationship development. Baxter (1990) also argues that strategies are employed by relational partners that enhance the dialectic to improve or maintain the relationship. In other words, a partner may have different strategies to gain some autonomy back into the relationship if the partners have been too close. Based on these findings, Baxter and Simon (1993) studied perceptions of dialectical contradictions and satisfaction in relationships. They studied the effectiveness
of three strategies, avoidance, romance, and contact, on returning the relationship to dialectical equilibrium. In doing this, they focused on partners’ perceptions of effectiveness. They found that certain strategies were more effective for certain dialectical opposites. For example, partners perceived romance strategies as the most effective when the relationship had become too predictable.

Summary

Ethnography of communication methods are the best methods to be employed in this study for examining the use of dialectics in community building and maintenance in the culture of the Seattle music scene. Qualitative methods can be employed by a researcher to discover the ineffable qualities of culture, and these methods are particularly useful when little is known about culture. Communication patterns in community building are important to study and recognize for it is through communication between people that communities are built. Communication builds both relationships and communities, so it is understandable that thoroughly studied relationship building communication patterns would be applicable to the community building of a speech community.

Research on community building helps establish a link between relationships and community. Both are useful to help inform the data gathered in this study on how relationships are built between community members and the community itself. Community building research is used to assist in defining the Seattle music scene community as a recognizable community and in addition, assist in recognizing community stabilization and change. Dialectics are used to show how those community members communicate and identify patterns of talk specific to their community.
CHAPTER 2
HISTORY OF THE SEATTLE MUSIC SCENE

The history of Seattle and its music is explored in an attempt to provide a background that will make the more current happenings (events, etc.) understandable as well as this thesis and its findings. The chapter is divided into three sections; the early history of the music scene in Seattle from about 1960 to 1980 with a brief look at Seattle before 1960, the early 1980s until about 1989, and from 1989 to the present. A native term dictionary can be found in Appendix C to assist in understanding the terms used in this chapter.

In this chapter, the larger community’s disregard for the music created by the fledgling music scene is discussed. The terms “Seattle music scene” or “music scene” are used to refer specifically to people that make up the culture examined in this study. Over time, the music scene has changed, and the reader needs to recognize this change. The changes in the social group are explicated below.

Seattle music was not readily available to listen to or created by a cohesive group of musicians until the late 1970s. During this period, very little was going on musically in Seattle. In the early 1980s, the music scene began to develop into a group of people who worked to produce, promote, and create music for local audiences. Members of the scene played many dual roles, especially that of band member and audience member. Members often helped with promotion of music by handing out leaflets, and with production by helping to create album covers, etc. Within the next five to eight years, the music gained some popularity through the region as the music became more accessible. As more people
became interested in the music scene, the music grew to encompass different styles. Humphrey (1994) found nineteen different styles of music in the scene, each with a different purpose. Diversity in the music began early by musicians, and through the diversity, musicians of every genre were supportive of each other. The scene remained fairly small until the late 1980s and early 1990s when Seattle music became popular worldwide. The music scene membership grew exponentially with the addition of new audiences and bands looking to gain notoriety from the popularity of Seattle music. Membership now included audiences, musicians, promoters, photographers, journalists, bar managers and the like. Many of these new membership roles sprang from people being musicians when they were teenagers and remaining in the scene as they got older and found employment not necessarily (but very often) still related to the Seattle music scene. This definition of the music scene is discussed more thoroughly throughout the chapter.

Seattle has become famous in the last five years for a music style commonly known as “grunge” (see Appendix C), while the rest of the music that has been created in Seattle has primarily been disregarded. “There is no singular ‘Seattle Sound,’ but there is a common Seattle attitude. [Scene members] believe in making great music and art, not in the trappings of celebrity” (Humphrey, 1995, p. vi). The supportive attitude has been a driving force for Seattle musicians, especially in light of the city’s unsupportive attitude toward music. Despite the city’s oppressive nature, musicians have become successful. It may be the common belief among artists, Humphrey argues, that has encouraged such varied and talented musicians, authors, artists, and personalities to grow in the Seattle
community and move onto larger endeavors. The list of successful musicians from the Seattle music community include; Robert Cray, Sir Mix-A-Lot, and Duff McKagan (Motley Crue). Many others received their start from Seattle music oriented organizations, such as Matt Groening (creator of “The Simpsons”) who began publishing his cartoons in The Rocket music newspaper. This list does not include Jimi Hendrix who had to move to England to get his big break, which is discussed later in the chapter. The Northwest has been an area full of talent and creativity often ignored by the Seattle establishment.

Laying the Foundation

A short history of Seattle and how it has received the creation of music helps to illustrate how artists in the city were treated and the environment in which they had to work. Humphrey (1995) writes of the history of the Northwest and Seattle that identifies the climate in which music was, and currently is, being made:

There is an evil in the woods. This may be a land of perky backpackers and nerdy engineers, but it’s also a land of environmental destruction, deliberately-released radiation clouds, racist fraternal lodges, brutal gangs of every race, serial killers . . . ice skaters with thug boyfriends, and other phenomena you’ll never read about in a tourist guide. Even our early heritage is one of brutality, exploitation and genocide. (p. vi)

The McCarthy era hit Seattle hard when many people were blacklisted and many others were scrutinized for their activities. One of these people was Frances Farmer, who acted in her college days at the University of Washington, and was scrutinized heavily by the press for her connections to the Communist party. Her mother had her institutionalized at
the end of her acting career, which started rumors of soldiers gang raping her and Farmer undergoing a lobotomy (Humphrey, 1995). Farmer’s story had a profound impact many years later on musician Kurt Cobain, lead singer and songwriter for *Nirvana*. He wrote the song “Frances Farmer will have her revenge on Seattle” and released it on *Nirvana’s* third album that sold 1.5 million copies within the first year of release (Humphrey, 1995).

The Seattle community as a whole, some argue, was vapid and lifeless. Humphrey (1995) states that Seattlites mistook blandness for virtue and was the city where the 1970s never died; the self-centered, lifestyle-obsessed boring side of the ‘70s [never died]. Seattle changed from a town of uptight, quietly dull, self-deprecating squares to a town of uptight, righteously dull, self-aggrandizing baby boomers. At least in the square era, you could sometimes see black music performed by black people. (p. 14)

Seattle artists were often overlooked by the city although funding was established to promote the city’s artists. Seattle frequently bestowed grants for artistic endeavors to out-of-state artists. An unwritten rule kept black musicians from playing and promoters from seeking them out until the late 1970s; one black person per group was the limit if a band wanted to play in the city (Humphrey, 1995). Jazz and blues clubs that have predominantly had black performers have only recently met with success. At the beginning of the Seattle punk scene, the jazz and blues scene was also very much underground. The repressive nature of the city actually encouraged music to be made; those that were directly affected by the repression used music as an outlet for their frustration. Thus a relatively “homogeneous” group of musicians (Bell & Newby, 1971) were brought together under one cause; to make the music they needed to create. A
volunteer association (MacCallum, 1970) began to occur as people began to sacrifice their
time and money to help others create music without the expectation of any type of return.
Punks were driven to backlash against the lifeless and unjust city that tried to control
music development. In fact, such an environment was what the whole punk movement
itself stood for, regardless of the city. Seattle’s history made the soil rich for future
musical growth.

City officials as well as the surrounding Seattle community were not pleased with
the growing musical creativity and performers. This trait of Seattle has not changed, even
today as the city has been put on the map by its musical success (to be discussed later).
During the 1960s, hippies became the targeted group. City officials created laws during
the late 1960s and early 1970s to reduce the number of “hippie” music festivals. In 1970,
the mayor eliminated a unwritten “tolerance policy” for bars and taverns in the city, which
was actually a system of bribery of bar owners by city police officers. With the unwritten
policy in place, police arranged bribes in return for not policing closing hours, minors on
the premises, and alcohol sales. The resultant heavier policing encouraged many of the
hippie bar owners to turn their bars into “yuppie” or gay bars (Humphrey, 1995).

Despite the anti-music culture and city government, music was happening, albeit
disregarded. Seattle has been cited by some as being the birthplace of 1950s folk music
and a music festival better than Woodstock. The 1969 Seattle Pop Festival that rivaled
Woodstock, comprised of Led Zeppelin, the Doors, Ike and Tina Turner, Chuck Berry
and Bo Diddley, among others, was touted as one of the best music festivals in the nation
(Humphrey, 1995).
When the music industry began promoting singers such as Fabian in the 1960s, the national music industry was left without musicians. Industry officials focused on creating celebrities and teen idols rather than promoting music for its own sake. A local promoter, O’Day, began to open teenage dance clubs, beginning an era of “cover” bands (see Appendix C). In other words, in order to “get a gig” the band had to play songs made famous by other bands via radio or television. Original tunes could be thrown in occasionally, but with great care. A woman interviewed for this study stated that her mother was a singer for one of these cover bands, and confirmed that almost no one risked making original music. The few bands that did take the risk broke ground for bands to follow at the risk of their popularity. Even today they are poorly remembered (13). As this hiring practice continued in the Seattle/Tacoma area, bands were hired only if their versions of the cover tunes were true to the original artists’ version. A band’s true test of greatness in the 1970s was how close their version of “Stairway to Heaven” was to *Led Zeppelin*’s original (Humphrey, 1995).

This focus on copying other artists’ work instead of creating new music was a great loss for Seattle’s fledgling music scene. Seattle has often wrongly touted Jimi Hendrix as “Seattle’s native son,” when he actually had to move to England to get his start. Hendrix tried very hard to be a musician in both Seattle and Tacoma, but his race and his desire to play his own original music were two strikes against him. Seattle had no room for him (Humphrey, 1995). Even the band *Heart* decided to look elsewhere for success. Nancy Wilson from *Heart* stated: “We promoted the record ourselves, driving to radio stations through the Midwest. We said we were a band from Vancouver, B. C.,
because it sounded more exotic and more interesting than to say we were from Seattle” (Humphrey, 1995, p. 17).

Construction of a Community

During the 1970s, the products of the national music industry left little to be desired. There were musical extremes from heavy metal to soft rock to disco, and little in between. Someone had to start a new scene. Punk rock (see Appendix C) seemed to be that new musical outlet for those who were frustrated and bored with current music. Punk gave a new vitality to the scene and offered signs of growth.

In 1978, the first band party house, named Chez Macabre, was established by the Telepaths (Humphrey, 1995). A party house was a home rented by members of the same band, where they would live, rehearse, and hold parties. A band party house served several purposes; it often helped house friends of the band as well as the band itself, it was their rehearsal space, and the only venue in which the band had opportunity to play. The houses became the sole venues for bands because clubs were practically non-existent in Seattle at the time. Other than the underground jazz scene, very few clubs existed where music could be heard (since the elimination of the tolerance policy). Most of the remaining clubs did not have live music, only DJ’s playing records of national acts. A feeling of anger grew over the new punk bands’ inability to play anywhere in the Seattle area. In a book written about the Seattle music scene, Humphrey (1995) captures their frustration with the lack of venues. He argues that “our whole attitude as a gang was a perpetual state of anger about our environment. We opposed just about everything we felt Seattle stood for” (Humphrey, 1995, p. 19).
The scene grew more as stores in Seattle began to carry import albums and
fanzines (see Appendix C) from England. Parties at band houses and rental halls were
promoted by telephone pole posters which quickly became a new Seattle art form. The
pole posters served two purposes: to advertise a band’s gig, and to give the poster’s
creator a chance to publicly display her/his work. An important part of the Seattle punk
scene was the inclusion of women not as followers but as creators and serious artists.
Men were not “blazing the trail” with the women following (Humphrey, 1995). Rather,
women had active roles in bands and the creation of music. One woman, who was
interviewed for this study, has been recognized as the “founding mother” of the scene.
She worked to promote bands on street corners by handing out flyers, booking bands at
clubs, helping bands connect with recording studios, and even today remains heavily
involved with promoting bands that have gained national attention. Equality has been, and
remains, an integral part of the community.

Another sign of growth occurred between 1979 and 1980 when the first music
newspaper in Seattle was created. The Rocket’s mission was to be a forum for local
music rather than for the Album Oriented Rock (AOR) national mainstream bands like
\textit{Van Halen} and \textit{AC/DC}. Many in the city’s mainstream, including radio stations and
advertisers, did not like the Rocket’s focus on Seattle bands only. The Rocket complied
with those advertisers that funded the paper. AOR bands were reviewed and “trashed” by
The Rocket’s music critics (Ferrigno, 1994, p. 8).

A final sign that Seattle’s punk scene was growing was evident when well-known
punk bands performed in the city on their national tours. Punk rock has been defined as a
type of hard-driving rock music which has been “characterized by harsh lyrics attacking conventional society and popular culture and often expressing alienation and anger” (American Heritage Dictionary, 1992). Punk became a way for young people to vent anger and be liberated from the predominant social structure. Through punk, they could speak out against the establishment they found repulsive. The punk messages about society were produced through artistic freedom and creativity.

At its best New Wave/punk represents a fundamental and age-old Utopian dream: that if you give people the license to be as outrageous as they want in absolutely any fashion they can dream up, they’ll be creative about it, and do something good besides. (Emphasis original, Bangs, 1995).

Punk was a movement against all types of conformity.

The members of the new Seattle music scene, like “punk rockers,” were essentially opposed to Seattle’s establishment. From this opposition, they created their community. More characteristics of community building became evident. The members of the Seattle music scene were defining themselves in opposition to the city mothers and fathers, putting them in an “us versus them” situation. The actions of these city officials shaped members’ actions. Scenesters “practices” against the city defined and nurtured the Seattle music community (Bellah, et al., 1985). In addition, community members were working toward a common goal; another necessary characteristic of communities (Bell & Newby, 1971). Members were donating as much of their time as possible to help everyone create their music.
Due to increasing support of others and exposure via band party houses, the music scene began to grow and the city responded by making it impossible to keep clubs open. From 1978 through 1981, clubs in the city were inspected frequently for fire code and liquor board violations, and for underage patrons. The city tried to pass an anti-postering law to ban clubs and bands from placing advertisement posters on telephone poles, thus making it incredibly difficult to advertise shows inexpensively. In 1985, the city closed down two of the clubs at the heart of the punk scene, the Gorilla Room and Bahamas, which were for fire code violations (Humphrey, 1995). These clubs had hosted some of the world’s best known punk bands during the few years they were open. Most of this study’s informants frequented these clubs while they were open and commented on how the scene was damaged by their closures. “The city had long treated all public gatherings of teenagers as menaces to be crushed . . . Officials never understood that shutting teen hangouts never stopped illicit activity, it just dispersed it” (Humphrey, 1995, p. 26). The closure of clubs was not only important to the police and city, but also to the local television networks. Each time a club was raided or closed, the local news teams were there aiming their cameras at scenesters’ odd hair or clothing. They often quoted police for blaming such clubs as breeding grounds for violence and crime. All of these instances of the city cracking down on the music scene gave the punks a reason to create an opposition to the city. The tension between the punks and the police did not erupt into a violent episode as was possible. Several instances did occur however, where scenesters were beaten by police or fire officials (Humphrey, 1995).
Even against the hurdles created by the city, a stronger music fixture was evident. Sales were down in the music industry nationwide and punk seemed to offer an alternative to many young people. Music industry officials (the creators of AOR music) were hostile toward new wave and punk rock which they saw as “highly subversive of good old-fashioned corporate rock’n’roll” (McChesney, 1994, p. 12). People were needing a new type of music and they were seeking out alternatives. People increasingly sought each other out and continued to create bands and find venues in which to play. As the Seattle music scene grew in size, there grew a feeling of expectation and recognition of urgency. John Keister’s final statement as journalist and editor of The Rocket in 1984 foretold the need:

What this town really needs is one band to blow us all away. Just one band who can play some new music that captures the imagination of the town, that would turn everything around. There’s somebody out there right now who can do it. This could be you. So get to work. (Newman, 1994, p. 22)

The new music to capture the imagination of Seattle that Keister called for came to the forefront of the local scene in 1986. That year proved to be pivotal for the Seattle music scene; punk rock was joined by a new form of rock called “grunge” (see Appendix C). The sound of this new rock was somewhat slower in tempo; punk was known for a very hard and fast beat, almost sounding violent to listeners unfamiliar with it. Grunge rock, on the other hand, kept primarily the same chord progressions and musical style, but the music was slowed down considerably and thus sounded less violent. Grunge music also made detuning of instruments (i.e., altering the tuning of instruments from the standard) very popular in the music industry. More important though, was the differing purpose of
grunge rock from punk. While punk rock was known for attacking conventional society and popular culture through lyrics filled with alienation and anger (American Heritage Dictionary, 1992), grunge rock focused on the individual. These new lyricists wrote about how societal problems affected them individually, as well as their inner turmoil, which many have called teen angst.

Pavitt (1994) called 1986 a transitional year for the scene in which the members both broke the old rules and created new ones. Making new rules such as this was a sign that the community was moving on to a new life stage. According to Bell and Newby (1971), community can move from growth to youth stages. This happened in 1986 as the scene broke the rules established in its “growth” and tested new rules in its “youth” stage. It was during this time that Sub Pop, a recording company, was created by Bruce Pavitt. Until Sub Pop, one of the first indie labels (e.g., independent; not associated with AOR) in Seattle, local bands could not get a recording contract; “It was just us [scene members] against them [everyone outside the scene]” (p. 31). In other words, it was a small recording company that provided studios and equipment to musicians, prepared albums for release, and promoted albums in stores throughout Seattle and the Pacific Northwest. Local success and popularity had never really occurred outside the group of scenesters before, so scene members could establish the norms. “These rules are what now enrich us and suffocate us” (Pavitt, 1994, p. 31). These rules became the “practices” that Bellah, et al., (1985) suggest enrich and nurture communities. The rules Pavitt spoke of were created for a smaller community. As the Seattle music scene grew, the rules originally set by members remained important, but were becoming outdated. The scene, with
approximately 1000 people at the core and the fringe, was still small enough at the time that one event could bring them all together (Boyd, 1994). The core of the scene was made up of bands, producers, promoters, and audience members who were always at shows and well known by the community. Fringe members were characterized by less involvement and less time spent in the community. They were bands that did not play shows very often, some audience members, and friends of musicians.

Around 1986 when Seattle bands started to gain some popularity, Sub Pop, the primary record label of Seattle, became just as famous. While they produced many kinds of music, they became known for the “grunge” rock for which Seattle was becoming famous. “Grunge” was the term used by national music critics, producers, and promoters to describe one style of music coming out of Seattle. Quickly, all music coming from Seattle was identified as “grunge” regardless of the sound. By 1988, there was a shift in popularity and attention. Sub Pop had been recognized by the nation as an indie label focusing primarily around grunge music styles (Gilbert, 1994). By this time, people began associating Seattle with PopLlama, a newer recording company and also an indie label. PopLlama was known for promoting different types of bands, and with their new popularity, the music that was gaining regional and national attention was more eclectic.

While new albums were being released constantly and in sheer bulk in the region, little recognition for Seattle music was gained from the national music industry. The industry was still focused on heavy metal rock (and AOR) because that was where the money was. The music industry also ignored Seattle because it was still considered punk and subversive.
This lack of recognition meant there was still no place to play one’s music. Bands were forced to practice in their garages and release tapes without ever playing in public. While the Seattle music scene was producing a lot of music, there were still very few venues for bands to perform in, and stage time had to be divided between different music styles. An active participant in Seattle music for over fifteen years remembers rarely being able to go out and see a band perform in a club in the early days (16, See Appendix A). She was exposed to local music by bands passing out their tapes in order to build an audience and a following. One band, *Queensryche*, actually found success from promoting themselves with homemade tapes. They were one of the first bands signed to a major record label in 1988. However, the band’s music was considered heavy metal, which ended up reinforcing two beliefs: heavy metal was the only money maker and that nothing of value was being created in the Seattle punk scene.

By 1988, the scene had been declared “dead” by community members. To them, the sound was old and boring, which gave rise to new bands seizing the attention of the crowd. Community members declared the scene “dead” because it had lost its appeal for scenesters, not because it was no longer being created: “They say that [grunge is dead] because . . . Seattle people like to think they’re hip cutting edge. Grunge wasn’t hip cutting edge anymore so naturally it was dead (I 2).” One Sunday night however, an unknown band played to a small crowd. While the crowd was impressed with the band called *Nirvana*, led by Kurt Cobain, the general thought was that since the scene was dead they would probably get nowhere (Anderson, 1994).
The World Moves In

Around 1989, Seattle music began to gain national attention, much to the surprise of community members. Nationwide popularity of bands considered “grunge” like Alice-in-Chains and Soundgarden helped prepare the nation for the large upheaval to come. However, it was the events in 1990 and 1991 that lead to worldwide attention: the release of Nirvana’s album “Nevermind,” Pearl Jam’s album “Ten,” and the movie “Singles.”

While the new fame and notoriety was good for bands who received recording contracts, very few community members realized the problems the scene would face. Scenesters were preparing for the end of their community’s life cycle (Bell & Newby, 1971) and were not fully prepared for future community growth.

This abrupt change in fame and notoriety for the Seattle music scene was more damaging than anyone would have imagined. The first death of a long time member of the scene occurred in 1990. Andrew Wood, lead singer of Mother Love Bone, overdosed (after having been clean and sober for four months) just before going on tour and just after signing a major label contract for his band. Mother Love Bone was one of the core bands of the scene and Wood’s death was disturbing to all. Another adjustment for community members was seeing their friends become millionaires overnight and observing how tenuous fame could be for them. These new millionaires often had been wondering where their next meal was going to come from just weeks prior and now had more money than they could ever have imagined. No one took the fame and the money seriously at first, but eventually it could not be ignored. Friends were becoming different people (16, 17).
"That was kinda like winning the lottery. You wouldn’t wouldn’t in your wildest imaginations think you’d actually get signed with a major label" (I 6).

One of the first bands signed to a record deal during this time was *Alice in Chains*, considered a grunge band by those outside Seattle, although considered heavy metal by those in Seattle. The signing of metal bands was frustrating to people who were considered punk or “grunge.” A double bind became apparent as bands were getting signed more regularly; they wanted to get “signed,” but were considered “sell outs” once they were signed. While bands were being signed more steadily, the Seattle music scene was still making relatively no money. Even with worldwide notoriety, Sub Pop faced bankruptcy almost every day. Bands that were recording with Sub Pop expected to be treated as if they were recording with a major label company. Many bands had the misconception that notoriety equaled money. There was little money in the scene, especially for album production. *Nirvana* made their first album at a cost of $606.17 (insanely cheap for album production) and gave Sub Pop a good return on their investment (Humphrey, 1995). *Nirvana*’s second album, “Nevermind,” was the first Seattle album to be successful worldwide (I 6). It was the first punk album to reach number one on all rock charts. The album sold ten million copies worldwide (Mundy, 1994). However, *Nirvana*’s album did more than sell worldwide; many think that it profoundly impacted listeners everywhere. Alden (1994) even believed that *Nirvana* cost then President George Bush his job. As one member reminisced: “those three guys from Aberdeen taught an entire generation that their rage wasn’t an isolated existential episode, but a universal theme . . . *Nirvana* (and, yes, others) taught us that we had a voice” (p.
Nirvana also helped solidify Seattle’s position in the national limelight. Each band’s rise to fame made Seattle more and more famous, which would soon bring the price of fame to the scene as well.

The Seattle music scene and grunge moved beyond Seattle to the United States and the world. Grunge began to refer to a lifestyle. For scenesters, grunge was only a small part of the community’s musical creativity. While grunge was not the only type of music coming out of Seattle, it became the conception that Seattle equaled grunge. Grunge wear became trendy nationwide and could be purchased at Sears and Kmart; and fashion magazines featured grunge clothing layouts. Grunge was the “Seattle sound,” and both were the new buzz-words across the nation.

Seattle’s musical explosion onto the mainstream was responsible for/coincidental with punk-influenced music reaching great numbers of people for the first time, the effects of which have been severely apparent. Some forms of behavior that would have been unknown to the average person suddenly became the hip things to do. Housewives took heroin. Men-on-the-street became men-in-the-mosh-pit. This led to a flux of inexperienced citizens flocking to enjoy the punk rock experience for the first time, without really understanding it. (Stringfellow, 1994, p. 14)

The media descended on Seattle artists, writers, and photographers wanting gossip or pictures of Seattle fashion to fill their magazines or time slots (I 1, I 4, I 6). The media ignored the true diversity of the music and only focused on the one sound known as grunge. By focusing only upon grunge, the media was ignoring most of the other music being created in Seattle (Cross, 1994). Cross stated that the media’s categorization of Seattle into only one sound was “lazy journalism.”
Considering all that happened, maybe the “lazy journalism” was an unexpected benefit for the Seattle music scene. The biggest price the scenesters paid for their newly-found fame was the loss of community feeling. Abernathy (1994) discussed this feeling of loss for community members:

for a lot of old-timers, it was the end, the time before which one could point to one’s having been a part of something, rather than a Johnny-come-lately here to cash in on the scene. The environment . . . [was] a victim of its own success. (p. 52)

In other words, those who had created the scene and had a stake in it now could no longer control it. The popularity of the scene brought in people who had no stake or concern for the scene itself; they simply provided the money to keep the music going.

The Seattle music scene new found worldwide fame put heavy responsibility on the bands. The band members accepted and some responsibility, but not all of it. For example, Pearl Jam, whose two albums released in the early 1990s catapulted them to America’s favorite band, took on the ticketing and venue monopolizer, Ticketmaster. In 1994, they presented a statement to the Department of Justice regarding Ticketmaster’s monopoly and price gouging. This act could be ultimately beneficial to concert goers across the nation by saving them millions of dollars in fees charged by Ticketmaster. The band went through much personal sacrifice to plan concerts and tours without using Ticketmaster’s services. In the summer of 1995, the band vowed (after a failed attempt to tour without Ticketmaster), to never tour again if working with the corporation was their only option. In July of 1995, the Department of Justice dropped the investigation into
Ticketmaster’s monopoly. Currently, *Pearl Jam* is the only band that has taken this stand although many other bands have complained about Ticketmaster.

*Pearl Jam* was definitely not the only band or performers to be under pressure. Kurt Cobain, the lead singer of *Nirvana*, was hailed as the spokesperson for Generation X and as the next John Lennon. Cobain wanted neither title; he did not want to be the voice of a generation. Instead, he wanted each person within that generation to find his/her own voice (I 2). Where Lennon could revel “in the power of his celebrity, using it to press his own agenda,” Cobain could not figure out “how to make stardom work for him” (Fricke, 1994, p. 66). It is important to note here that Cobain defined himself as an outsider (as most scenesters did) which is in opposition to any kind of leadership role. He also fell victim to the expectations of the music industry that often destroy the bands they claim to promote:

They’ve [*Nirvana*] fallen victim to the built-in claws of the world-wide record industry, which are there to squeeze the udders of the sacred cow until it bleeds.

And if it bleeds to death, no matter: there’s always another cow waiting for sainthood. (Gaar, 1994, p. 56)

Even when scenesters thought the scene was dead in 1989 and 1990, the popularity of bands like *Nirvana* and *Pearl Jam* gave it a new and different life. By 1994, grunge became the dominant form of music across the United States and much of the world.

As true to nature, Seattle city officials tried to thwart musical development in the city, even as the music was bringing national attention to Seattle. The city passed laws that made the opening of “all ages” venues (clubs in which no alcohol is served and
teenagers are admitted) placed too costly a business venture by creating heavy taxes and licensing fees. The city passed a law banning posters on telephone poles in 1989. The law has been ignored by the music community.

The music scene and the music created from its artists have been identified with "Generation X;" the young people other generations have condemned to be losers and slackers.” Kurt Danielson, the lyricist for the band Tad, said: “The loser is the existential hero of the ‘90s” (Alden, 1994, p. 48). This music spoke to the young people who had realized that they would not live as well as their parents. The people who had been faced with the injustices of a society who favored the rich and promised “a trickle down” to the poor. Much of the country have identified these people as Generation X, but many of those in the Seattle music community have decried the notion of belonging to a generation (I 1, I 2). Many of those scenesters became national heroes to young people. Being placed in the position of spokesperson or hero is precarious, especially when that person has always considered himself as an outsider or loser. “The bands that had rebelled against the establishment now were the establishment. It would prove to be a most uneasy alliance” (Gaar, 1994, p. 56). The combination of unease, the pressure of being a hero to young adults, and a host of personal problems drove Kurt Cobain to his suicide in April, 1994. The death of this important rock hero was felt across the Seattle music scene and the world.

The Scene Settles Down

Nineteen ninety-four was a transitional year for the Seattle music scene, and the future for the scene is still unknown at this writing (July, 1995). Part of the reason for the
change is the volatile nature of the music industry; the industry moves on after a city or type of music has become mainstreamed. Many scenesters abhor the notion that the national music industry “exploits” the music created by a city’s young people only to move on when the music is no longer making the industry millions of dollars. One scenester believed such exploitation ignores the value of the music and the ability of the community to continually evolve.

You saw all the magazine headlines, about where is the next Seattle? . . . The whole premise of the next Seattle is that this is just one place that happened to have a few bands that could be signed and exploited and then the industry would move on. As opposed to a permanent creative community continually coming up with new things. (14)

Alternative music by nature is supposed to be an underground, non-mainstream form of music. “[W]hen alternative artists are forced out into the mainstream, they are marketed, exploited, and consumed by a mass media fed audience. The point of being in an underground subculture is to escape this mindset” (POS 3). Alternative music is now a well established part of the music industry, so its “newness” has worn off. Some people interviewed think that the hype surrounding Seattle will calm down and Seattle will be known as an important city for music. Others think that scenesters may “burn out” and not have the energy to keep the community alive. Either way, the scene has changed and expanded again. It has now begun to move to the world of cyberspace; more and more musicians and artists in the Seattle area have turned to the Internet as a forum for discussing the music, their position in the scene, and life in general (e.g., interview with Courtney Love by D. Fricke, 1994).
The scene is also changing by taking on causes and trying to change the surrounding community. Many bands have donated their time to raise money for local causes, such as food banks and national causes such as “Rock the Vote.” *Pearl Jam* worked with Gloria Steinam to arrange two concerts to raise money for the “Voters for Choice” organization. Many other bands have donated their talents to create compilation albums. One important recent project was a compilation album in memory of scenester, and rising star, Mia Zapata. Mia was the lead singer for *The Gits*, a very popular band in the scene. Mia was murdered on her way home from a friend’s house in 1993; her attacker(s) was never apprehended. The proceeds from this compilation album will go to a non-profit organization to provide safety training for Seattlites. Another album written before Mia’s death is being recorded by the remainder of the band and singer Joan Jett. The proceeds of this album go to fund a private investigation to solve the crime.

The Seattle music scene has been nothing if not volatile. A great number of changes as discussed here put the creators of Seattle music in precarious positions, and has left many to reconcile that new position with where they once stood. Once the community worked together for a common goal of creating music, and now the tie that brings many of them together (Anderson, 1993) is the awareness of social problems. Scenesters have focused on these new altruistic goals with their music as a method of solving problems. Using music as a medium to make the community around the Seattle music scene a better place may become a new defining feature of the community that also “nurtures” it (Bellah, et al., 1985). Scenesters are trying to keep their community at a
vital point in its life cycle (Bell & Newby, 1971). It is from the history of unstable circumstances in the Seattle music scene that this study springs forth.
CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODS

This is a qualitative examination of the communication that occurs in the Seattle music community. In this chapter, the use of conceptual framework is discussed along with methods of data collection and analysis. The conceptual framework is defined, followed by the discussion of data collection methodology, and finally the analysis of the data gathered.

Conceptual Framework

Conceptual frameworks can be used to help “test” and extend theories and determine what communication phenomena are occurring in the speech community. Baxter’s (1990) theoretical work on dialectical contradictions in relationship development has been employed as the conceptual framework.

Dialectics

As identified in Chapter One, Baxter (1988) posits three dialectical contradictions that are examined and expanded upon in this study. These three contradictions are autonomy - connection, openness - closedness, and predictability - novelty. The contradiction pairs are defined by Baxter’s (1990) article and are used as the conceptual framework. This framework is used primarily to examine the data gathered from fieldnotes and interview transcriptions. The conceptual framework was the source of analysis only; participants were not asked directly about their use of dialectics in talk. Informants interviewed later in the data collection process were asked to comment on findings, including the use of dialectics. The members of the Seattle music community may use
communication patterns such as dialectics in order to build their relationships with the music community or as a means of stabilizing that relationship. According to Baxter and Simon (1993), the community may have strayed from an equilibrium point and members may be employing strategies to return the community to equilibrium.

Data Collection

Informants

To ensure correct assumptions concerning the speech community and conclusions drawn from data analysis, choosing informants is essential to any ethnography. Spradley (1979) suggests that informants should be currently involved in the community for a minimum of one year, have the time to donate to a research project, be nonanalytic, and thoroughly enculturated. Thorough enculturation is essential in a good informant; they “know their culture so well they no longer think about it” (Spradley, 1979, p. 48). The actions of informants within the speech community are so thoroughly ingrained in their behaviors that they no longer need to ponder their membership or their role within the community. It is also extremely important that informants are nonanalytic in nature. Spradley cautions that “many persons draw from psychology and the social sciences to analyze their own behavior. They mistakenly believe they can assist the ethnographer by offering these analytic insights” (p. 53).

With these conditions in mind, two women were chosen as informants. While very knowledgeable about the scene, these women were not as involved or enculturated as others interviewed. As such, they met Spradley’s criteria for effective informants and were used as such. One informant had been in bands off and on for over ten years, her
circle of friends are based in the music scene, and she had held jobs that continued to keep her involved in Seattle music. The other informant had been an audience member for over six years and also had a circle of friends based around the scene. Both informants commented (during their interviews) about having some difficulty answering questions; they no longer thought about their membership and how they “fit into” the scene. This communicated that they were thoroughly enculturated and would provide the most honest responses with the least amount of analysis.

**Participant/Observation**

The scope of qualitative research is to look for larger trends, patterns, and styles of behavior (Adler & Adler, 1994); participant/observation can be extremely helpful in identifying those trends and behaviors. A researcher using participant/observation techniques is placed at an interesting vantage point in the speech community; the researcher can investigate or test informants’ disclosures and learn new questions to ask. Participant/observation is an excellent technique to use in studies that examine life in the public realm because it enables researchers “to gather data on large groups of people at a time, and to isolate patterns of group behavior” (Adler & Adler, 1994, p. 384).

The researcher must find a balance between the roles of participant and observer that both suits the researcher and the study. Adler & Adler (1994) identify three research roles that lie on a continua of participation and observation: complete-member-researcher, active-member-researcher, and peripheral-member-researcher. These roles can be chosen by the researcher, but often are determined by those in the culture, the researcher’s comfort level, and need of the study.
Approximately 116 hours were spent in the field conducting participant/observation and interviews. Additionally, roughly 200 hours were devoted to other types of data gathering: reading publications, books, or magazines published by members of the community, articles by the national media written about the Seattle music scene, and reading and posting on Internet bulletin boards about the Seattle music scene.

During time in the field, brief notes were jotted down to stimulate memory later on when notes were expanded. Substantive field notes (Burgess, 1982) were kept that included a chronological account of places and events, attempts to contact and arrange interviews, and correspondence with informants. A set of methodological field notes were also kept (Burgess, 1982). These included personal impressions, reflections on research, questions to be asked and expanded upon, relationships with informants, methodological suggestions for future data collection, and analysis of the researcher's role within the community and research. Both substantive and methodological field notes were kept as needed from interview data. These notes were kept amidst the interview transcriptions as notes prior to the interview and reflections upon the interview.

**Interviews**

For a description of those interviewed for this study, refer to Appendix A. A list of questions that were the basis for questions asked in interviews is available in Appendix B. Structured interviewing involves asking a set of pre-determined open ended questions that are pointed and direct enough to guide a respondent to answer the question in a limited and directed way (Fontana & Frey, 1994). As used in this ethnographic study, interviewing methods were molded to transform a possible one-sided process into a
“friendly” conversation where new topics and questions were introduced to guide the conversation (Spradley, 1979). Encouraging remarks and probes were used to follow up on ideas generated and to be more directive through the interview (Whyte, 1982). Interviews were specifically formatted to guide the respondent through the process easily and smoothly; the researcher and project were introduced, the interview format, consent form, and possibility of future papers were discussed. The respondent had an opportunity to ask questions about any aspect of the project. The interview questions varied slightly for each respondent based on prior knowledge of his/her role in the Seattle music scene (e.g., slightly different questions were asked for a photographer than for an audience member). During the interviewing process, several guidelines set forth by Fontana & Frey (1994) were strictly followed. For example, the explanation of the study was brief and a set procedure of introducing the interview was adhered to. Personal opinions were kept out of the conversation and responses to questions were never suggested to the informants. Some personal experiences in the Seattle music scene were shared to build rapport and to demonstrate peripheral membership within the community.

Most of the informant’s names were obtained from other informants, much like a quantitative “snowball” sample. The informants were asked to provide names of anyone that would be suitable for the study as well as be willing to participate. Several times respondents would comment on possible biases the possible interviewee may have, how reliable their information may be, or their mental set (e.g., “He would be a good person to interview, but since he was just kicked out of a band, he may not be the most reliable source of information” (I 4)). Notes were taken of any behaviors or comments observed
during the interview that may have been indicative of distortion. The primary method for
detecting distortion or for verifying information was to ask informants about comments
that had been made in previous interviews or observations from time spent in the field.
Strict confidentiality and anonymity were kept when conducting such verification. The
verification process resulted in a rich description of the community and yielded new
questions to be asked of informants and of the study itself.

Twelve interviews were conducted (five telephone interviews) during the course of
this study. Each was tape recorded and later transcribed, with all identifying information
removed and the tapes recorded over to protect the anonymity of the respondents.
Interview questions were added and changed slightly over time to include new
information, demonstrate knowledge of the community and the progress of research to
respondents. In addition, a few questions were added or re-focused based on current
articles in 'zines (see Appendix C) or popular press magazines with which the respondents
would be familiar.

An important aspect of the interviewing process for this study was building rapport
with informants through demonstrating membership, passing their “tests,” and
demonstrating knowledge. While many researchers wish for the informants to view them
as uninformed newcomers, it was imperative for this study that this did not occur. The
Seattle music scene has been inundated over the last six years with newcomers wanting to
be a part of the community because it is “trendy.” These newcomers are not respected by
and often dismissed by scenesters. Thus, demonstrating some type of membership was
vital to gain respondents’ respect. To remove their fears of being interviewed by a
newcomer, the researcher gave information at appropriate times regarding previously living in Seattle and having attended shows giving specific names of bands and venues. Giving such precise information was standard for those in active-membership roles as they discussed the Seattle music scene.

**Triangulation**

This study incorporates the methods of taking field notes, conducting interviews, reading articles printed in 'zines (see Appendix C) and the popular press, and compiling Internet postings. There are several benefits to using multiple methods of data collection and analysis, known as triangulation. Primarily, triangulation of data and findings informs both the researcher and reader that the data are reliable and valid. "Multiple and independent measures, if they reach the same conclusions, provide a more certain portrayal of the . . . phenomenon" (Jick, 1979, p. 136). A researcher can use multiple techniques within one particular method, such as an ethnography, to collect and interpret data, which allows the researcher to check internal consistency or reliability.

While the primary data gathered for this ethnography came from interviews and participant/observation, data from interviews with people in the Seattle music speech community and articles written by members of the community printed in national and regional magazines have also been obtained. Advantage has also been taken of a relatively new domain for social science: the Internet. Many members of the Seattle music community use the Internet for discussions and postings about the music and their membership in the music scene. Everyday, more community members are gaining access to "the net" and making the music community accessible to more people. These postings
and discussions have been an additional source for triangulation. Lastly, articles written by the national press, books published on the Seattle music scene or on members of the scene particularly, and music have been used as sources of data to inform and assist in data analysis and interpretation. Combining all of these areas “within method” will allow a reduction of bias, and contribution to the internal consistency of this work.

Another benefit of triangulation is that it can “capture a more complete, holistic, and contextual portrayal of the unit(s) under study” (emphasis original, Jick, 1979, p. 138). In other words, use of all available data helps to re-create the culture of the Seattle music scene for the researcher and readers that can more accurately portray the essence of the culture as well as a more holistic compilation of data to be analyzed.

Data Analysis

Methodology

All interview transcripts, field notes, articles, and Internet posts were read and coded based on Baxter’s and others (Baxter, 1988, 1990, 1994; Baxter & Goldsmith, 1990; Baxter & Simon, 1993; Baxter & Wilmot, 1983; Goldsmith, 1990) research on dialectical contradictions. All the material was read through to search for either dialectical statements within a single topic area or an extreme comment (either positive or negative) that was not accompanied by an opposing statement. Searching out singular, extreme statements was important to the data analysis, for the researchers of dialectical contradictions in relationship building all state that if too many positive or negative comments are made by relational members, a relationship is bound to fail. Such descriptions of extremely positive or negative statements are identified in Chapter One, as
well as the impact of singular, extreme statements on the relationship. When such statements were found in the data to be analyzed, marks were made next to the statements, and they were placed onto cards. These were then coded into the three dialectic categories, autonomy - connection, predictability - novelty, and openness - closedness using the constant comparison method (Glaser, 1962, 1985). The constant/comparison method included comparing each piece of data to the others, determining the differences or similarities between the cards, and then coding the data into the category that best suits the piece of data.

During the analysis of the autonomy - connection data, the researcher noticed that scenesters’ autonomous statements were more focused around separation than autonomy. The distinction between the two terms is a semantic one; separation suggests a parting or a gap between partners or community members while autonomy implies independence. Because of the interdependent nature of the Seattle music community, the autonomy label was not as descriptive of the phenomenon as was a term that could suggest a parting between a member and the community in which they were still may be connected on other levels. The choice was made to use the term separation instead of autonomy in the analysis and discussion sections of this study.

The researcher quickly noticed the emergence of supportive and unsupportive comments and immediately began an attempt to code data into such a category. Several members of the music scene explicitly stated their “support,” which did not coincide with the other dialectic pairs. Through analysis of this data, one new category was added to
the three already established. That category of supportive - unsupportive was defined as follows:

Supportive - Unsupportive - Supportive comments are favorable to any aspect of the Seattle music scene. Unsupportive comments question the value of the community or the people within it. Too many supportive comments could reveal a lack of awareness, while unsupportive comments would call into question the person’s continuing membership.

Using the constant/comparison method again, the data coded into these four contradiction pairs were analyzed to ensure that there was no overlap or similarities between the three pairs and the new category. It was imperative that the researcher determine this to be a separate category rather than data that should be categorized into the current dialectic pairs. A small portion of comments could not be coded into these categories and were coded into a category called other. The re-analysis of all the data using the comparison/contrast method was used to identify any such coding mistakes and ensure the existence of a new and separate category. Each dialectic pair was analyzed based on dialectical contradiction research, community building information, and the history of the Seattle music scene.

Through the analysis of each of the dialectical categories, the openness - closedness category was not as well supported as the other two categories established in dialectical contradiction research. Significantly fewer comments were coded into this category with less themes resulting. A discussion of this category is included in the findings chapter. The other category was also analyzed, but no major themes could be derived from it.
Reliability and Validity

Reliability

There are several constraints on the reliability of ethnographic research, particularly with replication and choice of informants (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982). Qualitative studies are difficult to replicate because events or cultures are often difficult to reproduce or study the culture at a later time.

External Reliability

To account for reliability with this study, two aspects of external reliability are especially important. First, the status of the researcher may adversely impact those in the speech community. In other words, if the researcher seems to have any type of power over informants and members of a given speech community, observations are then tainted by her position. This aspect of external reliability was not a problem in this study. As noted earlier, the researcher's status was that of a peripheral member of the speech community, so power never became an issue. Participant/observation was not problematic either, for the multitude of people in the clubs made the researcher practically invisible during data gathering.

Another method of increasing external reliability is through careful choice of informants as the screening and selection of informants renders them reliable. As discussed previously, two people were chosen to review and subsequently respond to the findings of the study.
Validity

By checking the validity of an ethnographic study, a researcher can question whether the study measures what the researcher purports it to measure. In other words, validity questions whether the researcher’s findings accurately measure what is truly occurring in the culture.

Internal Validity

LeCompte and Goetz (1982) outline four ways of meeting internal validity. They suggest that data should be collected for long periods of time, informants should be interviewed, participant/observation should be employed, and that continual questioning and reevaluation should be used. Researchers conducting investigations of a community face the possibility of changes occurring over time, thereby impacting the results of the study. To account for history and maturation effects, research for this project took place over a period of a year. Hence, any significant changes to the community could be studied and accounted for during that time.

Second, as noted earlier, various people were interviewed, each of whom had slightly different backgrounds, experiences, and length of membership in the community. In order to increase the validity of this study, interviews were conducted so that conclusions were not based solely on personal perceptions (Adler & Adler, 1994). Interviewing various people could yield a broader scope of information and assurance that not one aspect of the community was being favored.
Respondent accounts were checked for distortion and for concurrence with other respondents. The reliability of the informant and the knowledge of the informant’s mental set were considered when checking interview responses for distortion (Whyte, 1982).

Third, participant/observation was conducted in the natural settings of the community. Data were gathered and research was conducted in different clubs, on different evenings, during various times of the evening. This variety was extremely important to the data collection process to ensure that one type of audience was not always observed, or that particular activities that transpire at different times of the evening were only observed. Attending only a few clubs, on the same days, at the same times, or seeing the same bands perform could all give the data a biased and invalid look at the community. Observational notes would only include a snapshot of the possible events or behaviors that could exist within the community. Thus to increase validity of this study, several different clubs were attended, on different days of the week, observing different bands, for extended periods of time. To study the natural settings of the culture, as many aspects of the culture as possible must be studied to gain a complete picture. To assist in gaining a complete picture, meticulous notes were kept of all field work and interviews. Substantive and methodological field notes (Burgess, 1982) were important to account for any changes over time and to ensure the essence of the culture was being examined.

Similarly, it is imperative that the researcher does not impact the community being studied. Observer effects can include informants altering their responses or acting unnaturally in their own setting. Because of the researcher’s peripheral membership, there was little impact on the community. During interviews, the rapport building that occurred
and the conversational style of the interview should have alleviated any large observer effect. Finally, self-monitoring should be conducted to evaluate the research as it progresses. This occurred during the entire process of data collection and analysis through continual evaluation of field notes, interview transcriptions, and personal notations. Notes were kept of such analyses and evaluations over the course of the research.
CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Four categories of dialectics were used to analyze data. Much of the data were coded into three of the categories (autonomy - connection, predictability - novelty, and supportive - unsupportive). The openness - closedness category was not well supported. Findings, by category, are reported below. The dialectics and the themes derived from within them are presented in Table 1.

Separation- Connection

The dialectical comments coded into this category were based on Baxter and other’s (Baxter, 1988, 1990, 1994; Baxter & Goldsmith, 1990; Baxter & Simon, 1993; Baxter & Wilmot, 1983; Goldsmith, 1990) definition that over connectedness can destroy the relationship, and too much autonomy can create feelings of loss or separation. In the analysis of this data, the term separation was a more adequate descriptor of the Seattle music scene data than was the term autonomy (as discussed in Chapter Four). For this study, separation was coded as comments which reflected a feeling of being removed from the community, while connection was coded as identification with the community and its other members. Connection to the community was characterized by comments relating a
desire to continue membership in the community as well as positive comments that explicate one person’s similarities with others in the community. The themes that arose in this category were: community membership, rules, attitudes, interdependence and the music. Scenesters communicated separation and connection dialectics both verbally and nonverbally. Autonomous statements seemed to be nonverbally communicated to those new to the community, whereas connection comments were verbally communicated to other scenesters.

Community Membership

Connection

All types of comments analyzed here had references to those who did not fit into the community. Scenesters have referred to these people as “bandwagoners,” “newcomers,” or “newbies.” Newcomers are really a conjunction of people who have become involved in the scene only since it became regionally and nationally recognized. These terms “newcomers” and “scenesters” are the first indication of a separation between outsiders and community members. Scenesters (see Appendix C) by self definition are those who have been members of the Seattle music community for a long period of time, are highly involved and well known among other members. Scenesters are those people that have been a part of the scene prior to its popularity. In addition, they are separated from newcomers by their commitment to the scene and contributions to it. Scenesters have had a history with the Seattle music scene that has often included many hours working in the scene, having many friends who are also in the scene, and often holding jobs in scene related activities (e.g., photographer, promoter). Scenesters
characteristically refer to newcomers as a specific group and often refer to themselves (as a community) as “we.”

An example of this expressed difference between scenesters or “true fans” comes from a scenester who notes that,

I have also been listening to Pearl Jam way before they were even known. I also hate those so-called ‘bandwagoners,’ the people that only listen to a band because it is popular or the radio is playing it . . . those people aren’t true fans. A true music lover spends time looking for new and upcoming bands and likes them because he [sic] wants to like them . . . I personally give much more to the music world than half of these pieces of crap that call themselves fans. (POS 4)

While this person’s comment may be a little extreme in his condemnation of bandwagoners (he recognizes that later in the post), a band member made a similar comment (I 3). She talked about the scene and type of music she enjoyed and created and how it was “not for the average person.” She notes that scenesters “were people who were really into music and music was really important to them. Now you get people who don’t so much care about the music as they do just wanting to be a part of the scene . . . because it’s trendy or hip or whatever.” The bandwagoners, she states, care about the music so little that they may not even be able to identify the names of the bands they say they like. She typifies bandwagoners as people who prefer to be “seen” rather than scenesters and some newcomers who care most about the community’s music. The scenesters and music are interdependent, which is not evident for most newcomers. Music both defines and nurtures the community and those within it. Thus there is a deeper connection to the music for scenesters. It is because of this connection that scenesters are so bothered by
newcomers disregard of the music they come to see. Newcomers are unable to understand the defining features of the community or the hardships scenesters faced to create the music initially.

**Separation**

Unfortunately for scenesters, newcomers are also identified as outsiders with which scenesters cannot, nor want to, identify. A bar manager identified his clientele as being very diverse, including the “upwardly mobile homophobic type.” These newcomers clash with the regulars of the bar that feels as if “this is one of their places” (12). When this type of diversity occurs in one of the clubs, fights often occur. The same bar manager recollected the fights that had occurred in the bars in which he has worked. All of the fights (except for one) occurred on a night when “homophobic types,” “frat boys,” people from an affluent city, or “yuppie types” were present. The people who most often clash with scenesters are fraternity men from local universities, homophobic 20-30 year olds, and those that are more affluent than scene members. He attributed the fights to the rudeness of these newcomers and their basic inconsiderateness of others. He also suggested that these newcomers are used to restaurants/clubs where they are catered to more and where “the customer is always right.” Not all newcomers are the “upwardly homophobic type” or any of the other labels of people the bar manager identified. Those newcomers that do fit this description, however, give other newcomers a bad reputation.

Another aspect of community membership is down-playing one’s roots to the community. The growth of the Seattle music scene has been a little disheartening for many members, and was mentioned by many interviewees. In addition, the need of bands
to be “hip, cutting edge” requires them to shun some of the fame that has come to Seattle and the “Seattle sound” (I 2). One band made the conscious choice not to put a band biography in the promotion packet they released to the press (I 4). The band did this in order to lessen the possibility of stereotypes being latched onto them because of their hometown. The band member interviewed for this study commented that there are just as many bands trying to down-play their roots as bands who are proud of them. These bands are proud “of what they’ve accomplished and what . . . Seattle means, not just around the country but around the world.” Another band briefly considered moving to another area to get their start for the same reasons as those listed above (I 5). On a more individual level, scenesters have down-played their roots by saying, “I’m from Seattle but I’m not grunge!” (I 4) The term “grunge” had become a label applied mostly by “packagers in a penthouse office” (Humphrey, 1995, p. v). True scenesters did not care about the label and tried to differentiate themselves from the corporate label. These occurrences in the talk of scenesters indicate an interesting dialectic. Some aspect of the Seattle music scene drew the musicians and people to it in the first place and now they are attempting to distance themselves from it. Possibly the innovativeness of the community in its early stages was the magnet. However, as the scene became more mainstreamed with its popularity, they felt the need to pull away.

**Rules**

The separation between scenesters and newcomers grows further in the separation category when the newcomers are unable to follow the rules of the
community. If one does not follow rules, s/he will not be included by members into the group. Scenesters and newcomers can be distinguished by those who follow the rules and those who do not. Many scene newcomers do not understand the rules or are simply unaware of them. When these rules are broken, newcomers can be upsetting to both the community and scenesters. Rules about behavior, attitudes, and consideration are not followed by newcomers. Scenesters often do not recognize the rules as “official” rules because they refuse to view the community as restrictive. Many believe the rules regarding behavior and attitudes are just “human decency” or expected behavior in any situation. Newcomers often do not understand what the music means to its members or the history of the scene that is so influential to the creation of the music. Trying to understand the community and what it stands for is another integral rule. “People who don’t quite know why they’re here except somebody told them it was hip” (14). They are unaware of the defining features and history (Bellah, et al., 1985) of the community that are so important in being a member of it.

According to members, “homophobic types” do not fit into the community because they are unaware of the implicit rules which govern behavior (12). A primary rule for membership to the community is to follow the expectations of the community. There is a basic, underlying rule that everyone who participates in the scene must be respectful of others. When outsiders are rude or confront scenesters, they are being disrespectful and will not be accepted into the community. In addition, the few newcomers who treat others with disrespect encourages scenesters to be more wary of other newcomers. In other words, the improper actions of a few newcomers establishes a bad reputation for all
newcomers. Continual enforcement of these rules may be a powerful tool for scenesters to keep newcomers from being more integral members of the scene. When members observe such behavior, they most often “punish” the offender through nonverbal communication (e.g., through the expression of “dirty looks”) and through reducing or eliminating contact with them (13). Roles of punisher and offender establishes power roles between newcomers and scenesters.

Rules about moshing (see Appendix C) also tend to be ignored when newcomers are present. These situations were evident on many nights of observation, but one was most apparent at a Seattle band’s gig in another city (F 15). It appeared from an older, “cowboy’s” facial expressions that he was getting angry at being bumped into while dancing. At one point he shoved a man and was going to hit the mosher until others stopped him. On another evening at the Milltown cafe, a fight broke out because a “frat boy” was hitting other moshers too hard, knocking them down and not helping them up. He was hitting people with his hands, fists, and elbows rather than the normal bumping of bodies (F 2). As one scenester noted,

You could tell they were just copying what they saw on MTV or whatever, because besides being completely inappropriate it was not even a proper pit. Just a bunch of jerks running into each other. (POS 21)

It is often this kind of inconsiderate behavior that prompts scenesters to keep newcomers at bay by not communicating with them at all. Only once did an respondent know of a newcomer who apologized for his harsh moshing behavior (I 3). The offender, a man almost a foot taller than she, elbowed, kicked, and hit her several times. She finally had to scream at him to get him to stop. She resorted to using overt tactics to help him realize he
had done anything wrong. Incidents such as these prompted a band member to write an article for a local 'zine discussing such rules and considerate behavior (A 19, partially reprinted in Appendix D). Publication of such articles may be a way of communicating acceptable behavior to newcomers as well as communicating who has the right to create and identify rules of the community. One person explicitly disagreed there were rules of conduct in the clubs, but implicitly commented that she would somehow withdraw from a person exhibiting rude behavior (I 3). The admission of behavior causing her to withdraw is confirmation the existence of rules because penalties exist for failure to adhere to certain standards. Lack of knowledge about community rules is a sign of separation. If one is removed enough to be unaware of community rules, that person is unconnected from the community and its members. One cannot be a functioning, connected member if s/he is unaware of the rules that are a component of the community.

Another rule identified that was imperative to this dialectic was involvement. If one is not involved in the community, that person generally feels autonomous from the other members. Quitting one’s job that is scene related (I 3), being an armchair fan (F 101), or not attending shows as often as one used to (I 6, I 7) can make members feel separated and distant from the community. All of the people cited above (except for I 6) expressed some type of desire about being more involved. Others felt more isolated because they wished to be involved more and were not. Two women interviewed expressed a desire to become more involved than they had been lately (I 3, I 6). Because of outside activities, both were more removed than they liked and wanted to become more
involved. They felt this would help them to feel more a part of the community. One
former member lamented her withdrawn membership:

I mean I’ve kind of withdrawn from it though I’m hoping to rectify that . . . one of
the main things is you have to be involved and do and be around a lot and be seen.
Which I’m not doing so much now, so I’m a little more isolated than I used to be.

(1 3)

**Attitudes**

**Separation**

The attitudes of others in the scene (primarily newcomers) have been a catalyst for
some scenesters to decrease their involvement, which arose as a separation theme. One
woman commented that she no longer went to clubs as often as she used to because of she
felt like she “was in a sociology experiment” (I 1). The attitudes and behaviors of others
(particularly women) appalled her and made her wish to withdraw from the scene. She
commented on certain audience members being “out of touch with the real reasons they
are there” and feeling uncomfortable around “fakey or obsequious” people who are all
“running and hugging.” Her solution to feeling uncomfortable was to listen to the album
at home instead of attending shows. Her inability to relate with these “obsequious people”
was due to their attitudes with which she could not identify.

Another woman that approached the researcher during fieldwork separated herself
from those in the club by saying they were “insecure” and “weird” (F 2). She had recently
moved to Seattle and said that Seattlites were weird like Los Angeles people, and that
scenesters were insecure because “when you walk by them, they look at you.” She then
went on to discuss how she thought everyone there was more concerned about “seeing and being seen” than the music. Her solution to this problem was to move back to her home in Tennessee. Her inability to relate to scenesters as a newcomer did not allow her to feel like a part of the community. For this woman, others’ behaviors were also a catalyst for her to consider decreasing her involvement and becoming more separated. For the first woman, her self-imposed separation was due to the behaviors of more peripheral members in the scene (11). She was unable to relate to these people on any level and thus felt removed. Her feelings were so strong that she continued to lessen her involvement.

For the second woman, her lack of involvement arose from her short term exposure to the community. She was lacking an understanding of the Seattle music scene which is important in becoming a community member. Bellah et al., (1985) argue that understanding a community’s history is integral to communities. It is also most likely integral to being a community member.

For the community, involvement has to be on several different levels which generally include jobs, bands, and socializing with other members. Sometimes involvement includes parties and drug use. The choice to refuse such activity may reduce the level of involvement. This could give bands and audience members one less opportunity to obtain a level of involvement that is required by community rules. A band member discussed her band’s lack of involvement in heroin, alcohol, and parties as being a distancing factor between her band and the community (15). She felt the choice her band made to follow their own rules and stay out of that aspect of the scene was hurtful to her band’s chance of success. The separation was so great that they considered leaving the
Seattle area to make their music. Similarly, a woman who accompanied the researcher during participant/observation communicated how excited she was to see a show (she had not been to one in quite a while) (F 6). She had been more involved previously by being in a band that played several clubs in the Seattle area as well as being in a relationship with a person who had been in several bands that played in Seattle. While she spoke of how glad she was to be involved again (by attending the show), she also talked about how she could not relate to “these people” [those at the club]. She felt removed from them because she does not live the lifestyle of “clubbing” or doing drugs, and she did not intend to live that way. A woman who worked as a journalist at one of the local music magazines expressed some exasperation at her increased amount of involvement (I 1). The abundant number of compact disks released by local artists and the growing number of industry and local magazines that she must read to keep herself informed is beneficial to her writing career. However, no matter how involved she is, she still cannot know everything about each band. “I just feel pressured to know each and every CD, to listen to each and every one.”

**Interdependence**

Many interviewees commented upon the close-knit community and the feelings of affiliation brought upon by that closeness. When asked to describe what the music scene was like, one man replied, “It’s great. I love it... Especially since... Seattle is such an ‘art-y’ town” (I 2). Communities are partially defined and nurtured by the community surrounding it. As the community is nurtured, so are the members within the community. The nurturing atmosphere helps to impact the scenesters’ creativity. Another scenester
took great pride in identifying with what he felt to be very important aspects of the community:

It's people making their own music, their own art, their own own fashion, their own, their own record covers, their own attitudes. It's not about declaring yourself hip by declaring yourself the first on the block to mindlessly copy the latest trend from Los Angeles, San Francisco, or London. (I 4)

For these two members, the community offered characteristics with which they could identify.

In many places (interviews, field notes, articles written by scenesters) the term "incestuous" was identified as a positive aspect of connection. A writer for a local 'zine said that the "small incestuous little community" was very much like a family in that it had "its own taboos, its own rules and conduct of behavior." He further went on to say that its a subculture and "not the anonymous mass production, mass consumption relationship." In other words, members of the community are interdependent; members have many roles which include both creating and being a consumer of music. Dual roles such as this may encourage scenesters to feel more interdependent and committed to the community.

Another interdependence theme that arose in this category was how Nirvana's listeners felt connected to both the group in general, but to Kurt Cobain in particular. His music reached a lot of young people in small towns and suburbs. As one man said, "He'd reached a lot of people. I don't think he quite understood the level he reached them at . . . maybe if he'd realized it might have helped him (from committing suicide)" (I 4). The
same respondent identified what Kurt Cobain stood for: “He was about . . . taking the guitar into your own hands.” He reached out to fans and encouraged them to make their own music. If Kurt Cobain had realized how much of an impact he had on his listeners, he may not have committed suicide. As is evident in his suicide note, he was just as impacted by the audience’s presence as they were with his presence in their lives. One man argued that “He had trouble being people’s role model. He had trouble being people’s inspiration. He wanted to think of himself as the outsider . . . as a reactive force . . . Not as any sort of leader” (14). He created his music in part to reach out to them and they were fans of *Nirvana* because of that music. One woman shared the above perception about Cobain’s influence on the music industry and world when she revealed that “Kurt Cobain of *Nirvana* reached out to his fans but there were problems with that connection to fans” (10).

The Music Connection

The music is at the core of the community; it is the central reason for the creation of the community almost 20 years ago. While the impact of newcomers on the community may encourage scenesters to feel separated, it is often the quality of the music that can make members feel more connected. Eddie Vedder, the lead singer for *Pearl Jam*, has noted that the kind of person a musician is has everything to do with the kind of music s/he makes (A 1). A musician must keep his integrity over the life of his career. Vedder claims that his new found fame does not give him the right to disregard all that has led to making him the person he is today. He argues that he must maintain the integrity of his
music. In other words, Vedder claims that he has to be connected with his fans in order to remember what it was like to be one. Unfortunately, being in the position of creating music forces him to be separated from those consuming it. He states:

I believe in the power of music. To me, it isn’t just a fad . . . We went from an era when rock’n’roll meant wearing a boustier as a woman . . . and guys trying to portray something that wasn’t realistic . . . We are trying to make it seem real . . . relate to our lives. (A 1)

The dialectic is that the music at the core of the community can both connect and separate community members. Musicians and their audiences can be brought together by the messages in their music. Since scenesters empathize with the music, it can make them feel more a part of the community because their reason for being there (e.g., communicating their dissatisfaction for society) is reinforced. At the same time, scenesters feel more connected to musicians because of a sense of “knowing” them. However, as more people begin to “know” the musicians, the fame makes the musicians more separated. Musicians need to be more protective of their personal lives and are separated even more as the audiences enlarge. The amount of connection to band members is finite; as more people want to feel connected with musicians, each of them are increasingly less connected.

Most of the separation statements focus on insiders trying to identify outsiders that have attached themselves to the community. The community has grown exponentially in the last five years, and this type of talk by scenesters may be a way of identifying the “true” members of the community from the “bandwagoners.” The connection comments
tend to focus more on identifying those in the community and maintaining the “tight knit”
nature of the community.

Predictability - Novelty

The second category of dialectics that were found in the Seattle music scene data
is that of predictability and novelty. This dialectic was defined by Baxter and others
(Baxter, 1988, 1990, 1994; Baxter & Goldsmith, 1990; Baxter & Simon, 1993; Baxter
& Wilmot, 1983; Goldsmith, 1990) to be a tension between high levels of uncertainty and
excessive anticipated behavior. For this analysis, predictability was defined as patterns of
behavior that occur frequently enough to become expected or recognized by members.
Novelty was defined as changes occurring in the scene, unexpected patterns of behavior,
and surprise. The themes that arose in this category are: patterns, attitudes, and scene
stability. The comments that are based toward the predictable end of the spectrum have a
tendency to sound rule-like. In other words, these predictable aspects of the continuum
are more likely to be community norms or rules. The novelty end of the continuum, on
the other hand, gravitate toward comments that are more based on scenesters’ aspirations,
hopes, or goals for the future of the music scene. Remaining comments are primarily
positive statements foreseeing a change in the scene that will keep members involved in
new ways.

Patterns

A pattern that is evident in the Seattle music scene is the types of audiences that
follow specific types of bands. One experienced bar manager/tender could guarantee with
almost perfect accuracy the type of audience that will follow specific types of bands. He learned quickly that certain types of bands (heavy metal, punk, grunge, etc.) drew similar audiences. Each type of audience had their own personality and patterns of behavior. He argued that:

> There are certain bands you could draw out their name and I could tell you what I have to order liquor and beer wise . . . there are certain bands that draw certain types of crowds . . . certain bands never having heard’em or seen’em or anything . . . if you played a few songs for me, I could pretty much know what kind of crowd they were going to draw. (I 2)

He further comments that there is a certain core of “Seattle grunge rockers” but that the audience core differs from show to show depending on the band. In other words, he has identified the core of scenesters in the Seattle music community and has also identified the larger number of newcomers that have attempted to become a part of it as well.

A scenester's ability to discern patterns between bands and audiences becomes even more important when that scenester cannot identify with certain types of audiences. A music editor and audience member commented that certain “elements” impact the relationship between band and audience types. She noted that:

> [With] certain bands, I think their crowds are more steady, more intelligent, or they have more schooling, or they have more aesthetic value. They are people who ask for more out of bands they like . . . [others] get a following of people who aren’t especially cultured, or interested in exploring the interesting things about life. I mean there’s definitely an agenda there. (I 1)
It appears that this woman identifies with certain types of crowds and prefers attending shows made up of those crowds. Having the insight into predicting such audience.band relationships can be very beneficial to her, for she is able to “weed through” the numerous gigs in the Seattle area and choose shows that fit her musical tastes as well as being with others similar to her. The ability to predict the following a band will have can become a tool for choosing which shows to attend. If punk rock is preferred, one may not wish to attend a gig that includes a heavy metal band. A punk audience member may feel out of place at a show primarily made up of a heavy metal audience.

There is a pattern that ties bands and audiences together in the Seattle music scene. Some bands have famous musicians as both fans and audience members. Many of these “famous fans” are long-time friends of the band. Often these famous fans attend shows and peak the interest of the rest of the audience. Audiences learn the ties between a particular band and their famous fans. Once they have the ability to predict the appearance of famous musicians at gigs, attendance is increased.

Pete Droge is not a very grunge type of musician, but um, he’s like childhood buddies with guys from *Pearl Jam*, so guys from *Pearl Jam* was gonna be here [for the gig]. So, everybody was hanging out to see if they could see them . . . So that has an influence on it too . . . but who do they know, and are they coming out to see who’s there to see them. (I3)

This pattern is important for several reasons. Again, there are economic benefits for clubs. They can guarantee larger crowds and more income on such evenings. For audience members, such knowledge may become opportunities for them to feel more connected to the bands and musicians that seem so separated because of their fame.
Predictability

A host of attitudes are a part of the predictability - novelty dialectic for the Seattle speech community. Being able to predict certain attitudes, including bands’ abilities, can be very beneficial for community members. Bands have to have some predictable attitudes in order to “fit in.” They are expected to work hard and they live up to that reputation. A few people identified the predominant spirit of the community as a “down to earth attitude [that is] also about getting things done” (I 3, I 6, I 9, I 10). Core band members work very hard at creating their music, which is in opposition to a popular conception that musicians are lazy. One man currently has three jobs working to promote bands and arrange gigs (I 11). One musician said that he was involved in Seattle music most hours of the day, every day of the week (I 9). Another band member not only had a day job in the scene, but was constantly in bands (sometimes more than one at a time) for ten years (I 3). Working hard to make the scene better is not only the job for bands, but for all scenesters. The predictability of this hard-working attitude is important for many reasons. The Seattle music scene was created over 20 years ago because people saw a need that they wanted to fulfill. They set goals and worked diligently to achieve them which became a norm for the community. For scenesters to decrease the amount of time and effort they put into the scene would be to go against the definition of the community. For many, the creation of music is a labor of love and something they need to accomplish for themselves. Thus, they cannot imagine decreasing their efforts for something they love so much. Those that are
Another attitude that is important to the predictability - novelty dialectic is that of arrogance. “You are supposed to have an ego of sorts. You are supposed to take pride in what you do” (14). This attitude is not known to everyone, especially newcomers. This sense of ego was inadvertently made apparent to a band member at a gig (1 5). Because she and the other band members were tired, they sat in a corner alone before and after they performed. The band was not trying to “act snobby,” but just not prepared to mingle with the crowd and other bands. “We noticed suddenly that people wanted to be more into us. That they’re more coming over to our table and talking to us.” Having learned this lesson, the band was able to act more predictably. They learned that audiences expected bands to have an ego. Since they learned this expectation and acted more predictably, they have been rewarded with more attention by others. There are several reasons why these attitudes are important. Being “aloof” and having an ego may be a way for band members to communicate pride in their music. It may also be a way for them to communicate their hard work and devotion to the creation of their music. This band’s mistake of having an “ego” has since been to their benefit.

**Scene Stability**

Novelty

The stability of the Seattle music scene seems to be an important topic to scenesters. Members are often surprised by aspects of it and also have expectations about its future. The stability of the scene is particularly important to scenesters for several
reasons which are evident through this analysis of findings. One informant was surprised that punk rock has lasted 20 years in a volatile medium such as pop music (I 4). Part of the success of the punk movement in Seattle and Seattle’s own music scene is the community’s aesthetic. He identified it as being determined by those in the scene:

[B]ecause the music and faction media are still operating on . . . a modern point of view. A belief in hipness, in hotness, in fashion, in fad, you know, trends to be dictated . . . to be killed easily. I’ve decided that the Seattle aesthetic, or at least my interpretation of it, uh, is more post-modern, where nothing is really new or old, where nothing is really in or out, it’s just good or bad. (I 4)

It is this post-modern view of music and community that will help keep the community alive, although changes will take place. It is the unpredictability of the future that keeps scenesters interested in predicting what will happen and in staying in the scene to find out. A music writer expects that more musicians will become nationally famous, but thinks that it will come “in waves” and that there is a growth in “different kinds of bands . . . We’ve had the Big Bang, and now the universe will spread out” (I 4). The Seattle music scene’s future growth and changes will mirror other music scenes across the nation: “I think you are going to see a decentralization of American culture.” If a decentralization of American culture is to occur, it is a very novel response to the American culture status quo. Several band members think that the popularity of the music scene is going to decrease although no one is sure how it will continue in its future forms (I 3, I 9).

In order to keep the music scene vital and interesting, bands need to view their own music differently and accomplish many tasks in creating their music. One way to
keep the scene vital is for female bands to work harder at their popularity and creating their music. Two people interviewed felt that the female bands were passed over because there was a “market [for] white male angst” (14, 1 10). Many of those bands may also choose to remain a “cult item” and not search out the major label record contract. These bands “want to speak to their own” by diversifying their sounds and not aspiring for national fame (1 4).

Many think that bands are going to keep their music novel by breaking away from the alternative music that has become mainstreamed. Again, they are trying to be “hip, cutting edge” by breaking away from the stereotypical grunge rock (1 2). According to a music writer, there have always been sub-trends within trends, which makes the music scene more vital than ever. He philosophized a theory of Seattle’s “ardent culture” over 15 years ago; in order for Seattle to be recognized for its music, the community would have to break away from whatever was being created in other cities and create an individual sound (1 4). One of the ways the music community may be able to do that is for each band to explore its own musical capabilities. One scenester remarked on the Seattle music scene’s continuing life:

Seattle people think it’s cool until other people think it’s cool, and then it’s not cool anymore. So, it’s not dead at all. There are so many mimicking bands out there trying to duplicate the sounds of the bands that made it big. (1 2)

Many say that Seattle will not go away, that the scene will never die but grow and change (1 3, 1 5, 1 9). Some scenesters argue the scene that is “here to stay” although the future may be very different from its past. “There’ll still be an amazing amount of stuff coming out of it that might not be in the pages of ‘Time’ . . . it might not be the stuff that
professors write about . . . [it might grow and change] to many small scenes” (I 4).

Another person thinks that the scene may be partially dying and will spring back in the future (I 5).

While specific themes were detected for this dialectic, a general sense can be derived from the category. The comments that are based around the predictability end of the spectrum have a tendency to sound rule-like (e.g., the expectation of bands to be arrogant). In other words, these predictable aspects of the continuum are more likely to be community norms or rules. The novelty end of the continuum on the other hand, tends to be made up of comments that are more based in aspirations, hopes, or goals for the future of the music scene (e.g., to remain “hip, cutting edge”). This is for which the community endeavors.

**Openness - Closedness**

This category of openness - closedness was not as evident as other categories. There were some data that could be coded into this category, however, and they are presented here. For the purpose of data analysis, openness was defined as freely discussing one’s feelings about being a member of the community and if that relationship has changed over time. Closedness was conceptualized as one’s wish not to release information regarding one’s relationship with the Seattle music scene as well as one’s lack of doing so. The two themes evident in this category were comments about the scene and the audiences.
The Scene

Openness

When scenesters talked about the nature of the community and their relationship to it, they exhibited the openness portion of the dialectic. When respondents were asked to look back at the origination of the scene, many talked about those times as if they “were the good old days” (I 3, I 6, I 7, I 11). When asked about how one man thought others felt about the changes to the scene, he talked about members longing “for the old days wistfully:”

They weren’t too happy about it at the time, you know, they were broke, they were parking cars or making coffee for a living, and then practicing all night and then getting to play one or two gigs a month to 50 people. But of course now, now they look back at it as the good old days. (I 4)

The same man went on to talk about how the scene is “not officially about getting rich or famous.” He talked at length about the scene being about the creation of music, much as band members did (I 3, I 5, I 9, I 10, I 11). Most of those band members acknowledged a desire on some level to make money doing what they love. One man who works primarily at booking shows scoffed those who shame others by calling them “sell-outs.” He said that no musician can deny that if s/he was given an offer by a major record label to sign a contract for 100% musical freedom, to keep their integrity as musicians (e.g., by not doing ridiculous promotions), to get the album out to millions of listeners, and make a good deal of money that any musician would turn such an offer down.
One band acknowledged their feelings of fame due to their popularity in the Seattle clubs (F 11). In an amusing and light-hearted way, they were able to communicate their feelings to the audience. The lead singer of this band introduced a song by saying, “This city makes us feel like rock stars. Until we go out and get into our blue van. Yep, we feel like rock stars.” Another band recognized that same night the deep desire in most everyone to be famous on some level. At one show, they sent a message to the audience before playing a song: “We’re going to leave you with this song and the rest is entirely up to you” (F 11). The song they performed included the lyrics, “everybody wants to be naked and famous.” The same band that night also recognized the danger in signing a contract with a major record label and becoming famous. The lead singer previewed the song by informing the audience its topic; a toothless, destitute old man sitting on his back porch. The major record label he signed with “screwed him over” and he is left penniless. Once he finished the description of the song, the singer added, “Social commentary; I bet you never thought you’d hear it!” (F 11) Finally, one community member posted on the Internet his recognition of the impact the world has had on the Seattle music scene (POS 10). “It all seems so surreal that the world is caught up in some kind of crazed plague trailing behind some local boys. I would be a liar if I said that I haven’t been affected by the ordeal too.”

Closedness

Scenesters have been very careful about how much information they reveal. Many do not talk about the scene for several different reasons which are discussed. One writer has a monthly column in which he discusses issues including the Seattle music scene (I 4).
However, he has always been careful to keep information out of the column that concerns private parties held by scene members. “It was almost an unconscious decision at first to avoid those topics, but now as I’m coalescing an overall philosophy behind the column” there is no need to release that private information.

Many others have also commented about there being no need to release private information, particularly about painful and private subjects such as Kurt Cobain’s suicide. One woman talked about the close relationship she had with Mr. Cobain and said that she had many stories she could tell but refused to even discuss them in the interview (I 10). In another interview, a scenester gave a reason for such silence (including his own) (I 11). He talked about how each time a story is shared about an individual, part of that person is taken away and in some way defiled. He did not want any part of such defilement. Many others replied simply that the information is private and is “no one’s business.”

Krist Noveselic, bass player for Nirvana, wrote in an Internet post that he could not talk about the band Nirvana:

I really don’t have much to say, right now. Sure if I were to be in the seat next to you on a plane and we struck up a conversation, we’d pass the time by discussing the topics of the day or whatever. I cannot answer Nirvana questions. The mail I got was sweet and I appreciate it but hey, as the Flev says, “Can’t do nothing for you man!” To be truthful, I’ll read your messages but won’t reply. (POS 19)

Another such comment was made by Eddie Vedder, singer for Pearl Jam. Similarly to Mr. Noveselic, Mr. Vedder talked about how he will, at some point, decline to give interviews. “I’ll probably not do interviews one day, because I don’t want to end up convoluting the subject. Music is the one thing . . . It’s just 15 years ago, I found a
beautiful way to express myself; I found a very powerful medium.” In other words, to

talk about the music only detracts from it and puts the focus on something that is so much
less important than the music. For those in the limelight, there are very personal reasons
for not discussing such topics. If they were more open about themselves and private
information, they would become so connected with the newcomers that they would
“belong” to everyone and lose their personhood.

Audiences

Bands often communicated to audiences because they were accessible. However,
audiences were often the target for comments. Band members and spokespersons took
the opportunity several times to denounce the audience for various reasons. On an
evening that the Milltown Cafe was hosting a fund-raiser for the annual Seattle Hempfest,
the Master of Ceremonies introduced the bands and provided commentary during set
changes (F 4). During one of these commentaries, he ridiculed the audience (primarily
male) for being drunk and agreeing with him without thoroughly understanding his point.
He expressed anger at such short term agreement from the audience and derided them for
not trying to fight societal problems. At another venue, the evening’s third band was
preparing to start their set when the lead singer commented about the audience: “If you
missed [the first band] and [the second band] you’re fucked! Put your hands together for
them” (F 11). The singer was commenting on how the band room had been empty for the
previous two bands and how it had filled up as the third band was about to go on stage.

Krist Noveselic, bass player for Nirvana, had some similar sentiments in his post to
a newsgroup on the Internet (POS 19). His comment was directed at a larger audience
and their comments and reactions to Kurt Cobain: “Sometimes I can’t understand jack
asses who talk shit about dear old Kurt, but as a true democrat . . . I’ll respect the fact that
they have a right to their opinion, no matter how shallow and misinformed it is. We need
more respect in this world.”

When the audience does not listen to the first two bands and goes in to hear the
headliner, they are being unsupportive of those bands (I 11). The lead singer quoted
previously was attempting to make the audience recognize their lack of support while
communicating his support of the band. By doing so, he is communicating that the
audience has robbed themselves of a positive experience. The comment by Noveselic
serves the same purpose.

Supportive - Unsupportive

Another dialectic category became evident during the coding process: supportive -
unsupportive. Supportive comments were defined as comments that were favorable to the
Seattle music scene, while unsupportive comments were characterized by a questioning of
the value of the scene. Supportive and unsupportive data were coded into two themes:
bands and expectations of individuals. Many of the comments coded into this category
emphasized being supportive of community members and the music in the scene.
Members made unsupportive comments when they were concerned with newcomers and
the quality of bands.
Bands are the most visible aspect of the scene because of the community’s music core. Because of this, bands are also the most likely to be supported and criticized by members. A ‘zine writer talked about missing the days when audience members worked harder to support the bands they liked (I 4). He said, the only people that were in the audience were those that truly liked the bands that “were completely obscure and would be plugged into a very narrow circuit of knowledge.” In other words, community members had to work to follow the bands they liked because they were known to only a few. Another such comment was made during a field work observation. A woman commented that the obscure bands that are not well known “are the best kind of bands” (F 1). During an interview, a community member showed similar support for local bands by calling one band in particular “intelligent punk” (I 2). Verbalized support of bands is also support for the community. This is a way for scenesters to show support for others and the scene. Making such comments vocal to other scenesters communicates membership and similarities to those around him/her.

Unsupportive

Bands can also be the subject of unsupportive comments. The core of the community is the music, which makes the bands the most visible aspect of the scene to criticize. Bands also are important to clubs; successful bands make successful clubs. For economic reasons, club owners are very critical of bands. Several respondents talked about how club managers and booking agents seem protective of the reputation of their
clubs. If a band has a bad image they have diminished opportunity to get gigs. One woman said that the area a band comes from such as the south end of Seattle can immediately give them a bad reputation (11). According to her, the sound of the band did not matter; their neighborhood was more important in determining whether or not they were booked into a club. They could have a similar or identical sound as a band from Seattle: “They don’t get the good shows, they don’t get the good gigs, it’s not . . . It doesn’t work for them like it can for another band.” One band that she was referring to had a following of fans that were not welcomed warmly in Seattle clubs, and this following “took their image and shot it to hell. They couldn’t get a good show within the city of Seattle because their following like was guilt by association.” A band member interviewed for this study met some of this discrimination first hand (15). She said a booking agent liked her band’s demo tape but was worried that they did not have a bigger following (partly due to the members being from another city). He was also worried that they would attract the wrong kind of crowd to the club: “he was afraid that we were gonna look like ‘glam rockers’ (see Appendix C) and we would ruin the reputation of his club.”

Unsupportive comments such as these can be very difficult for people to accept, especially if the band is just beginning or is made up of more peripheral scene members.

Lack of support for bands also came from a woman who worked as a music editor for magazine (11). She talked about there being too many bands in the Seattle area and how the community is inundated with these bands (11, 111). The editor spoke about how the sheer number of bands made it difficult for her to do her job. “I know this will sound really terrible. I don’t want censorship in the music industry, but I wish there was some
type of ceiling [or minimum criteria] that people had to meet before they could send their CD out. Because the quality is so horrible for the expense.” She went on further to say that there are too many bands in Seattle; “and it has nothing to do with the quality of the work. The music can be just terrible.” Comments such as these can be indicative of the level of work expected by bands. Part of the bands’ arrogance comes from the level of commitment and hard work. If scenesters believe a band to be working below their level of potential, they are unsupportive. In addition, if they have attitudes that are unacceptable to the Seattle music scene, they are also unsupported.

Not all bands are well supported by the community. A woman talked about how bands could only get so big in town before they would have to leave to become more popular. In the early history of the community, bands were met with barriers; there were not enough venues, audiences were too small, etc. Bands would have to leave the city or break up in order to move beyond the barriers (I 3). Other bands had to leave the area to find any kind of fame (e.g., album sales, loyal following) because they were not supported in Seattle.

[Seattle bands] can go to Japan and it’s like a stadium concert . . . but they can come here and play on a Tuesday night and maybe seven people will show up. So you know, it does matter in some places and whether you’re good or bad it doesn’t really have anything to do with it. It’s whether you’re from Seattle or you’re not. (I 1)

Some scenesters do appreciate the community bands, but have been more realistic about the changes that have occurred since newcomers have joined the scene. “[T]here are always some good local bands. Even right now, I’d say we were kind of in a low--
there aren’t as many good bands as there were when I was at the Milltown Cafe. At least not as far as I’m concerned” (I 2). Respondents not only talked about the quality of the bands but also the impact on the music community due to the popularity of Seattle music.

One scenester posted on the Internet his feelings about the changes:

And I feel fortunate to be amidst a historic period of rock-in-roll that is centered around a beautiful city. At the same time, I’m a little dismayed at the popularity of the bands as it was only a few years ago that you could go to a small club in Seattle and see these guys [members of bands like Soundgarden] play. (POS 10)

His dismay at the scene’s changes focus around his inability to see the bands like previously able. His comments are similar to scenesters’ losing their “playground.”

Several people interviewed made similar comments about losing their “playground” (I 3, I 6, I 7, I 11). For one woman who was both an audience member and a band member, she met with some difficulty reconciling this feeling:

Some people are . . . like this is our playground and we don’t want anyone else to know about it . . . I feel like that sometimes too. You know, it’s frustrating sometimes when a band you like becomes big, and you can’t go see them and stand up front anymore, or see them every weekend . . . but at the same time I mean, you know at least bands can actually make a living now and keep doing it. (I 3)

Expectations of Individuals

Supportive

The community is made up of many individuals that play various roles. As the individuals talk about others in the Seattle music scene, they can make their support, or
lack of support, evident. One important way to show that support is through the “Punk Rock Ethic.” When a person believes in the “Punk Rock Ethic,” s/he encourages others to “be your own star.” It is the strongest support possible because it communicates a belief in that person as a person and as an artistic creative force. “It’s telling people everywhere you can do your own band. You can make your own clothes, you can make your own art. Don’t follow them, don’t follow us either” (I 4). Many people interviewed talked about the benefits of nonconformity for the scene (I 4, I 6, I 9, I 11). Imbedded in this value of nonconformity is also the value of encouraging fans to create their own music and scenes rather than looking up to only a few bands. “[Audiences around the world] see Seattle bands as voice of empowerment, as role models that they can be inspired by not to create bands that sound just like Seattle bands but to help to create their own scene” (I 4). Krist Noveselic, bass player for Nirvana, talked about Kurt Cobain and his belief in the Punk Rock Ethic at Mr. Cobain’s memorial service. “Kurt had an ethic toward his fans that was rooted in the punk rock way of thinking: no band is special, no player royalty. If you’ve got a guitar and a lot of soul, just bang something out and mean it. You’re the super star” (A 6). Nonconformity is integral for the punk rock way of life. Encouraging others to be leaders and not followers suggest they continue to build the scene and become its future.

Support for individuals can also be communicated in less overt, and often more nonverbal ways. There are unwritten rules about being nice to others in the scene (F 8, I 3, I 4, I 9). One man said that being politically correct or nice was not a “goal” of the community (I 11). It was instead taken-for-granted; being nice and supportive was just
how everyone was in the scene. The researcher made note of such supportiveness and kindness in field notes (F 8). One evening a bar was particularly crowded and moving through the mass of people was difficult. Others would help the researcher move through the crowd, begin a conversation, or simply smile and say “hello.” This type of behavior was confirmed to be the rule, not the exception (I 11). One scenester talked about how people very often will be nice to an individual, particularly by protecting and supporting the rights of gays and lesbians, people of all ethnic backgrounds, and women (I 11).

Unsupportive

Many unsupportive comments were also made about individuals in the Seattle music scene or about fans after Kurt Cobain’s death. Mourners had gathered outside his home for days, standing in the rain crying, creating memorials to his life and work. One woman was disturbed by these mourners and demonstrated her lack of support for their feelings: “she was saying ‘I just loved him you know. I loved him. He just really said things to me that no one else could say.’ I just felt like saying you know, he didn’t say it for you. He said it for himself” (I 3). Scenesters were highly critical of many of these mourners because they were newcomers and were mourning the loss of a star and not a human being. Many of them were more concerned about how his suicide affected themselves rather than what drove him to his suicide or concern for his family. In addition, many did not understand the meaning behind this music, thus could not understand what “he said.” Because scenesters mourned privately, lack of support for public mourners was a means of communicating their outsider status.
Unsupportive comments were not only made about the individuals involved in the scene, but also the audiences that frequented the most popular clubs in the community. The general consensus was that audiences were just too big (1 2, 1 3, 1 7, 1 11). One band and audience member commented on how frustrating it was for her to go to shows because she could not get close enough to the stage to see the bands anymore. A bar manager said these large audiences were becoming more difficult to handle often because of their “stupidity” and lack of respect for others.

[In] regular restaurants, the customer is always right. In clubs, the bartender is always right. And the customer can shut up . . . We have way too many people in here filling their beers to put up with any of that other stuff. So you know, decide what’s going on. If we have a problem with you then you go. (1 2)

These comments clarify the difference between scenesters and newcomers. Scenesters’ lack of support for newcomers helps identify the impact newcomers have had on the community. These comments identify the damage to the scene and are described the problems scenesters’ have had with the changes. These unsupportive comments seem to be ways to protect the community from continued infiltration of outsiders. Comments in the supportive - unsupportive dialectic are indicative of scenesters’ attempts to create a distance between themselves and newcomers. Unsupportive comments communicate that newcomers are outsiders and not a part of the community. More supportive comments are means to show similarity and acceptance for other scenesters.
CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

In this chapter implications of this research are offered. A discussion of the model that best represents the Seattle music scene is given first and is followed by the contributions of the study, particularly regarding how scenesters talk about newcomers. Future directions for research are also provided.

Applying Dialectics to Communities

The research on dialectical contradictions was helpful and illustrative in the analysis of this study’s findings. When used as a conceptual framework, the dialectic pairs could be tested and extended, as should occur when using any framework in an ethnographic case study. The framework yielded and should continue to yield important information regarding the functions of dialectics in communities. The predictability-novelty dialectic was tested in this study and found to exist in communities. The autonomy-connection dialectic also existed in the music community, however, the framework was extended to reflect differences in the community from relationship building research. The term separation better characterized scenesters’ talk than autonomy, which extends the framework for future research. The original research was also extended when the openness-closedness dialectic fell out and a new dialectic, supportive-unsupportive, was found.

A finding of this research is the scarcity of comments that could be considered a part of the openness-closedness dialectic. This finding is not as surprising when the original definition is examined again, however. Baxter (1988) defines this dialectic to be
open disclosure between relationship parties that is a necessary condition for intimacy. Openness can create vulnerabilities for the self, other and the relationship that necessitate information closedness. In other words, a relational partner makes comments about the amount and type of relationship disclosure with the other. If the partner reveals too many feelings about the other, that person is open to rejection. If that partner reveals too little about his/her feelings, the other will not know his/her true feelings and feel uncertain about the future of the relationship.

There are several reasons why this openness-closedness dialectic may not be present in musical communities. This dialectic requires that individuals discuss the relationship with each other, yet this is virtually impossible in a community. Dialectics exist between a singular member of a community and the community itself. In this instance, the community is comprised of both the individual members that comprise the community and the sum of those parts. As a community is comprised of possibly thousands of people, it would be unfeasible for an individual to express her feelings about the relationship she has with the community. Her disclosures would evoke little if any change. There is not an entity for her to reveal how happy or unhappy she is in the community other than to other community members. Such revelations would not make her feel any closer to the community, yet still possibly make her feel vulnerable to whom she has disclosed. For this dialectic to truly function in a community, a single community member would have to reveal her feelings to all community members. This is not feasible or desirable.
Another reason for the absence of this dialectic is that in musical communities there are more ways to communicate than just face to face. Community members can use forums such as 'zines to communicate their dissatisfaction, as a band member did in an article entitled “Moshers and Me” (A 19). This band member wrote an editorial to relay his frustrations in performing for crowds that were inconsiderate and dangerously boisterous. Considering the size of the community and how inaccessible most members of it are, articles such as his are the most feasible ways for members to disclose their reactions to community involvement.

A related means of communicating to the Seattle music community is to take advantage of the music and use lyrics to send a message. Several bands have used this method to vent their frustrations about the music industry and fame as well as send messages to audiences. On rare occasions, shows seem to transcend to a different level where the band and audience seem very connected leading to a synergistic effect occurring between the band and the audience. This does not happen often, but when it does, the band is more likely to comment on their relationship with the community. When one of these events occurred during field work, the lead singer made an openness type of comment: “This city makes us feel like rock stars” (F 11). They were commenting on the energy they were receiving from the crowd and how it in turn altered the way they felt about the audience. As mentioned earlier, such shows are rare and very special. In addition, it is a rare and appropriate opportunity for such openness - closedness comments that just cannot occur in normal everyday talk.
There may be a fourth reason for the absence of the openness - closedness dialectic occurring in this study, at least in terms of the interviews that were conducted. As the interviews were conducted with respondents, a relationship was built between the researcher and the respondent through the talk about the community. The dialectic may have been occurring between the researcher and the respondent. A few times, respondents verbalized that they did not wish to answer a particular question, which was an overt means of communicating that they wished to remain closed. This occurred a few times when respondents were asked about Kurt Cobain and his suicide. There may have been other times, however, that the respondents were closed to the researcher without her being aware they were doing so. In such a case, the dialectic would not be available for coding in the analysis process.

While one of Baxter’s (1988) original dialectics was not evident in the everyday talk of scenesters, comments which could be placed on a continuum of supportive - unsupportive emerged. It may not be feasible for scenesters to communicate their feelings to the community, however it is possible for them to demonstrate their support of the community. This may explain the lack of support for the openness - closedness dialectic and the emergence of a new dialectic, supportive - unsupportive. Community is conceptualized by Anderson (1993) as a collection of people working together for a common goal or achievement. Community members then have an obligation to encourage or “support” other community members in their attempt to accomplish that goal. If the entire community is working for the same goal and the work is difficult, then support is needed in order to encourage those that are sacrificing themselves for this goal. If
members perceive others’ work as not contributing to community building or the accomplishment of the community’s goals, then it is reasonable that their comments would be unsupportive of those individuals. Whereas a community member cannot verbalize feelings about the community to all its members, s/he can show support by making statements about individuals and their actions.

The Anti-Socialization of Newcomers

In this section, a discussion of newcomers’ impact on the Seattle music scene is provided to help the reader understand the changes in the community from a scenester’s perspective. In addition, the implications of community growth are highlighted to help establish a foundation for understanding a re-conceptualization of the socialization process, titled here as anti-socialization. Researchers have often examined the socialization process from the perspective of a newcomer (Albrecht & Bach, in press; Bach, 1990; Louis, 1980). Information is presented here regarding how veterans obstruct the socialization process.

The Impact of Newcomers

The division between scenesters and newcomers in the Seattle music scene is apparent in the beginning of dialectical analysis. Scenesters have difficulties relating to these new people that want to join the community. Their reasons for wanting to be more involved with the community generally consist of reasons such as the community being “hip, cutting-edge” (12). Seattle became trendy for many people who wanted to take advantage of a local brush with fame. Many of the reasons newcomers wanted to join the community were the exact reasons scenesters wanted to keep them out of it. The
behavior and attitudes of newcomers were the most visible of all differences between scenesters and newcomers. Scenesters pride themselves on being open minded and being concerned with the welfare of others. It is this kind of concern that has prompted scenesters to begin projects that are aimed at helping other people. Fundraising, such as for a private murder investigation, for “Voters for Choice,” and for local projects is an important aspect of the Seattle music scene. On a more basic level, scenesters pride themselves on being considerate of others in everyday situations. It is possible that their inducement to be kind arises from experiences where they were once chastised, discriminated against, or sometimes beaten up for being different.

In reaction to this treatment, scenesters created a community in which they could feel comfortable and work together to achieve their goals. Their success, however, drew the attention of even those that had once chastised them. Several comments were made about people who used to “beat up” the scenesters in high school now being the biggest fans of punk and alternative music. Scenesters can in no way feel connected to these people as these newcomers, nor want to share the community they have created with them. Scenesters would be more open to accepting “frat boys,” “homophobic types,” and the “upwardly mobile types” if those people were more considerate when they visited the Seattle music community. However, many newcomers’ willingness to start fights with scenesters that are different from them, their disregard for the scenesters’ community, and for the feelings of others creates a deep division between newcomers and scenesters.

This division is more apparent in the unsupportive comments that scenesters made about newcomers. The supportive - unsupportive comments were identifications of
insiders and outsiders through identifying acceptable and unacceptable behaviors.

Scenesters could communicate their attempts to distance themselves from newcomers by identifying attitudes that they believe are important and by recognizing that newcomers do not understand the importance of the community or the history of the Seattle music scene. Understanding its history and the reasons for its creation are extremely important. To be a functioning, accepted member of the Seattle music scene, one must understand that the community’s music was often created in opposition to, and because of, the people with whom they could not identify. These newcomers have been identified in this study by the separation - connection and supportive - unsupportive data. Many newcomers have also identified themselves as the biggest fans of “grunge” by buying into the fad and fashion the mass media created after the Seattle “explosion.” They have further made themselves familiar with the most popular music to be released from the scene from frequenting clubs in the Seattle area. Newcomers are in some way attempting to demonstrate to outsiders their loyalty and support of the Seattle music scene (Bach, 1990). However, newcomers have not made themselves familiar enough with the scene to be able to identify the rules of the community. If one is truly a member of a community and expresses allegiance to it, s/he should be able to identify the norms and rules of the community (Bach, 1990). Being able to identify such rules is a sign of connection to the community as well as an admission of support for those rules.

In some way, scenesters must communicate their dissatisfaction with the infiltration of newcomers in order to maintain some control over their community. Some members used local 'zines (see Appendix D) as a means of communicating rules
concerning safety and consideration in the community, while others have used less obvious ways such as nonverbal communication in the clubs. Communicating rules regarding safety to newcomers may serve several purposes. There is a basic need for safety in clubs where hundreds of people may be in a mosh pit. Communicating these rules can then help ensure the safety of scenesters and newcomers in the audience. Scenesters are often the ones that get hurt in such incidences, so may feel the need to safeguard themselves. Publication of rules may also be a method of accepting the addition of newcomers to the community and reconciling the differences between the two factions. Communicating rules to newcomers via published articles is not in opposition to scenesters’ attempts to keep newcomers at bay. Overt communication of these rules does not occur unless there are serious risks to scenesters and audiences from newcomers’ irresponsible behavior. Scenesters run the risk of divulging the rules of the community that would allow newcomers to successfully adopt those rules (Bach, 1990).

I never felt like I was in any danger when I was in the audience of a true punk show. There is an etiquette there among the chaos . . . I guess the stage-diving thing evolved as the ultimate expression of the shrinking distance between performers and their audiences; the people who are at the show are welcome to participate, and no rules were [sic] necessary because a tenet of punk rock is that people are able to govern themselves and neither appreciate or need any help in doing so . . . There’s nothing more distasteful than a bunch of high-fiving white guys who think being an annoying idiot is what punk rock is all about.

(Stringfellow, 1994, pg. 14)
Scenesters were faced with having to protect their own health for the first time in the history of the Seattle music scene. In order for musicians to continue with their livelihood, they had to ensure that they could do so safely. By “announcing” the rules of the community to newcomers, scenesters were trying to encourage more acceptable behavior, by communicating clear differences between them and a “bunch of high-fiving white guys.”

Musicians are in an interesting position for such communication: “One thing you people who attend shows might not know is we performers are frequently observing you too” (Stringfellow, 1994, p. 14). Some of the most public means of communicating to these newcomers that they do not belong is through lyrics of popular songs. One of these songs is by the band *Nirvana*, and identifies such hypocrisy by the newcomers:

He’s the one who likes all our pretty songs
and he likes to sing along
and he likes to shoot his gun
but he don’t know what it means

*don’t know what it means* (In Bloom, “Nevermind”)

Lyrics such as these indicate the basic inability of newcomers to understand the emotions behind the lyrics as well as the history of the scene that in so many ways defines the scene. Another lyric by Kurt Cobain of *Nirvana* became the party line for many young people that just did not “get it.” A line he had written in “dry jest,” “Here we are now, entertain us,” became an anthem for the “Flannel Nation.” In other words, the lyrics became the theme for millions of young people who were conforming to a culture they could not understand. Such abuse of the lyrics made it impossible for Cobain to perform that song.
without contempt for its violators. “By the start of *Nirvana*’s 1993 fall tour, Cobain could barely bring himself to play the song with any enthusiasm” (Fricke, 1994, p. 66).

Participation is essential to express validation (Bach, 1990). However, scenesters are identifying the rules of the community for newcomers by defining them as outsiders in the process.

For scenesters, one of their defining features was that they refused to conform to what the majority dictated. They were the outsiders in high school that were abused for dressing oddly, their sexual preferences (or assumptions about their sexual preference), their poverty, and their hobbies (such as music). Many scenesters hated their high school years because of such abuse and because they could not relate to the “jocks,” “preppies,” and homophobic behavior that existed all around them. In many ways, they created a community in complete opposition these experiences. They built a safe place for people to experiment and try new avenues for creativity. “At its best New Wave/punk represents a fundamental and age-old Utopian dream: that if you give people the license to be as outrageous as they want in absolutely any fashion they can dream up, *they’ll be creative about it*, and do something good besides” (emphasis original, Bangs, 1995). This was a nurturing component of the scene that probably encouraged scenesters to create nineteen separate types of music (Humphrey, 1995).

Members of the Seattle music scene created a community in order to invent their music. Creating and performing their music provided them with a link to others who could empathize and share their experiences. Once they were able to perform this music for larger audiences, they were able to make connections with people and have a sense of
belonging. In order to understand the music and be able to empathize with the musicians, it was vital that the audience had some type of similar experience. Those that lived privileged lives were unable to understand the basic emotions that drove the music, such as abandonment, poverty, and alienation. This was what drove scenesters to feel separated from newcomers, while their empathy facilitated a connection with those people that were similar. A rock journalist described a successful connection well:

We fight our way through the massed and leveled collective safe taste of the Top 40, just looking for a little something we can call our own. But when we find it and jam the radio to hear it again it isn’t just ours -- it is a link to thousands of others who are sharing it with us. As a matter of a single song this might mean very little; as a culture, as a way of life, you can’t beat it. (Marcus, 1995).

Every time a song becomes popular and reaches thousands of people, there is the possibility of damaging the integrity of the music. The impact on the music is another reason why scenesters are bothered by the incorporation of newcomers into the Seattle music scene. The point of this and any musical community is to create music for others to hear. However, there can often be a trade off for those creating the music. Another important feature of “alternative” music is that it is not mainstreamed. In other words, alternative music must have messages that most cannot relate to, must be written so that most will not want to listen to it, and must be inaccessible enough that the serious fan must work to seek it out. When the Seattle music scene became famous however, it became “mainstreamed.” Most of the music had messages that the privileged newcomers could not relate to, and which they ignored. They announced “Here we are now, entertain
us” as they entered their fraternity parties. Women wore strands of pearls to concerts in which the performers had never known wealth.

In addition, it was not difficult to seek the music out once it became trendy to visit clubs in Seattle. New clubs opened up all over the city increasing the opportunities for newcomers to see shows. Coincidentally, the scene became mainstreamed by the people in which the scenesters defined themselves in opposition. Scenesters were then required to worry about the integrity of the music for the first time. Probably the most difficult thing for scenesters to accept was knowing newcomers, that scenesters could not relate to, thought they could relate to the music. If scenesters were able to halt the change to the community from affecting them personally, they would be able to protect both their integrity and that of the music. Questions regarding how the fame affected him personally and thus, affected the music were evident in Kurt Cobain’s suicide note when he spoke of having lost the excitement in creating his music (reprinted in Rolling Stone, 1994, 697, pg. 40).

The impact of money created the worst damage to the Seattle music scene. Where the community had once prided itself on non-conformity, as is evident by comments in the predictability - novelty category, it had become the new source for fashion and trends. Abernathy’s (1994) article, “Get your grunge wear at Kmart, kiddies,” is evidence of such conformity. Clothes that had once been purely functional (and cheap) for scenesters had become the focus of such magazines as Vogue and Rolling Stone. The deeper implications of such fashion trends was that people and the culture were being merchandised. Many of the scenesters had been so poor that they obtained their clothing
from a church that gave it away free once a month, known to scenesters as the "Church of the Free Clothes" (Humphrey, 1995). Scenesters' poverty had become a multi-billion dollar business of flannel shirts and Doc Marten shoes. The merchandising of scenesters' poverty was just the first of many difficult things for scenesters to accept.

When money became abundant in this community, the community was changed by it. One of the first signs this musical community was monetarily successful was the emergence of "copy cat" bands. Outsiders began creating bands and writing music that modeled the current successful bands. The only purpose for the creation of these bands was to "cash in" on the success of the scene. This occurred in Seattle as bands were hoping for record contracts that they thought would promise them millions of dollars.

Scene bands were separated from their copy cat counterparts by many of the experiences, beliefs, and attitudes that separated scenesters from newcomers in all three of the dialectic categories in this study. Many other bands suffered from the success of the music scene's popularity by playing to the lowest common denominators in the audiences. As the crowds enlarged with outsiders, the audience's expectations of the music changed.

Scenesters still expected music to be created with passion and artistry. Newcomers, however, just wanted something they could "mosh" to. This was evident by newcomers moshing to slow songs, inappropriate songs, and even to the tape recorded music played during set changes. If a band gave in and played what the crowd wanted, they were no longer pushing their own creative boundaries.

The most devastating impact of newcomers on the Seattle music scene has been on the everyday life in the community. An important finding of this research is the scenesters'
talk about the infiltration of their “playground” by outsiders. Comments about newcomers, “upwardly mobile homophobic yuppie types,” and the like are really indicators of anger and resentment the scenesters have for those that have done the most damage to the community. While many outsiders may think the community has suffered the most damage from the fame and notoriety that the scene procured over the last five years, it is most apparent from scenesters’ talk that this is not the case. Much less time was spent talking about the nationwide and worldwide fame that Seattle has seen for its music than the comments made about newcomers. It is not surprising that scenesters had such a strong reaction to newcomers for a variety of reasons. Fame did not harm the scene; more records were sold, bands made more money, and the city’s music gained the recognition it deserved. Comments about fame and notoriety are most evident in the predictability - novelty category as scenesters discuss the future of the Seattle music scene. The addition of fame, newcomers and their money to the scene let bands be monetarily successful for the first time. Band members could quit their jobs and devote themselves to their music full time. However, there were large prices to pay for monetary stability.

As band members became more famous, they were no longer able to live a normal lives. They became more secluded and protective of their personal lives as is evident in the analysis of the separation - connection dialectics category. The most popular bands in Seattle even had to deal with the seclusion fame brings. The most harmful indicator that the scene was being infiltrated by outsiders, however, was the loss of clubs, coffee shops, and restaurants the scenesters felt most comfortable in. A bar manager identified that the biggest problem with the addition of newcomers to the clubs was that they were taking
over the places that scenesters felt comfortable in and “could call their own” (12). Once a gay or lesbian scenester could feel safe being themselves in clubs, but now could no longer be guaranteed of such comfort and protection. The clubs, coffee shops, and restaurants that scenesters could once call their home were being overrun by people who did not appreciate these places. Scenesters had to be protective of their “playground;” it was a tangible aspect of their community that was a part of the history of the community as well as helping to contribute to the Seattle music scene’s culture. Scenesters had difficulty feeling comfortable when the entire community was changing:

> You know what I can liken it to? . . . You know those things they have at playgrounds that have the bars that you hold on to and it goes around? Everybody was on it and everybody was at an even level way back when. We were all friends. You know everybody played in everybody else’s band and then it started moving. It started making money and it started getting famous. And the faster it spun, the harder it was to hold on. And some people . . . you know like me, I could have stayed . . . But it doesn’t stop. It keeps moving and going faster. And other people jump on that haven’t been there before. And they’re . . . some of them are taken in with open arms and some of them aren’t. But they’re still there. You climb back on but there’s new faces. (I 11)

The feeling of community for the Seattle music scene is gone. Long time members of the community are still there and they still have their core friends. However, the sense that a small group of people were working toward the same goal is gone. A group that used to consist of 1000 people now is too large and transient to count.
Anti-Socialization: A Different Perspective

The assimilation of newcomers into organizations has been examined in socialization research. Louis (1980) recognizes that socialization is pervasive in adult lives because of individuals numerous associations. With so many associations, learning the rules of an organization and "fitting in" can be a tedious and time consuming process. During the socialization process, an organizational member learns the behaviors and attitudes necessary to participate in the organization as a member. Louis (1980) argues that the socialization process actually continues to occur during the entire career or association a person has with an organization.

Socialization is a process that requires effort on both the part of the person being socialized and those that are conducting the socialization. Every organization has different techniques for socializing its new members, which makes the process unique across organizations (Albrecht & Bach, in press). The process that requires the veteran and newcomer both attempt to make the socialization successful. The socialization of a newcomer is impacted by the amount and type of contact between the veteran and newcomer. In other words, the successful socialization of a newcomer is highly dependent on the abilities of the veterans responsible for the socialization. Specifically, veterans need to provide their students with trust, instruction, and communication.

An organizational veteran needs to feel s/he can trust the newcomer with information that is necessary to play one’s role. Much of the information given by the veteran will be of both professional and personal natures to help integrate the newcomer on all levels. The veteran must also be willing to teach the newcomer the rules of the
organization. Lastly, the organizational veteran must be able to clearly communicate the
rules, norms, etc., of the organization so that the newcomer can understand. The
socialization process takes a great deal of the veteran's time and effort. In some way, the
veteran must feel there is some compensation for his/her efforts.

The question that needs to be asked of current literature and future projects is,
“What if the veterans do not want the newcomer to be socialized?” Situations in
organizations arise where a person must train his/her replacement. Often bitter feelings
can reduce a person’s motivation to successfully socialize the newcomer to the
organization. Various other scenarios could be explicated with the same results; the
veteran does not give the necessary information to the newcomer. In other cases, the
veteran may not want the newcomer to be a part of the organization or community, so
s/he will not give the necessary information to help the newcomer adapt to the community.

Albrecht and Bach (in press) argue that in order for newcomers to be enculturated
into the organization, s/he must learn job skills, how to build relationships, and the implicit
values and norms of the work groups. In the Seattle music scene however, this
enculturation is not occurring. Scenesters do not want to let newcomers feel comfortable
in the community (as discussed in this chapter as well as Chapters Two and Four). The
existence of newcomers to the scene have been damaging, so scenesters are not motivated
to assist in enculturation. In fact, they have exhibited signs of attempting to halt any
socialization, which has been labeled here, anti-socialization.

It is important to note here that the term “newcomers” refers to those that
scenesters can not identify with nor want to identify with because the values held by both
are so different. Not all newcomers are those that damage the Seattle music scene, but newcomers that exhibit the behaviors and attitudes that are not valued in the community make it difficult for all newcomers to be enculturated. People that have recently come into the Seattle music scene that share the same values, experiences, and ambitions (as well as being able to understand scenesters) are not considered newcomers. They are considered members of the community. Their length of membership will impact their socialization into the community, but because they are similar to other members, they will be socialized.

In organizations where a newcomer is being successfully integrated into the company, the level of information they are given suits the level with which they are comfortable. Newcomers cannot learn everything right away. The process takes time and guidance from the veterans. In other words, a newcomer will most likely not receive personal information about co-workers until after they have been introduced. In the anti-socialization process, this information would never be divulged.

The anti-socialization that has occurred in the Seattle music scene has occurred on a basic level. Scenesters are trying to keep newcomers from being socialized into the Seattle music scene by withholding information regarding basic skills in being a scenester. They will not build relationships nor teach how to build relationships with other scenesters and finally, they will not make the implicit rules of the community explicit. Many of these strategies to keep newcomers from being enculturated into the Seattle music scene could be best described by the openness - closedness dialectic. This dialectic could be reconceptualized separately from the dialectical contradictions research into a better descriptor of anti-socialization. It may be here that the dialectic could be reconceptualized.
into the anti-socialization concept. As evident in the analysis of this dialectic, scenesters overtly communicated rules, etc., to newcomers or chose to keep information private. The process of anti-socialization is inherently one of not revealing information, such as the closedness part of the dialectic. It may be through further analysis of this dialectic that more information can be derived regarding anti-socialization.

**Basic Skills Training**

In the Seattle music scene, scenesters do not offer any type of lessons or training in how to play a musical instrument, how to promote bands, etc. Scenesters learned these skills on their own and will not make it easy for newcomers to the scene to learn such skills. The skills involved in the scene include specific occupations such as photographer or writer as well as skills in being an audience member. Audience skills include basic knowledge such as how to find venues, or determining which bands are playing certain evenings. For newcomers, basic skills training can be completed for the most part without any assistance from scenesters. Music magazines such as *The Rocket* can provide enough information about the scene to inform newcomers about venues and shows. Other basic skills such as playing music can and are learned on their own.

In a formal organization where anti-socialization may occur, basic skills training would be very different. It may include the veteran not giving information or giving misinformation to the newcomer. Information may also be withheld by the veteran by giving information on a “need to know” basis. Making the newcomer dependent on the veteran could reduce productivity, independence, job satisfaction, as well as slow the integration process. The newcomer would not be able to perform his/her job successfully
without the assistance of another person. If such inabilities continued for too long, termination of the employee would most likely occur, either by the organization or self-termination. If this occurs, there would be no opportunity for validation to occur, which is integral to the socialization process (Bach, 1990).

Building Relationships

Scenesters do not make themselves accessible enough to newcomers to build relationships with them. Very little intermingling occurs between scenesters and “frat boys” at clubs, and very few nonverbal cues are given to communicate a willingness to be approached. While a band may try to increase its following, an interpersonal relationship is not necessarily being built between the band and the audience. To build relationships with others, one must have some personal information about another. If that information does not come readily from the person himself, it must then come from another to reduce uncertainty. In the Seattle music scene, scenesters are very careful about who and how they release information about others. This was evident in the scene when outsiders wanted information regarding Kurt Cobain or other famous scenesters.

In formal organizations, similar circumstances could occur. The veteran could withhold information about co-workers that would be beneficial to the newcomer. S/he could also refrain from introducing the newcomer to other organizational members, thus leaving it up to the newcomer to establish these relationships over time. Another way newcomers may learn to build relationships with co-workers could be to watch the veteran and his/her interactions with others. If the veteran is careful not to interact with others in view of the newcomer, the newcomer would again be left without any helpful information.
Learning Implicit Values

One scenester noted that there were no lists of rules posted in any clubs to make the implicit rules explicit. However, there are other ways in which scenesters can keep newcomers from learning the values and norms of the Seattle music scene. One way in which to do this is simply not to discuss values that are important to scenesters with or in front of newcomers. Values like understanding the history of the scene and understanding the music may not necessarily be clear to newcomers if they are not told about these values. Several times during data collection information regarding newcomers breaking of rules arose as well as the “punishment” for such infractions. Often, the “punishment” was inflicted via nonverbal communication. Scenesters commented that they would “give the person a look” or eliminate the possibility of contact with that person if s/he was behaving inappropriately. Newcomers may be unaware of the use of nonverbal communication as a means of “punishment” for infractions such as being inconsiderate, sexist, racist, etc. They may also be unable to accurately interpret such nonverbal cues as facial expressions and eye contact. This inability stops them from recognizing they have broken a rule, which further separates them from acceptance and from scenesters.

The methods for keeping implicit values and norms implicit in the Seattle music scene may be very similar for formal organizations. Other implicit values such as coming to work on Saturday may be intentionally withheld from the newcomer to ensure his/her breaking of the rule. Also, simply not discussing the explicit values of the organization could decrease the likelihood of discussing the implicit values.
Summary

The literature review for this research project included an examination of the ethnography of communication, community building, and dialectics research. The history of the Seattle music scene was examined in the second chapter, paying particular attention to how the community was built over the last 20 years. The methodology of such a qualitative case study was explored in the third chapter. An analysis of the comments the informants made, the information from articles, and data in field notes was conducted in the fourth chapter. The data were coded into the dialectic categories Baxter and others (Baxter, 1988, 1990, 1994; Baxter & Goldsmith, 1990; Baxter & Simon, 1993; Baxter & Wilmot, 1983; Goldsmith, 1990) have developed. One new category (supportive - unsupportive) emerged in the data and the openness - closedness dialectic fell out of the analysis. The data were further analyzed in light of the topic of newcomers in the community. When these comments are examined in light of current theory on community building, the members' talk can be viewed as their attempt to continue building community and evoking change in it now that the attention to Seattle's music has diminished. It was found that scenesters are using their talk as an attempt to change their community and have control over it again by refusing to socialize newcomers to the scene. A new aspect of the socialization process was introduced, called anti-socialization. The implications of such a new process were discussed.

Limitations

As with any study, this research project has limitations. Many of the limitations that exist for any qualitative case study also exist for this particular study. Findings in this
study cannot be generalized to other communities, even if they are musical communities. Due to each community's distinctiveness, the numerable variables keep a researcher from generalizing her findings.

Another limitation of this study was that the researcher lived a significant distance from the Seattle music scene. Much reliance was then imposed upon interviews, time spent in the field, and recollections of previous time spent in the community. Had the researcher lived in the Seattle area, a richer description of life in the community may have been possible.

A burdensome detail for any qualitative researcher to determine is her level of involvement in the community being studied. It is not clear if any variation in the participant/observer equation is more conducive to data collection or more beneficial. While it is this researcher's belief that her peripheral membership was beneficial to data collection and analysis, that membership role may have biased the findings of this study. Any level of membership with the community can enrich the findings as well as bias them.

Finally, there has been little research on the particular ways of speaking in communities like the one that is examined here. Thus, the research is exploratory and does not yield a clear line of theory that should be followed. Relationship building information from interpersonal theory has been used in an attempt to understand the ways of speaking in the Seattle music community between members. The findings of this research has, however, lead to findings that suggest organizational communication research. The inconsistency of the grounded theory may be confusing for readers and theoretically. However, the combination of these theoretical backgrounds may be an
important finding for culture research. In other words, musical communities comprise both interpersonal and organizational aspects, leaving both theoretical groundings appropriate.

Future Directions for Research

Since the nature of this research has been exploratory, this project has been quite heuristic. The examination of dialectics in this project has extended previous interpersonal communication theory to begin examining dialectics for communities. It was found that dialectics are evident in the talk of community members in a musical community and when examined in this way, they are no longer linear. Further research needs to be conducted that examines if dialectics are multi-dimensional in other arenas (e.g., families). In addition, further research needs to be conducted that examines the existence of dialectics in various speech communities. If dialectics exist in the community, then the categories derived in this project can be supported with further research or differing dialectics may be found for that community.

The Seattle music scene is a relatively old community (about 20 years old). Since this community has gone through significant changes in the last five years, members are still building and re-building the community. However, community building and the communication patterns that exist during such building needs to be examined in younger communities. Dialectics may be more evident in earlier stages of community building, as well as there possibly being a change in focus in dialectics.

An important finding in this research is that musical communities are loosely knit organizations. It seems that music cultures are a combination between interpersonal and
organizational information. This finding is not counterintuitive when one realizes that a musical community is made up of individuals that are interpersonally connected to each other as well as individuals with specific roles to work toward a common goal (of creating music). This relationship between two theoretical groundings needs to be further examined both in this community and in other similar communities. One of the ways in which to examine the organizational communication practices that are a part of the community is to examine organizational identification for scenesters. Scenesters showed indications of being more or less identified with the community, and expressed that their identification changed over time. Specific members' identification levels could be examined as well as the existence of turning points in those identification changes.

The existence of a new communication pattern arose out of this research project: anti-socialization. More research needs to be conducted that examines the existence of anti-socialization in other communities as well as in organizations. What are the steps in the process a veteran uses to keep a newcomer from being socialized? Does that process differ from organizations to communities? A possible way to examine this phenomena in organizations or communities would be to observe a veteran that is unenthusiastic about the socialization of a new organizational member. His/her communication and behaviors would be very insightful in further identifying an anti-socialization process.
REFERENCES


In R. L. Conville’s (Ed.) *Uses of “Structure” in Communication Studies*, (pp. 23-37).


TABLE 1
Dialectic Themes Derived from Data Analysis

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APPENDIX A

Guide to Coding Notes

This is a reference list to assist readers in quickly discerning the types of data used in this study. Codes are used to reference data including field notes, interviews, Internet postings, and articles throughout this study. The data are referred to in the chapters by the codes listed and described below.

Interviews

I 1 - Interview with a woman who worked as an editor for a Seattle music magazine and also worked as a free-lance writer about the local music scene. She has been an audience member for seven years and has many personal ties to other scenes members.

I 2 - Interview with a general manager of a club who has worked in some of the most popular clubs in Seattle. He is also an audience member and has been a part of the scene for more than six years.

I 3 - Interview with a musician and free-lance writer. She has been in bands consistently for 10 years and worked as a writer for a few local ‘zines for several years.

I 4 - Interview with a writer for a local ‘zine and free-lance writer who has spent a great deal of time researching the Seattle music scene. He was involved early on as a radio DJ 15 years ago, as an audience member, and friend to many local band members.

I 5 - Interview with a member of a band that is trying to become successful. She has been involved in bands for several years, although none of the bands have met with great success yet. They have recently cut their first album.

I 6 - Interview with a photographer that has been involved in the scene for over 15 years. She was a photographer with one of the local ‘zines and has since been working on projects including shooting photos of nationally and locally popular bands for album covers.

I 7 - Interview with a woman who has been an audience member for over six years. She has worked alongside several people now famous locally and nationally for their music as well as being close friends with many other band members.

I 8 - Interview with a band member from a city outside of the Seattle music scene. He is in a band known fairly well in his city and is a very close friend to band members from Seattle that are known nationally. He spends a great deal of time in Seattle visiting friends and has even gone on tour with a famous band.
I 9 - Interview with a band member that has met national success and has been a member of the scene for over 15 years. He has been involved in many musical projects both locally and worldwide. He has many roles in creating and promoting the music in the scene.

I 10 - Interview with a woman who has been in one of the longest running bands in Seattle. She also has a job that is involved in making and promoting Seattle music.

I 11 - Interview with a man who worked booking shows in Seattle for several years. He has toured with several Seattle bands and has even been in bands as a singer and guitar player.

I 12 - Interview with a woman who manages several nationally known Seattle bands. She has worked since the beginning of the scene to promote bands and to book bands for gigs.

Field Notes
F 1 - Notes taken on 07/13/94 at Turbo’s.*
F 2 - Notes taken on 07/15/94 at the Milltown Cafe.*
F 3 - Notes taken on 07/15/94 at an all night cafe.
F 4 - Notes taken on 07/16/94 at the Milltown Cafe.*
F 5 - Notes taken on 07/19/94 at Turbo’s.*
F 6 - Notes taken on 07/21/94 at Turbo’s.*
F 7 - Notes taken on 07/22/94 at the Exposure Bar.*
F 8 - Notes taken on 10/07/94 at Turbo’s.*
F 9 - Notes taken on 10/08/94 at Turbo’s (afternoon video shoot).*
F 10 - Notes taken on 10/08/94 at the Starlight Tavern.*
F 11 - Notes taken on 10/08/94 at Turbo’s.*
F 12 - Notes taken on 11/6/94 at various clubs.
F 13 - Notes taken on 02/08/95 at a Pearl Jam concert.
F 14 - Notes taken on 03/14/95 at a 7 Year Bitch concert.
F 15 - Notes taken on 04/03/95 at a Seattle band’s gig in another city.
F 16 - Notes taken on 01/07/95 at the Sussex Bar.*
F 17 - Notes taken on a concert at a theater in Pioneer Square.**
F 18 - Notes taken on a friend’s band at the Other Side bar.**
F 19 - Notes taken on a friend’s band at the Atomic Rock bar.**
F 20 - various notes on several bars attended over time.**

F 100 and higher - various personal Email messages, correspondence, and personal notes taken during the research period.

* All names of bars or clubs are pseudonyms.
**These field notes were taken from memory of attending clubs in the Seattle music scene over the last several years.
Articles


A 4 - Interview with Eddie Vedder reprinted on the Internet from an unknown magazine.

A 5 - Article in “Swing” magazine in the section titled “Most powerful twenty somethings in America: Eddie Vedder, Grunge King.” Posted on the Internet.

A 6 - Quote from Krist Noveselic, band member of Nirvana, at Kurt Cobain’s memorial service. Posted on and taken from the Internet.


A 8 through A 11 - not coded. Used for information only.

A 12 - Pearl Jam Newsletter sent via Email.

A 13 - Album review from Los Angeles Times newspaper.

A 14 - Pearl Jam Newsletter sent via Email.

A 15 - A 16 - not coded. Used for information only.

A 17 - Pearl Jam Newsletter sent via Email.

A 18 - Transcript of Courtney Love reading Kurt Cobain’s suicide letter.


A 20 - Pearl Jam Newsletter sent via Email.


A 22 - Pearl Jam Newsletter sent via Email.

A 23 - Pearl Jam’s statement to the Department of Justice.

A 24 - not coded. Used for information only.

A 25 - Interview with Eddie Vedder from Platinum magazine re-printed on the Internet.

Internet Postings

POS 1 and higher - various postings on Internet bulletin board groups discussing such groups as Pearl Jam, Nirvana, Hole, and various Seattle alternative and punk groups. The following newsgroups were read and examined over the course of this study:

alt.fan.courtney-love
alt.music.alternative.female
alt.music.nirvana
alt.music.pearl-jam
alt.music.soundgarden
APPENDIX B

Interview Guide

This is a list of topics that were used as a guide in the interviewing process. Questions were changed slightly depending on the role of the respondent within the speech community. The questions were not asked in a particular order, and often reflected the respondent’s comments.

1. Involvement:
   a. Tell me about your current involvement and exposure to the Seattle music scene.
   b. How much are you involved?
   c. What is your involvement?
   d. Are you more or less involved now than previously?
   e. How were involved before?
   f. What are your reasons for being less involved?

2. The Music Scene:
   a. How would you characterize the scene when you were first involved?
   b. What were the bands/audiences like?
   c. How has the music scene changed?

3. Rules:
   a. Are there rules about being a member?
   b. How do you know if you broke them?
   c. Could anyone be a member?
   d. Have the rules changed about being a member?

4. Popularity:
   a. What do you think about the growing popularity of the Seattle music scene?
   b. How have you/others reacted to the popularity?

5. Description of Seattle music scene:
   a. If I had never heard of Seattle music scene, how would you characterize it to me?
   b. What do you think the future holds for the Seattle music scene?
   c. What do you find most surprising about the Seattle music scene?
APPENDIX C

Native Term Dictionary

**Alternative (music)** - The current term that encompasses the type of music known as "grunge." Several years ago, alternative was recognized as being a separate form of music from both rock and punk. Punk is often used to refer to European music while alternative is used for American music.

**Band room** - The room in which bands play at clubs. Audience members must pass a door man and pay a cover charge to enter. Rooms have a counter to order drinks, but do not have a bar for patrons to sit at. There are tables or booths around the perimeter of the room with a dance floor in the middle. Bands only play in this area in clubs; they do not play in the primary bar area itself (except for smaller bars that are not as large as clubs).

**Club** - A place in which bands play and people go to hear the bands. Each club is generally made up of a restaurant area, bar area, and band room. The bar and band room are separate and generally separated by a long hallway or the restaurant itself.

**Cover charge** - The money patrons must pay to get into a bar, or in these instances, to get into see a musical act.

**Cover** - A song that is performed by a musician or band that is not the original artist. The word can be used as both a noun ("They play mostly covers") and a verb ("They covered that song").

**Crowd Surfing** - This is done in mosh pits at gigs or concerts. A person is hoisted up above the crowd, which holds him or her above their heads. The person, in a horizontal position, is passed around on top of the crowd.

**Fanzine** - Magazines that are written primarily about one band to inform fans about specific band members, the history of the band, the creation of their music, etc. See also 'zine.

**Gig** - One of the terms used by band members to denote being hired to perform at a club.

**Glam Rock** (Glamour Rock) - A type of rock music identified mostly with the 1980s that still is made today though primarily "out of style." The lyrics were most often concerned with sex, parties, alcohol and drug use. "Glam rockers" can often be identified by their tight, purposely ripped clothing, long teased hair, and sometimes by wearing makeup. A general conception of such bands is that they make music only for profit and not because of an inner need to create music.

**Grunge** - The term used to name Seattle’s style of music. It was previously known and has returned to being called alternative. It is a very "heavy" music using odd chord
progressions. The term “grunge” gained popularity as the mass media latched onto its use. The term grunge was used in the mid 1980s by a band member to describe the sound of his band as “grungy.” Many have claimed the origination of the term, but the above incident is seen by some to be the first official account in reference to Seattle music. For many reasons, scene members now refuse to use it.

The Milltown Cafe (pseudonym) - a club in Seattle now nationally known because it has been credited as the starting place of Nirvana and Pearl Jam.

Mosh pit - This occurs when a large group of people have accumulated on the dance floor close to the stage, to watch a band play. After awhile, the people (generally in the center of the group) start jumping up and down and intentionally bumping into each other. The “pit” often starts to move in waves. During the late 1970s and early 1980s, a version of this type of dancing was known as “slam dancing.”

Moshing - This is the dancing that occurs within the mosh pit. It is similar to slam dancing (popular during the late 1970s and 1980s) in that people slam into or bump into each other. In moshing however, people sometimes take a running start at each other to collide and will back up to do it again. Because of recent attacks and reports of rapes of female moshers, males primarily take part in moshing.

Playing out - One of the terms used by band members to denote being hired to perform at a club. It is used as well as the word “gig.” An example of its use is, “We’ve been playing out a lot.”

Punk Rock - A form of hard-driving rock music characterized by harsh lyrics attacking conventional society and popular culture and often expressing alienation and anger. (American Heritage Dictionary, 1992)

The Rocket - A Seattle newspaper published bimonthly that covers only musical interests. It includes reviews of bands or recent CD releases, a calendar of events, concert tour dates, and a listing of bars/clubs and their itinerary of shows for the month. The Rocket was founded in 1980 when the Seattle music scene really began to form.

Scenesters - A term used to refer to long-standing Seattle music community members. Scenesters are those that have been a part of the community for an extended period of time, if not from the beginning.

Selling Out - A term used to describe bands that have become or want to become popular and famous for their music. Bands are said to “sell out” when they have taken action based on the monetary value rather than the personal value of creating music. These people are viewed as having lost their integrity.

Set - Bands usually play “sets” at gigs. A set is the allotted time a band is allowed to play. Sets generally range from 20 to 45 minutes.
Sub Pop - A Seattle based record label that produces and distributes compact disks of local bands. Many of Sub Pop’s bands, including Mudhoney, Tad, Nirvana, and the Fastbacks, have gone on to be huge hits. Sub Pop also owns and runs a record store that carries its own label and other small recording labels. Sub Pop has recently sold 49% of the business to Warner Brothers, Inc. in order to promote the lesser known bands nationally.

Sub Popians - A term used by some outside this group to refer to a particular type of crowd or audience that follows certain bands signed by Sub Pop. These people can be distinguished by the bands they follow and the way they dress. They generally follow bands that are more “punk”.

‘Zine - (Short for fanzine or magazine) They generally are alternative press newspaper-like publications that are published on various schedules. Many ‘zines deal with issues like music, politics, etc.
APPENDIX D

Rules Publicized by Community Members

Two articles were published in 1994 that concerned the implicit rules of the Seattle music community with which newcomers were unfamiliar. Portions of these two articles are reproduced here.


This article gives a brief summary of the Seattle music scene as well as a description of the sub-scenes. The following rules comprise the substance of the article.

1. As with any social situation, civility rules. Moshing at non-mosh bands or songs, yelling at female musicians to violate Liquor Board dress codes onstage, or demanding that other patrons be your instant friends are signs of poor form at best.

2. Shitfaced drunkenness? Not desirable, even if you’re not driving home.

3. Dress? The only real faux pas are ‘designer grunge,’ mall-bought hip-hop threads, or other professional fashion-industry misinterpretations of looks ‘from the street. . . .’ Creativity, ingenuity, and economy count in roughly equal proportions.

4. Invoke the term ‘grunge’ (known locally as ‘the g-word’) only in jest or irony. And don’t go around bashing ‘grunge’ either; that’s just as tiresome.

5. Don’t go anywhere to be seen, to be ‘hot.’ Or to see bands you don’t like but were told are ‘going to be big.’ The only reason to see, hear, or do any entertainment-related thing is because you personally like it or think you might.

6. It’s all about finding liberation, not allowing yourself to be enslaved. So boycott heroin.

7. Even though there’s now real money in the scene, it’s still not supposed to be about ‘making it big. . . .’ You shouldn’t want to be Rock Stars.

8. Don’t ask me how to get laid in the scene. If I knew I wouldn’t tell. But I do know that in the scene, sex is seen as something for pleasure, friendship, and maybe even love. It’s not (preferably) about power or money.

9. Sincerity and passionate belief systems are taboo in some sub-scenes. Fight this taboo. Sarcasm has its limits (I know). If you’re going to do something, mean it.”
This article was written in reaction to a gig that was problematic as well as dangerous. The author is a musician, so he is able to offer his insight as a performer and "observer."

"Drunkenness is definitely a factor, as it inhibits not only the coordination necessary for pulling off a successful [stage] dive, but also the social self-awareness necessary to know when one has worn out one’s welcome. There’s nothing more annoying than seeing the same person up on stage every two minutes long past the point where it’s funny, daring, or even has a point -- i.e. during slow songs, tuning breaks, etc. I begin to think of that person’s parents -- if they had just given this person a little more attention early on, this person wouldn’t feel a psychological compulsion to embarrass themselves at rock shows throughout his/her early adulthood. It all comes down to manners.

I guess the stage-diving thing evolved as the ultimate expression of the shrinking distance between performers and their audiences; the people who are at the show are welcome to participate, and no rules were necessary because a tenet of punk rock is that people are able to govern themselves and neither appreciate or need any help in doing so. I hate telling anyone what to do, but if you care at all about music, musicians, or music audiences, keep these simple guidelines in mind:

- Not all music or all songs make sense to stage dive to, unless you’re someone who thrives on irony (at others’ expense).
- If you’re headed to the stage, DON’T AIM FOR THE MICROPHONES. There’s plenty of room on most stages for you to land without endangering singing people’s orthodontia.
- Nobody, NOBODY wants to see your face more than once or for more than one verse or chorus.
- Finally, on a personal safety note, the more annoying you are and the longer you wear out your welcome, the less likely it is anyone will catch you.

My personal, silent maxim -- that may not be right for me to say, but I’ll stick my neck out here: There’s nothing more distasteful than a bunch of high-fiving white guys who think being an annoying idiot is what punk rock is all about.”