Media influence on the work ethic among the baby boom generation

by

Jenny Lorna Herring

A thesis submitted to the graduate faculty

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Major: Journalism and Mass Communication

Program of Study Committee:
Lulu Rodriguez, Major Professor
Daniela V. Dimitrova
Charles B. Shrader

Iowa State University

Ames, Iowa

2007

UMI Number: 1443099

UMI®

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

Using cultivation theory, this qualitative study analyzed the influence of television in shaping the work ethic among members of the baby boom generation. It also probed the role of social, cultural and historical events, as well as personal experience, in shaping the work ethic and career paths. The results showed some cultivation effects, particularly in the definitions respondents held of the work ethic, and in feelings of low self worth during periods of unemployment. The study also found a strong cultivation effect in the childhood occupational dreams respondents had. The study found limited resonance effects based on the impact of the social upheaval televised in the 1960s and 1970s, but did find mainstreamed memories of those events, based on images broadcast on TV. Other findings included some conflicted feelings about the role of education in career success, and fairly consistent feelings of job insecurity and disappointment with retirement benefits.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the fall of 2005, the *Des Moines Register* conducted a survey on social attitudes among people ranging in age from approximately 20 to 70. In addition to several questions on moral or values-oriented issues, the survey also included questions about the work ethic. The results confirmed what is evident in every office and factory across America: that when it comes to the work ethic, there are generational differences.

Whether it is the World War II generation, the baby boomers, Generation X, or the millennials, each group has put its own stamp on the working world. For example, consider the baby boomers. The tremendous cultural groundswell this 75 million-member generation (Light, 1988) initiated at birth is now starting to make its mark on retirement as the oldest boomers turn 60. Of course, the boomers may not retire for a few more years. As a researcher for American Association of Retired People (AARP) noted: "Generally speaking, boomers aren't running their lives as if they're going to pull out the rocking chair when they reach the traditional retirement age of 65. As they age, boomers will still be boomers. This generation doesn't want to turn into their parents. They will not turn 65 and hang up whatever it is they have been doing" (Downey, 2006, p. 2).

Problem Statement

For perhaps the first time in history, the workplace is populated by four generations—including a handful of the World War II generation, quite a few boomers, and growing numbers of Generation X and millennials. Employers and employees alike face the challenge

of working successfully together (A. Goben, personal communication, 2006), which makes it all the more important to understand the ways the work ethic has changed over time, and among generations. While there may be many variables that shape an individual's work ethic, including family influence, personal circumstances, and demographic characteristics such as race, age and gender, on a broader scale, one of the major influences may be the social environment. This includes historical, cultural, political and economic events.

The boomers "were profoundly affected by the Vietnam War, the civil rights riots, the class of the Kennedys, the Kennedy and King assassinations, Watergate, the sexual revolution and Woodstock. This cohort witnessed the foibles of political, religious, and business leaders that resulted in a lack of respect for and loyalty to authority and social institutions" (Smola and Sutton, 2002, p. 364-365). Of course, many of these events were widely transmitted via television. "Television is the source of the most broadly shared images and messages in history" (Gerbner, 2000b, p. 193).

In addition to the messages about social change, television also broadcast information about social mores, including work and the work ethic. Signorielli (1993) noted that in addition to learning about work through personal experience and observing friends and family, "we also get a sizeable amount of information about jobs from the mass media, particularly television" (p. 314-315). Given the era of upheaval during the boomers' formative years, and the messages they received about social change (including the work ethic) from television, it seems possible that many of their attitudes toward work may have been shaped by media messages.

Purpose Statement

Television plays a major role in broadcasting messages about changing social environments, but it is not quite as clear how its messages may have influenced the work ethic for the baby boom generation, which has been linked closely to television. It is fairly widely accepted in the literature that television has had a deep impact on baby boomers. "The impact of television on this generation so far exceeds the impact of radio, motion pictures, and vaudeville on previous generations because of the universality of TV. It has had a profound impact on the speech patterns, the dress, and to some extent the intellectual process of any number of people growing up even in the earliest days of television" (Light, 1988, p. 123-124). Further, for many boomers, television generally replaced parents, teachers and other adults as a primary agent of socialization. "… It separated them from traditional social connections, and taught them intimate lessons about being an adult without any intervention from parents or teachers … it crowded out other sources of information and pleasure" (Light, 1988, p. 124-125).

This study will focus on the baby boomers, and the way television may have influenced their work ethic.

There are four generations referred to in this study. Although the birth years for each generation vary somewhat, in general the dates and descriptors found in the literature are fairly consistent (Light, 1988; A. Goben, personal communication, 2006; Lockwood, 2004):

1. The World War II generation (also known as "traditionalists" or "veterans"), born before 1945.

2. Baby boomers, born between 1946 and 1964. Light (1988) breaks this generation into two groups: older boomers (born between 1946 and 1954) and younger boomers (born between 1955 and 1964).

3. Generation X, born between 1965 and 1983.

4. Millennials (also known as "echo boomers," "Generation Y" "Nexters" or "the entitlement generation"), born between 1979 and 1994.

This study looks at the work ethic, which is sometimes portrayed as a kind of core value, or "character ethic" about personal success that holds true across socioeconomic status. It focuses on the work ethic of Light's (1988) categorization of older and younger baby boomers. Many believe they can succeed with a combination of hard work and motivation, apart from their family background (Clark, Demont-Heinrich, and Webber, 2005). "Embodied by historical exemplars such as Benjamin Franklin, Andrew Carnegie, and Harry Truman, the character ethic stresses hard work, self-reliance, and self-discipline. Its desirable traits include perseverance, industry, reliability, and thoroughness, with its essential ideological trappings molded around the belief in a rags-to-riches possibility" (p. 412).

Other researchers argue that the work ethic is not an innate human value, but rather something that is shaped by social, political or economic events or even personal circumstances such as social position (Beder, 2000; Smola and Sutton, 2002; Wentworth, 1997; Csikszentmihalyi and Schneider, 2000). Beder (2000) saw the work ethic as being crafted and spread by corporations and politicians as a way to further capitalism (p. 8). Wentworth (1997) felt the work ethic was not "a dispositional variable but varies according to the period of time in which it is measured" (p. 294). As Csikszentmihalyi and Schneider (2000) pointedly stated, "respect for hard work makes little difference if the community

cannot provide a job. A strong work ethic was of little help to the Irish farmers of the mid-1800s when the potato crop failed" (p. 7).

Still, others see the work ethic as an emotional abstraction. "The work ethic is not so much a set of ideas and beliefs as a description of what we feel about work, whether we think about the work ethic as such or not. We experience the work ethic as a feeling...The assumption is that one's feelings about work are one's work ethic" (Lutz, 2006, p. 20, 24).

The classic definitions of work ethic draw upon the Protestant work ethic theory espoused by sociologist Max Weber. Hill (1997) notes:

> The work ethic is a cultural norm that advocates being personally accountable and responsible for the work that one does and is based on a belief that work has intrinsic value. Work ethic is a secularized construct derived from Weber's (1904/1905) Protestant work ethic (PWE) theory. The PWE, asserting that Calvinist theology encouraged accumulation of wealth, has been widely used as an explanation for the success of capitalism in Western society. Over the years, however, attitudes and beliefs supporting hard work have blended into the norms of Western culture, and are no longer attributable to a particular religious sect (p. 3-4).

This secularized idea of work ethic calls for individual responsibility and believes that work has value on its own merits. Hill (1998) used the Occupational Work Ethic Inventory to define the "employability skills needed for success at work." These "work ethic attributes" were "interpersonal skills, initiative, and being dependable" (p. 7). Other researchers (i.e., Tang, 1992) have included "the traits of industriousness, individualism, asceticism, community involvement and an overall valuing of work" in the definition of work ethic (p. 164).

Drawing from several of these previous definitions, this study will define work ethic to include the traits of hard work, dependability, personal responsibility, and perseverance. It will also include the idea that work has value for its own sake, both for individuals and for

the greater societal good.

Rationale for Conducting the Study

Baby boomers have been dominant in the labor force for many years. Although the percentage of boomers in the workplace is starting to be eclipsed by younger generations, most boomers are still a long way from retirement. Accordingly, they will continue interacting with other generations at work and continue to cast a wide net of influence on culture, politics, and other societal spheres. As the president of *TV Land* and *Nick at Nite* said, "Just about everything since 1946 can pretty much be attributed to the baby boom generation: the inception of rock 'n' roll, the sexual revolution, civil rights, women in the workplace, yuppies, SUVs. They have always been important and, as they pass through time, the things that are important to them are the industries that show phenomenal growth" (Downey, 2006, p. 1).

Cherrington, Condie and England (1979) observe that "specific historical experiences, such as the great depression or World War II, have a strong impact on one's work values" (p. 617). Of course, many of the most important historical events of the last 50 years have been broadcast on television, a medium that boomers have had an interactive relationship with for most, if not all, of their lives. Accordingly, it makes sense to consider how television's picture of reality, including social change and work, may have influenced this cohort's work ethic.

Other researchers have suggested it may be worth examining the media's influence on socialization, the work ethic and sex role stereotypes (Hill, 1997), or exploring how people, particularly children and adolescents, develop their attitudes toward work (Csikszentmihalyi

and Schneider, 2000). This study hopes to provide some input into these areas of inquiry. It offers a rare qualitative examination of the cultivation effects of television on the members of an important cohort.

It hopes to serve as a benchmark for future studies on how television, or other types of media, has influenced the work ethic of other generations. Television's influence on the work ethic may not have been as great for older generations, such as the traditionalists, and may have been supplanted by other types of media, including the Internet, cell phones and instant messaging for younger generations such as Generation X and Millennials.

Moreover, this research could have application for human resources professionals and corporations with multi-generational workforces by helping them better understand the baby boomers' perspectives on work.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

In exploring how television may have influenced the work ethic of the baby boom generation, the tenets of cultivation theory are instructive.

Cultivation Theory

In cultivation theory, as developed by George Gerbner and colleagues, television plays a dominant role in shaping people's perception of reality and is a medium considered as "one of the major players in the socialization process" (Signorielli and Morgan, 2001, p. 333). Gerbner (2002b) explains:

> The repetitive 'lesions' we learn from television, beginning from infancy, are likely to become the basis for a broader worldview, making television a significant source of general values, ideologies and perspectives, as well as specific assumptions, beliefs and images. (p. 203)

Of course, many of television's messages are based on a selective slice of reality, resulting in distorted and stereotyped beliefs (McQuail, 2000, p. 465). In cultivation theory, television's ability to impart its values and messages is gradual and cumulative, differing in this sense from a direct stimulus-response effect (p. 465).

Gerbner found that television's greatest impact is on those who are heavy viewers. While there is a syndrome connecting heavy TV viewing with people who have "lower education, lower mobility, lower aspirations, higher anxieties, and other class, age, and sex related characteristics" (Kottak, 1990, p. 11, citing Gerbner), heavy viewing on its own

contributes to distorted perceptions of reality that surpass other characteristics. Gerbner refers to this as "mainstreaming:"

> Mainstreaming means that heavy viewing may absorb or override differences in perspectives and behavior that ordinarily stem from other factors and influences...For example, regional differences, political ideology, and socioeconomic differences are much less influential on the attitudes and beliefs of heavy viewers…Through the process of mainstreaming, television may have become the true twentieth-century 'melting pot' of the American people—and increasingly of other countries around the globe" (Gerbner, 2002b, p. 201).

In the media version of biology's nature vs. nurture debate, the question has been whether the media mirrors society's existing attitudes, reinforces them, or functions as an agent of change (Demarest and Garner, 1992). In a content analysis of 30 years' worth of women's magazines, Demarest and Garner (1992) found that the media (including television) usually mirrored social change instead of initiating it, with the result of reinforcing existing attitudes (particularly sex role images in the Demarest and Garner study).

Heintz-Knowles (2001) notes that TV programming "both reflects the values and ideals of American society and shapes the attitudes and beliefs of those who watch it…Television content sends implicit messages about the relative cultural importance of different groups, behaviors, and ideologies" (p. 177). She expands: "Those images and messages that viewers see repeatedly often get perceived as reflective of the real world" (p. 197). Heintz-Knowles felt there was an element of social learning at work even though television is an entertainment medium. "Viewers around the world use television content—both informational and entertainment—to form perceptions about their worlds and to learn how to act in it" (p. 197).

Gerbner (2002b) argues that television influences the world it exists in, but has also been shaped by its environment, including "the historical, political, social, economic and cultural contexts within which it has developed" (p. 206).

Signorielli and Morgan (2001) found that television's standardized images and messages, and nearly universal reach, had made it "the most common and constant learning environment. It both mirrors and leads society" (p. 334-335).

> The world of television shows and tells us about life—people, places, striving, power, fate, and family life...Television, however, is special because its socially constructed version of reality bombards all classes, groups and ages with the same perspectives at the same time. The views of the world embedded in television drama do not differ appreciably from images presented in other media, and its rules of the social hierarchy are not easily distinguishable from those imparted by other powerful agents of socialization. What makes television unique, however, is its ability to standardize, streamline, amplify and share with virtually all members of society these common cultural norms (p. 334-335).

Gerbner (2002b) found that the cultivation impact of television is influenced by personal experiences and circumstances in a phenomenon he called resonance, "in which everyday reality and television provide a 'double dose' or messages that 'resonate' and amplify cultivation" (p. 200). Thus television's messages may have different meanings for different generational cohorts, such as the baby boomers, based on their own personal experiences combined with larger national and international events. "Television viewing usually relates in different but consistent ways to different groups' life situations and world views" (p. 200).

This seems to be especially true during periods of great political and social upheaval, such as that lived through by the baby boomers in the 1960s and 1970s. McQuail (2000) said the power the media has to influence beliefs and attitudes and the power people have to be

influenced by media messages may vary by historical conditions. "We cannot rule out the possibility that media are actually more influential in certain ways at times of crisis or heightened awareness. People often know about the more significant historical events only through the media and may associate the message with the medium. In times of change and uncertainty it is also highly probable that people are more dependent on media as a source of information and guidance" (p. 421-422).

Television's Impact on Baby Boomers

Television's impact may have been especially strong on the boomers due to the social and political upheavals they experienced. Light (1988) believes they share a "zeitgeist" or spirit of the times based on their reaction to such events as the battle for civil rights, the race riots, political assassinations, and most significantly, the Vietnam War.

> History and demography came together at the most sensitive moment in the baby boom's life cycle, just as the generation was making the transition to the carefree world of childhood to the already confusing period of adolescence and young adulthood. Other generations were surely affected, too, but none with the lasting impact and shared zeitgeist of the baby boom (Light, 1988, p. 43).

The boomers may have also been heavily influenced by television because of its omnipresence in their lives. "By the time the average baby boomer reached age 16, he or she had watched from 12,000 to 15,000 hours of TV, or the equivalent of 24 hours a day for 15 to 20 solid months" (Light, 1988, p. 123-124). At the same time, television provided a shared experience and unifying influence for boomers, and contributed to their uniqueness and separateness as a generation. According to Light (1988), television

> reinforced the generation's separation from potential societal networks. There can be little doubt that television reduced the baby boom's contact with its peers and parents,

and that the generation made its first contacts with the real world through the medium… More important, it crowded out other sources of information and pleasure. Nine out of ten baby boomers were well acquainted with TV long before they read their first newspaper. Two-thirds were active TV viewers before they saw their first movie. Moreover, television was the baby boom's window on world events (p. 125).

Because media outlets in the 1960s and 1970s were largely limited to just television and radio, and "boomers heard the same rock music and saw the same news programs…what emerged was a youth culture of shared imagery, issues, and expectations." (Steinhorn, 2006, p. 25).

By and large, television presented an attractive fantasy world, albeit one that was very adult. Wilbur Schramm (cited in Light, 1988) comments: "The effect of this is that the old timetable for gradually exposing a child to adult ideas is gone forever. There is no use looking nostalgically back toward it—it is gone" (p. 125-126). Child psychologists questioned whether the glamorous version of life presented on television could ever match reality and how the discrepancy would affect children who were socialized by television. Other researchers wondered whether watching too much television—regardless of content— "so poaches the brain or predisposes viewers to immediate gratification that they become unable to work for distant goals or engage in disciplined activity" (p. 128).

Television's Messages about Work

Given the complex nature of the relationship between television and the baby boomers, what did this cohort learn about work from television? Even though television is by and large an entertainment medium, some of its most significant lessons are about work and

occupations. "It is fairly common knowledge that television presents a very specific and consistent set of occupational images" (Signorielli, 1993, p. 314-315).

Of course, the messages are frequently wrong (Signorielli, 1993, 2004; Signorielli and Morgan, 2001). For example, in the television programs of the 1970s and 1990s, married women with children were less likely to work outside the home than single or divorced women. Those who did work outside the home were usually depicted as having domestic problems (Signorielli and Morgan, 2001). Married men of all ages were shown as working, without any apparent negative impacts on their home lives. These portrayals "continue to reinforce the stereotype of men as the breadwinners," and send the message that "unlike men, women on television can rarely combine marriage and employment with any success" (p. 340). In later studies, Signorielli (2004) found that older women were typically shown as not working outside the home, although younger women were more likely to work.

Demarest and Garner (1992) found that most media portrayals (including those in magazines, TV and film) of women's occupational roles were generally limited to traditional roles such as mothers and homemakers. "Only in times of national economic peril (e.g., World Wars I and II) have women been portrayed as strong and independent, and most of the time these same characters were returned to subordinate roles as soon as the crisis passed (e.g., Red Cross nurses and assembly line workers almost always quit work upon marriage)" (p. 358).

Television also sends messages about the value and importance of work, and by extension, the value of people who hold certain occupations (Signorielli, 2004):

> The young and middle aged are cast in the most prestigious jobs seen during the prime-time hours while the elderly, particularly those over the age of 65, are cast in jobs that are not particularly prestigious. The only older group that is still cast in

prestigious jobs is white males between the ages of 50 and 64, the years when one presumes that a worker should be very productive and can offer years of experience in day-to-day operations (p. 296-297).

In a cross-cultural examination of television's messages, Kottak (1990) looked at American and Brazilian programming and concluded that in both countries, television celebrated those who lived glamorous lives. "TV characters tend to have higher-status occupations than do people in real life" (p. 56-57). However, Kottak found there were cultural differences in TV's messages about work. U.S. programs typically portrayed the working wealthy while the wealthy on Brazilian programs tended to be idle rich. "Unemployed people, rich or poor, are suspect in American culture and are rare among TV heroes…Americans believe that personal worth and moral value come through work" (p. 59-60).

Kottak (1990), Signorielli (1993) and Heintz-Knowles (2001) all found that TV overrepresented certain professions, such as physicians, attorneys, policemen and other professionals, while underportraying most white-collar and blue-collar jobs. In a content analysis of prime-time entertainment programming, 21% of the characters were portrayed as protective service/military personnel while 14% were professionals, and just 12% were white color/management/business owners (Heintz-Knowles, 2001, p. 182).

While white men were "generally presented in more high-status occupational roles than women and minorities," (Signorielli, 1993, p. 316) television's portrayals of work have improved somewhat over time. However, there are still "several stereotypic portrayals in relation to gender, race, marital status, and work" (Signorielli and Kahlenberg, 2001, p. 18). Compared to the reality of the working world,

television programs still place a large emphasis on the more prestigious, glamorous, adventurous and exciting occupations. This pattern of over-representation occurs for men, women, whites and people of color. On the other hand, white-collar (managerial, clerical) and blue-collar (service, labor) workers are very underrepresented on television when compared with their numbers in the US labor force (p. 18).

Other researchers have found that distorted representations of work roles appear in other media as well. Csikszentmihalyi and Schneider (2000) note that in general, media portrayals have shifted from "investors, businessmen, statesmen, and religious figures" to "entertainers, athletes, and celebrities of doubtful standing as role models" (p. 15). Faludi (1999) referred to these portrayals as an "ornamental culture…constructed around celebrity and image, glamour and entertainment, marketing and consumerism" (p. 35).

Changing Media Messages

Television's messages about work have changed with the times, seemingly both mirroring and leading society, as Signorielli and Morgan (2001) have suggested. Some of the most obvious examples include television sitcoms about American families. Early TV programs such as *Leave It to Beaver, Father Knows Best* and *The Donna Reed Show* portrayed white, upper middle-class families that were somewhat glamorous. Most of these families had at least one working adult, and in the early years of television, it was usually the father of the family. The family structure portrayed in TV shows changed somewhat in the 1970s and 1980s, featuring both nuclear and single-parent families that were still by and large, middle class. By the late 1980s and 1990s, a subset of TV families was "presented as psychotic and dysfunctional, and at times almost 'anti-family' (e.g., *Roseanne, Married with Children, The Simpsons*)" (p. 338-339). In almost every program Signorielli and Morgan

(2001) cited, at least one person in the sitcom family worked outside the home, even in dysfunctional families such as the Conners in *Roseanne,* where both partners worked, and in *The Simpsons,* where Homer worked in a nuclear power plant.

Even though Kottak (1990) found that images of unemployment on American television were rare and derided, more recent observations indicate that television and other media have gradually changed their portrayals of those who do not work. In a 2006 *New York Times* article on men who have dropped out of regular work either by losing their jobs or by simply choosing not to work, the paper noted that such men have "become more common in the popular culture, making the phenomenon more acceptable" (Uchitelle, 2006, p. 6). As examples, the article cited the TV show *Seinfield,* where "Cosmo Kramer, who did not work, and George Costanza, who regularly lost jobs, were beloved figures" (p. 6). In addition, the *New York Times* also mentioned that an increasing number of personal finance magazines "also encourage not working by telling readers how to afford retirement at 50 and showing painting—not working—as the good life" (p. 6).

As representations of work changed on television to gradually include more single-parent families, working women and greater numbers of unemployed people, the real world changed, too. In a study comparing the working world in 1974 to that of 1999, Smola and Sutton (2002) noted the decline of manufacturing jobs and the increase in service-oriented white-collar jobs. Workers in 1999 were better educated than those in 1974, with 26% having at least a bachelor's degree vs. 16% who finished college in 1974. In other major changes, the numbers of women, blacks and Hispanics in the workforce had also increased (Smola and Sutton, 2002).

Impact on the Work Ethic

These workplace changes may have influenced "employee expectations and perhaps even their work values" (Smola and Sutton, 2002, p. 368-369). This is also one of the concerns with media misrepresentations of the working world. "These stereotypical images of the television work force may have ramifications on the socialization process, especially for children, adolescents and heavy television viewers. Through long-term exposure to television, viewers' career choices may suffer" (Signorielli and Kahlenberg, 2001, p. 20).

Barber (1989) studied the misguided lessons children and adolescents were learning about work from TV soap operas and feared that because young viewers frequently want to follow in the footsteps of their TV heroes, right down to the glamorous lifestyles portrayed, they may grow resentful if they do not achieve what the TV characters do.

In their study on the development of the work ethic among teenagers, Csikszentmihalyi and Schneider (2000) concluded:

> Teenagers build shrines in their bedrooms to movie stars and singers in the hope that they too will become rich and famous; few surround themselves with the likenesses of successful engineers or accountants…When the most visibly successful people create wealth by manipulating phantom paper transactions, what is the point of learning a difficult craft (p. 15-16)?

The heroes teenagers are choosing are indicative of the shift in both the culture at large and changes in the working world that Faludi (1999) labeled "ornamental culture" or "celebrity culture" (p. 35), noting that for adults, it can negatively influence feelings of worth and the value placed on work:

> We have changed fundamentally from a society that produced a culture to a culture rooted in no real society at all…Where we once lived in a society in which men in particular participated by being useful in public life, we now are surrounded by a

culture that encourages people to play almost no functional public roles, only decorative or consumer ones (p. 34-35).

The changing work culture may be a factor in the declining work values Smola and Sutton (2002) reported over 1974 to 1999. They measured values, including pride in workmanship (measured by people's level of agreement to such statements as "A worker should do a decent job whether or not his supervisor is around" and "A worker should feel a sense of pride in his work"), and the moral importance of work ("Working harder makes one a better person"). Workers in 1999 felt significantly less agreement with these statements than workers in 1974. Moreover, people in 1999 seemed to derive a diminished sense of personal value and worth associated from their work. "This pattern reflects a general trend in society away from being a 'company man' to a perception of work that is given a lower priority than in years past" (p. 378-379).

These attitudes were apparent early on among the boomers, according to Steinhorn (2006), citing two studies done by Daniel Yankelovich. In 1971, boomer college students were "extremely uneasy with the top-down, hierarchical, 'organization man' work culture" (p. 167). By 1974, they were not only rejecting the old authoritarian ways of the working world, but also expressing a desire for greater satisfaction, including meaningful work, the ability to make a contribution and tolerance for them as diverse individuals.

Light (1988) also noted that boomers demand a lot out of work, viewing it as part of the key to helping them find greater meaning in life. "Baby boomers tend to value the content of work more than their parents, and appear to look for satisfaction and challenge to a somewhat greater extent…It appears that the baby boomers have less interest in the traditional meaning of work" (p. 152).

Smola and Sutton's 2002 work showed that although boomers and Generation Xers did not have big differences on pride of workmanship issues, there were significant differences between the two generations on the perceived moral importance of work:

> The newer employees were generally found to be less loyal to the company and more 'me' oriented. They wanted to be promoted more quickly than their older counterparts, were less likely to feel that work should be an important part of one's life and according to their responses, would be more likely to quit work if they won a large amount of money. At the same time, there were indications of a more idealistic attitude toward work among Gen Xers. They felt more strongly that working hard is an indication of one's worth. And surprisingly, they were more likely to feel that one should work hard, even if a supervisor is not around (p. 378).

Other researchers have also found generational differences in the work ethic, as well as differences in the strengths and weaknesses that characterize each generation. Santos and Cox (2000) reported different perceptions of occupational stress, particularly between boomers and those who belong to Generation X. They observe that boomers had more negative scores than Generation X and the World War II generation in areas of stress, strain and coping. Santos and Cox (2000) also found that boomers had negative perceptions of the Generation Xers they worked with, believing them to be arrogant, less committed to their jobs, and having a tendency to job hop. In contrast, Generation Xers did not feel negatively about their boomer colleagues, and did not believe their own generation was arrogant. Instead, they described their attitude as self-reliance. In describing their work ethic, Xers said that although they were committed to their professions, they felt they needed to take care of their own interests, which might necessitate changing jobs.

A 2004 survey by the Society of Human Resource Management (Lockwood, 2004) catalogued the top five work traits for the four generations: World War II, boomers, Generation X, and the millennials. The World War II generation and boomers both tended to

have long-term loyalty to their organizations and to give maximum effort. In fact, giving maximum effort was the top trait of boomers. Further, both generations were accepting of authority figures in the workplace, boomers even more so than veterans. This finding seems to counter Yankelovich's 1971 results where two-thirds of the boomer college students said they would "reject outright or accept only reluctantly the power and authority of a boss at work" (Steinhorn, 2006, p. 167, citing Yankelovich).

Other Differences in Work Ethic

Several studies reported differences in the work ethic based on age, maturation and years of experience, gender, education and occupation.

Although Cherrington, Condie and England (1979) did not group subjects into generations, their study of the correlation between work values and age had some similar findings to other researchers, especially Smola and Sutton (2002). Cherrington et al. (1979) found that older workers had more traditional work values and took greater pride in their work; while younger workers tended to value the money they earned and put their friendships ahead of work. They ascribed these differences to the possibility that the work ethic may change based on the "sheer number as well as the different kinds of experiences associated with growing older" (p. 617), and by specific historical events such as WWII. In addition, the study found that different age groups have been socialized and trained in different ways, which seems applicable to the baby boom generation.

Wentworth and Chell (1997) surveyed college students, both American undergraduate and graduate students, in addition to international students, using questions drawn from a 1971 "Protestant Work Ethic Scale" containing such statements as "People should have more

leisure time to spend in relaxation," "Hard work offers little guarantee of success," and "Life would be more meaningful if we had more leisure time." Responses were summed to derive a total PWE score, with a high score indicating endorsement of the PWE and a low score indicating little belief in the PWE (p. 288-289). Wentworth and Chell found that contrary to their expectations, "the mean scores on the PWE become lower as age category increases," indicating that younger students "still hold on to the Protestant work ethic" (p. 293). They also found that "male college students had significantly higher scores than female college students did" (p. 291). Wentworth and Chell speculated that younger students may believe more strongly in the PWE as a way to "justify the delay in gratification normally associated with preparing for a career" (p. 293), but as they age and begin working, they become less idealistic when "confronted with organizational politics as well as the lack of equity and fairness often associated with organizational decisions" (p. 293). As a result, they may become somewhat cynical about the work ethic.

Hill (1997) also reported a change in the work ethic based on the amount of work experience. People who had been on the job less than two years or over eight years scored higher on interpersonal skills, initiative and being dependable, while those with between two and eight years of full-time work experience scored lower on those characteristics. Like Wentworth and Chell (1997), Hill (1997) felt workers often start out with an idealistic view of the working world but become more realistic over time. "The present study, however, shows that workers move beyond the disillusionment…particularly with respect to initiative and being dependable" (p. 20).

Cherrington et al. (1979) and Wentworth and Chell (1997) thought the work ethic might be shaped by broader events, such as the political environment or changes in the

employment market. In particular, Wentworth and Chell (1997) cited a growing conservatism in the United States at the time of their study as influencing gender differences in work ethic. They also pointed at the media as "advancing a theme in which males are seen as having responsibilities and women as seen as having choices" (p. 293). They concluded that "the PWE is not a dispositional variable but instead varies according to the period of time in which it is measured" (p. 294).

Hill (1997) also found that the work ethic varied somewhat by gender, but his findings differed slightly from Wentworth and Chell's (1997). Women scored higher than men on interpersonal skills, initiative and being dependable, although Hill explained that these higher scores "neither mean that women's work ethic is good or that men's work ethic is bad—only that it differs. On an absolute scale, mean scores for work ethic of women and men would be positioned quite close together" (p. 17-18).

Among other attributes, Hill (1997) considered the influence level of education might have on people's work ethic, and concluded it was not a strong indicator. The study did find that those with more education scored higher on initiative and dependability. There were significant differences in the work ethic based on occupation, with those in professional, sales or service jobs scoring higher on initiative, interpersonal skills and being dependable (Hill, 1997).

Theoretical Framework and Research Questions

The literature review shows differences in the work ethic among generations, and indicates that some of these differences may be due to maturation as well as working experience. Several researchers also stated that the work ethic may be influenced by certain

historical events or by different types of socialization (i.e., Cherrington, et al., 1979; Wentworth and Chell, 1997). Hill (1997) called for "further probing" of the way the media has shaped work and sex-role stereotypes.

If, as Gerbner (2002a) said, "a culture cultivates not only patterns of conformity but also patterns of alienation or rebellion after its own image" (p. 186), it seems likely that some of the baby boomers' attitudes toward work have been shaped by television. Television's role as an instrument of socialization has been particularly strong for this cohort. Boomers may have also been especially susceptible to resonance effects of cultivation due to the events they experienced while growing up.

Based on cultivation theory, this study explores several research questions related to the idea that the work ethic for the baby boom generation in particular has been influenced by television. These research questions were also based on personal observations that influenced the selection of this topic. Personal acquaintance with several members of the baby boom generation indicated that many of these individuals struggled with their career choices and seemed unable to determine what they wanted to do when they "grew up." Some of them seemed to cycle through jobs quickly, dismissing them as being unfulfilling or poorly paid. Like the men profiled in the 2006 *New York Times* article (Uchitelle, 2006) they did not want "just any job" and would occasionally refuse work they deemed beneath them. Others picked the route of self-employment and endured sporadic periods without work or income. Still, for some of these individuals, this was preferable to a job that paid minimum wage or slightly above (never mind the fact that $8 an hour is more than $0 an hour). There were also a handful of people with no visible means of financial support, who had dropped out of the working world altogether, or at least the corporate world of full-time work.

The *New York Times* (2006) noted that approximately 13% of American men between 30 and 55 "are not working, up from 5% in the late 1960s" (Uchitelle, 2006, p. 1-3). While many of the men the *Times* observed had blue-collar backgrounds with little more than a high school diploma, "their ranks are growing at all education and income levels. It is a significant cultural shift from three decades ago. Indeed, a larger share of working-age men are not working today than at almost any point in the last half-century" (Uchitelle, 2006, p. 1-3).

These boomers grew up in different parts of the country, in rural and urban locations, and had different socioeconomic and family backgrounds. The one thing that they seemed to have in common was their membership in the boomer cohort. In addition, several were born in the mid-to late-1950s, making them part of the older boomers Light (1988) identified. They lived through the tumultuous 1960s and 1970s either as vicarious observers via television or as actual participants. Some were undoubtedly personally affected by major events such as the Vietnam War, either by being drafted, enlisting in the military in an effort to control their destiny at that time, or by knowing people who served in the war.

In their work ethic, these friends and acquaintances seemed to be reflecting a larger boomer attitude that rejected "the traditional notion of hard work as a reward in itself" (Light, 1988, p. 153). Yet as Light (1988) said, their quest may have created a certain level of bitterness and frustration. "Unlike generations before it, the baby boom tends to see its working life as part of the confirmation of the individual, an approach which puts the generation at some risk as it confronts the inevitable disappointments of life" (p. 154). Some of the people observed did seem to have a hard time feeling satisfied over a task done well for its own sake, and maintained a constant quest for the ultimately satisfying job, either in

terms of responsibility, advancement possibilities or financial gain. They never seemed to settle down into an occupational track.

Research Questions

This study explores several questions designed to learn more about how television may have influenced the boomers' work ethic. Based on cultivation theory, the following research questions are posed:

RQ1: How do the members of the baby boom generation characterize their view of the work ethic? Do heavy television viewers exhibit a work ethic more closely aligned with television's messages about work?

RQ2: Among the baby boomers, do heavy television viewers exhibit greater work ethic cultivation effects than light viewers? Is there an observable mainstreaming effect to their responses? To what extent is mainstreaming evident?

RQ3: Among the baby boomers, do viewers who had stronger memories of social upheaval from the 1960s and 1970s, either as portrayed on television or personally experienced, show greater work ethic cultivation effects?

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

As the literature review indicates, the work ethic and people's views about the work ethic vary by one's age group or generation and are apparently shaped somewhat by social, cultural and historical events, as well as personal experience. Following the axioms of cultivation theory, they also seem to be influenced by the messages people get from watching a great deal of television. This seems especially probable for the baby boom generation for whom television was an important socialization instrument.

The work ethic is a multi-dimensional concept with aspects linked to the old idea of the Protestant work ethic (PWE). Previous studies (Hill, 1998) have used the Occupational Work Ethic Inventory, including "work ethic attributes" such as "interpersonal skills, initiative, and being dependable" (p. 7) to measure changes in people's notions of the work ethic. However, because the current study was most concerned with the influence of television in shaping people's views of the work ethic, the most appropriate research methodology to gather data for this study needed to allow flexibility in questionnaire design while accommodating open-ended responses. As such, intensive interviewing was used to explore the influence TV may have had on the work ethic of the baby boom generation. This qualitative approach was expected to provide deeper and richer insights, help "collect indications of what may exist" (Wimmer, 2006), and identify related research questions for future studies.

As Creswell (1994) observed, "One of the chief reasons for conducting a qualitative study is that the study is exploratory; not much has been written about the topic or population

being studied, and the researcher seeks to listen to informants and to build a picture based on their ideas" (p. 21). Through probing, open-ended questions, intensive interviews seek to learn more about the respondents' attitudes and behaviors toward an issue, eliciting answers that may not be readily apparent through closed-ended questions common in most surveys. Creswell stated that interviews are useful when seeking information about issues that cannot be directly observed. Interviews also give the researcher some control over the questioning, although Bernard (2006) believes that "the idea is to get people to open up and let them express themselves in their own terms, and at their own pace" (p. 211). While flexibility must be the norm, Bernard recommends the interviewer "get people on to a topic of interest and get out of the way. Let the informant provide information that he or she thinks is important" (p. 216).

Terkel (1974) used intensive interviews to great advantage in his classic *Working* and admitted that conventionally conducted interviews were meaningless.

> The question-and-answer technique may be of some value in determining favored detergents, toothpaste and deodorants, but not in the 'discovery' of men and women. There were questions, of course. But they were casual in nature at the beginning, the kind you would ask while having a drink with someone; the kind he would ask you. The talk was idiomatic rather than academic. In short, it was conversation. In time, the sluice gates of dammed up hurts and dreams were opened (p. xx-xxi).

The current study used open-ended questions designed to encourage respondents (members of the baby boom generation) to talk freely about their feelings, attitudes and behaviors related to the work ethic and television messages about work.

Sampling

The study used a sample size of 31 baby boomers, contacted through the informal snowball sampling technique. As defined by Atkinson and Flint (2001), snowball sampling consists of "identifying respondents who are then used to refer researchers on to other respondents" (p. 1). The assumption is that there is a bond or link between the members of the target population, so that referrals are made within a "circle of acquaintance" (p. 3). The study started by identifying and interviewing one member of the baby boom cohort, who then suggested another member of this group for an interview, who then recommended a third member, etc. Atkinson and Flint (2001) note that this sampling technique can give the interviewer some credibility as a sort of insider with access to the group. They also caution that this methodology does have inherent biases involved with representativeness, stemming from the selection of the first respondents. As a solution, they recommend a larger sample size, as well as initiating several different interview chains with fewer links. "The real promise of snowball sampling lies in its ability to uncover aspects of social experience often hidden from both the researcher's and lay person's view of social life" (p. 9).

Interview Protocols

The interviews were tape recorded and also documented through note taking. Terkel (1974) felt the tape recorder could be both misused and well-used, but also noted that "a tape recorder, with microphone in hand, on the table or the arm of the chair or on the grass, can transform both the visitor and the host" (p. xix). Bernard (2006) recommends remaining flexible about the tape recorder, so that if respondents are uncomfortable with its use, they

have the option of speaking without it. The interviews were transcribed and stored on a computer.

Creswell (1994) notes the sheer volume of data gathered in a qualitative method can be overwhelming and recommends using a simultaneous process of data collection and data analysis. This involves collecting information from respondents, "sorting the information into categories, formatting the information into a story or picture, and actually writing the qualitative text" (p. 153). He also recommends using a process of data reduction and interpretation, where patterns and themes are identified and then interpreted using some schema. Starting with the whole, Creswell (1994) recommends a systematic process where the researcher identifies the underlying meaning of each interview and then lists all topics covered. Doing this for each interview will lead to a pattern of common themes that can be used as a sort of coding or categorizing method. The process also involves reducing the number of categories by grouping related topics and developing major and minor themes. During the entire process, Creswell (1994) reminds the interviewer to "look for unusual or useful quotes that later will be incorporated into the qualitative story" (p. 155). The narrative will be used to compare to the research questions and aspects of cultivation theory, specifically mainstreaming and resonance.

The questionnaire outlined in Appendix B was pre-tested on three members of the baby boom generation, and was revised according to their recommendations. These three interviews were included as part of the 31 total interviews conducted.

Because the intent of qualitative research is "not to generalize findings, but to form a unique interpretation of events" (Creswell, 1994, p. 158-159), the findings of this study may have limited generalizability (external validity). Additionally, there may be limitations on

replicating the study due to the unique nature of the assumptions, the selection of informants,

personal biases and values of the interviewer, among others.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The study was conducted to evaluate the influence of television in shaping the work ethic among members of the baby boom generation. Intensive interviewing was used to gather open-ended responses.

The Sample

This study included individual interviews with 31 people born between 1946 and 1964 (members of the baby boom generation). Participants were identified through snowball sampling involving several different interview chains. Interviews were conducted either face-to-face or over the telephone. Each interview lasted approximately an hour. Most interviews were tape-recorded and the tapes were transcribed. Tape-recorded interviews were usually supplemented with note taking, often on a computer.

Of the respondents, 19 (61%) were men, while 12 (38%) were women. All respondents were Caucasian. The birth years of the respondents ranged from 1947 to 1964, with the distribution as follows:

Birth Year	Number of Respondents
1947	1
1948	3
1949	2
1952	2
1953	5
1954	2
1955	2
1956	2
1958	2
1959	2

1960	3
1961	3
1962	1
1963	1
1964	1

Thirteen respondents held bachelor's degrees, with a few in this group also having some graduate school or continuing education. Six respondents held master's degrees or MBAs (one respondent held two master's degrees but these were not counted separately) and two respondents held doctorates. The remaining 10 respondents all had high school diplomas, and all in this group had either some college or trade school education beyond high school.

Most respondents (16) grew up in a town, while nine respondents grew up in a city. Four grew up in rural settings. Two respondents said they grew up in cities, towns and rural locations because they moved a lot as children. Of their current residences, the majority (21) lived in cities. Five lived in rural locations, and three lived in towns. Seventeen of the respondents currently lived in Iowa; four lived in Colorado; two each lived in Florida and New Jersey; and one each lived in California, Minnesota, Nevada, New York, Tennessee and Wyoming.

Only four respondents said they had served in the military, although a few said they had either tried to enlist and been refused for various reasons, or they had received a draft number but were not called up.

All respondents were currently employed, although one respondent planned to retire in the spring of 2007. Most respondents began working full-time, 40 hours a week, between the ages of 17 and 22, when they were out of high school. There were outliers on both ends of the spectrum, however, with a handful of respondents saying they started working full

time before age 16 (apparently referring to summer or childhood jobs held while they were still in school), and several others starting full-time work between 24 and 38. Those who started full-time work later were generally finishing up their education (sometimes involving advanced degrees) or influenced by other life circumstances such as their marriages.

TV Viewing as Children

To establish TV's role as an agent of socialization among this sample of the baby boom generation, respondents were asked to recall how much television they watched a day while growing up. This was not measured in exact time increments, although respondents were prompted to remember whether they had watched TV before school, after school or with their families in the evening. Many respondents remarked they could not remember exactly how much TV they had watched while growing up so they provided a rough estimate. One respondent, born in 1960, said he watched "pretty much from the time I got home from school until I went to bed" and then recited a time schedule of the programs he had watched. "I took in a lot of TV," he said. "My dad worked for the railroad and he was almost always gone. When he was home, there wasn't time for us. My mom had a job and she was almost always gone. When she wasn't gone, she was out playing with her friends, so she was gone anyway."

Several respondents said their TV viewing times were monitored or limited. Many commented that they watched small amounts of television during the school week (one to two hours a night), but watched more TV on weekends, especially Saturday morning cartoons. Several respondents remembered they watched only rarely because they preferred to go outside and play with their friends, or because they preferred to read or were active in

other pursuits such as sports, music lessons or homework. One respondent born in 1949 specifically remarked that his television viewing had been dramatically curtailed when he turned 12 and was sent off to a boarding school where he did not have access to television for the first couple of years.

In some cases, the respondents' families did not own a television set during their childhood but purchased them later when the respondents were teenagers. One respondent, born in 1948, reported her parents did not get a TV until she was a junior in high school. "My dad said he had four children in the household, and they provided enough noise without him electronically providing more." Even when the family finally got a television, she did not recall watching a lot of TV. "My mother always felt that any extra energy expended by children needed to be outside—riding bikes, riding horses, roller skating. I had a very active life."

In terms of the average number of hours a day the respondents said they watched television as children, 21 respondents said they watched one to two hours, which has been subjectively classified as low viewing for this study. (Respondents who said they did not watch a lot of TV or could not specifically remember how much they watched are included in this category, too.) Five respondents said they watched two to three hours a day; three said they watched three to four hours daily. This study has classified two to four hours of viewing a day as moderate viewing. Two respondents said they watched between four and six hours a day, classified as heavy viewing for this study. Male respondents tended to watch more television as children.

In most cases, there was only one television in respondents' homes, usually located in a living room or family room. A few respondents bought their own television sets as young

teenagers. Many respondents had fond memories of watching television with their families, particularly on Sunday nights or other times during the weekend. *Wonderful World of Disney* was cited by many as a favorite family program. One female respondent, born in 1954, said, "The whole family used to sit down together and watch television. It was kind of a nice secure feeling. We used to have snacks."

Several respondents remarked that their fathers controlled the television sets and that the family watched what the father wanted to watch. As one respondent, born in 1960, said, "Dad ran the TV, so you watched what he was watching."

A handful of respondents talked about the novelty of television in their families or neighborhoods. One male respondent, born in 1948, told of a well-to-do neighbor whose television was visible through a large picture window. Because few families in that neighborhood had television yet, the neighborhood children used to sit on the sidewalk outside the house and watch TV through the window. The homeowner would wave at the kids through the window. Another male respondent, born in 1953, remembered people watching TV programs simply because they were in color, not black and white.

Favorite Childhood Programs and Characters/Heroes

Respondents were asked to name their favorite childhood TV programs and characters. While a few respondents named programs that may have only broadcast regionally, such as *The Floppy Show* or *House of the Magic Window*, by and large the programs named were very similar based on the birth year of the respondent and the advent and duration of particular television programs. For example, the six respondents born in the late 1940s cited favorites such as *The Many Loves of Dobie Gillis, The Mickey Mouse Club,*

Father Knows Best, The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet, I Love Lucy, Jack Benny, Milton

Berle and *The Lone Ranger.* Among both younger and older respondents, *The Wonderful*

World of Disney, The Adventures of Superman, Lassie, The Lone Ranger, Gunsmoke, Looney

Tunes, *The Andy Griffith Show, Leave It To Beaver, Gilligan's Island, Bonanza* and *Batman*

seemed to be perennial favorites. Beginning with respondents born in the mid-1950s and

later, *Davy Crockett, Captain Kangaroo, Star Trek, Twilight Zone* and *Sky King* were

consistently mentioned as favorites. A handful born in the mid-1950s cited *The Mod Squad,*

The Monkees and *The Man from U.N.C.L.E.* Younger boomers enjoyed such shows as *The*

Brady Bunch, The Sonny and Cher Show, Happy Days, The Partridge Family and *The Mary*

Tyler Moore Show.

Table 1 briefly describes respondents' favorite childhood TV shows and notes any

occupations portrayed in the programs (CrazyAboutTV.com and Wikipedia).

Table 1. Respondents' Favorite Childhood TV Shows

TV Show:	Description:	Occupations Shown:
The Lone Ranger	Western action series starring a "masked rider of the plains," the Lone Ranger, and his Native American Indian sidekick, Tonto. Involved fight for law and order in the early American West.	Some law enforcement by the hero, The Lone Ranger.
Adventures of Superman	Fantasy action series featuring Superman as crime-fighting superhero with super powers of hearing, flying, x-ray vision, strength and invulnerability. Program also involved life of Superman's alter ego, "mild-mannered newspaper reporter" Clark Kent and his girlfriend, Lois Lane.	Newspaper reporter, crime fighting.

Table 1. Cont. TV Show:	Description:	Occupations Shown:
Gunsmoke	Western action show emphasizing law and order, particularly stopping the "bad guys" of cattle thieves, gamblers and gunfighters.	Marshall, doctor, bartender.
Davy Crockett	An early action miniseries produced by the Walt Disney Studios and loosely based on the life of U.S. frontiersman Davy Crockett. Crockett was billed as "The King of the Wild Frontier."	Frontiersman, soldier, politician.
Leave It To Beaver	Situation comedy about two brothers, Beaver and Wally, and their parents, Ward and June Cleaver. Shows included gentle moral lessons.	Teachers, housewife, firemen, white-collar professionals (Ward Cleaver's occupation was not specified, but he wore a tie and seemed to work in an office).
Bonanza	Western cowboy action series set on a Nevada ranch about a widowed father, Ben Cartwright, and his three sons: Adam, Hoss and Little Joe.	Ranchers, cowboys, sheriffs, deputies, some political figures.
Father Knows Best	Situation comedy portraying the lives of the Anderson family, gently dominated by patriarch Jim Anderson.	Insurance agent, housewife, teachers.
Andy Griffith Show	Situation comedy featuring Andy Griffith as a widowed small-town sheriff raising a young son, Opie. Other cast members included the sheriff's deputy and kindly Aunt Bee, who helped Andy raise Opie.	Sheriff, deputy, gas station attendant, teachers, auto mechanics, barber.
Star Trek	Science fiction drama set in the 23rd century aboard the "starship Enterprise." During episodes, crew members of the Enterprise explored the galaxy and met other peoples and space creatures. Featured an interracial cast.	Paramilitary, astronauts, engineers, scientist, doctor, radio communication expert.
Gilligan's Island	Situation comedy about the adventures of seven people who have been shipwrecked and now live on a tropical island.	Ship's captain and first mate, professor, movie star, millionaire, farm girl.

Table 1. Cont. **TV Show:**	**Description:**	**Occupations Shown:**
The Many Loves of Dobie Gillis	Situation comedy about teenager Dobie Gillis and his quest for money, popularity and girlfriends. Dobie's sidekick, Maynard G. Krebs, was described as both a hippie and a beatnik and disdained work.	Students, teachers, housewives, grocer.
The Mickey Mouse Club	Weekday children's variety series produced by Walt Disney Productions, featuring teenage cast members, "The Mouseketeers." Mousekeeters wore hats with Mickey Mouse ears. Programs included cartoons, newsreel, music, comedy, talent, and a serial with the teens facing challenges in everyday situations. Each day of the week had a different theme.	None overtly portrayed.
The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet	Family situation comedy about Ozzie and Harriet Nelson and their sons, Ricky and David. The Nelsons were a real-life family who essentially played themselves in the comedy.	White-collar professionals (Ozzie Nelson's occupation was not stated but he wore a tie and may have worked in an office), housewife, teachers.
The Monkees	Musical comedy series about a struggling rock band, the Monkees.	Musicians.
The Jack Benny Show	Comedy-variety series starring comedian Jack Benny and celebrity guest stars. Usually featured both music and comedy sketches.	None overtly portrayed.
Wonderful World of Disney	Anthology series originally hosted by Walt Disney personally and featuring mix of Disney animated cartoons and material from the Disney studios. *Davy Crockett* originally aired as part of *Wonderful World of Disney*.	None overtly portrayed.
The Milton Berle Show	Mid-50s comedy-variety show hosted by comedian Milton Berle. Originally titled Texaco Star Theater.	None overtly portrayed.
Lassie	Gentle drama starring Lassie, a collie dog, and her young owners, farm boys Jeff and Timmy. Lassie is very intelligent and frequently rescues her human companions.	Rancher, housewife

Table 1. Cont. **TV Show:**	**Description:**	**Occupations Shown:**
Looney Tunes	Animated cartoon series produced by Warner Brothers. Characters included Bugs Bunny, Porky Pig, Daffy Duck, Elmer Fudd, Donald Duck, Sylvester and Tweetie and Yosemite Sam.	None overtly portrayed.
Batman	Fantasy action series about the superhero Batman and his sidekick, Robin. Batman's secret identity is billionaire industrialist Bruce Wayne.	Wealthy industrialist and philanthropist.
Captain Kangaroo	Children's educational series, aired five days a week. Series featured puppets, cartoons, stories and stunts. Captain Kangaroo was the program's host, aided by sidekick Mr. Green Jeans.	Musicians, gardener, some guest roles including newspaper reporter.
The Twilight Zone	Science fiction anthology series hosted and narrated by Rod Serling. Programs sometimes had a moral lesson for everyday life.	Varied, depending on episode.
Sky King	Western adventure series involving rancher and airplane pilot, "Sky" King. King's nephew and niece helped him catch criminals or aid lost hikers, using a plane.	Rancher, airplane pilot.
Mod Squad	Police drama with hip, young crime fighters: one African-American, one street kid and one blonde woman. Premise was that the "Mod Squad" was offered work crime fighting instead of being jailed for their own offenses. Dealt with racial politics, drug culture and counterculture.	Law enforcement.
Man from U.N.C.L.E.	Action-adventure series featuring an American and a Russian who were a two-man troubleshooting team for a covert espionage organization. Ian Fleming, who wrote the *James Bond* books, contributed to the original concept for the show.	Spies, military officers, law enforcement officers.
The Brady Bunch	Situation comedy about the blended Brady family, with parents Mike and Carol Brady and their six children. Episodes revolved around typical family problems.	Architect, housewife, housekeeper.

Table 1. Cont. TV Show:	Description:	Occupations Shown:
The Partridge Family	Situation comedy about a widowed mother and her five children, who form a family rock band together and travel around the country.	Musicians, students.
The Sonny and Cher Show	Comedy-variety show featuring the musical duo of Sonny Bono and Cher (originally they were married, but later divorced although the show continued to air). Show featured comedy sketches, musical numbers, guest stars.	None overtly portrayed.
Happy Days	Situation comedy set in the 1950s and early 1960s, revolving around the Cunningham family of Milwaukee, Wis.	Hardware store owner, housewife, students, teachers.
The Mary Tyler Moore Show	Situation comedy starring Mary Tyler Moore as a career-minded single woman working in a TV studio in Minneapolis, Minn.	TV reporters, anchormen, weatherman, TV copywriter.
Rocky and Bullwinkle Show	Animated cartoon series with appeal for both adults and children. Zany characters and absurd plots appealed to children, while adults enjoyed the puns.	Spies, presented in cartoon form.
M*A*S*H	Medical drama/comedy series set in the 1950s during the Korean War. "MASH" stood for Mobile Army Surgical Hospital. Ensemble cast included sarcastic doctor, Hawkeye, and his sidekicks Trapper John and B.J. Considered by some as an allegory for the Vietnam War.	Doctors, surgeons, nurses, Army personnel including officers and enlisted men and women.
Kung Fu	Western action series, featuring martial arts and Oriental kung fu masters. Set in the late 19th century.	Buddhist monks and some law enforcement figures, such as sheriffs.
Charlie's Angels	Action series featuring three beautiful women who work for a private investigation agency and use guns and sex appeal to rout the bad guys.	Private investigators, law enforcement.

For many respondents, their favorite characters/heroes were the title characters from

The Lone Ranger and *The Adventures of Superman*. "Superman was appealing because he

was able to defeat villains and had super powers and was a handsome person as well," said a

male low viewer born in 1948. "Also, he was humble." Bullwinkle, of the *Rocky and Bullwinkle* cartoon, was also named as a favorite by several respondents who thought he was witty.

One male respondent, a low viewer born in 1955, said his favorite characters were from shows he enjoyed as a teenager, *M*A*S*H* and *Kung Fu*. "*M*A*S*H* was certainly much more challenging than any situation comedy you see these days. I certainly was a Hawkeye (a character from *M*A*S*H*) fan and was a fan of Kane from *Kung Fu*. I liked both of them because they were non-conformists. That's what I am."

Among those who liked *Star Trek*, both Captain James T. Kirk and Spock were listed as heroes or favorites. "I guess if I had a TV hero back then, it would probably be Spock just because he was smart, in control," said a male respondent born in 1956. Another male respondent, born in 1964, said he had actually used Spock as a role model in elementary school when he felt bullied by other children. "He (Spock) kept control of his emotions. I thought that since he controlled his emotions, I could do that too. I was probably close to 30 before I realized it was OK to cry. I thought that made a lot of sense—guys were discouraged from crying. I really worked for a while controlling my emotions, which has actually been useful at times."

A female respondent born in 1960 named Sabrina from *Charlie's Angels* as a favorite character "because she was the smart one." A male respondent born in 1949 said he had enjoyed *Dobie Gillis* and noted that Dobie and his friend, Maynard G. Krebs, "never worked. That was a pretty cool show. I liked the one that didn't work, the hippie (Maynard G. Krebs)—he was funny."

Childhood Attitude toward Television

Respondents were asked what they liked about watching television as children. Many said they enjoyed the entertainment aspect. One heavy viewer, born in 1960, who watched between four and six hours a day and more in the summertime, said he liked TV because "it fueled my imagination. I was able to see things from all around the world—from the depths of the ocean to the outer reaches of space to the inner world of a microscope through TV; to see things that I would have never seen before without it." His comments were echoed by a male respondent born in 1956, who was a low viewer: "It was mostly science fiction that I liked watching. It was sort of an escape from normal life. But also it had some realistic, futuristic things. As I think back, *Twilight Zone* stretched your imagination, offering a mystery to solve while watching the show. It made you think a little bit as you were watching it; not just mindlessly watching television." Another male respondent, a low viewer born in 1953, felt that the stories on TV "provided inspiration for play time—my friends and I would play the characters on the shows. Batman and Robin, secret agent stuff."

A female respondent born in 1953 also commented on the escapism TV offers, but noted that TV also helped her learn. "I had a pretty limited life experience at that point; it was a big window on another world, an escape from the dreariness of every day." A female low viewer born in 1954, said, "I just loved it (television). I loved the little stories, the animals. The adults were kind and moderate in their behaviors, so I liked that. I liked how nice everybody was to each other."

TV Viewing as Adults

To establish current exposure and attention to television, respondents were asked how many hours per day they spend watching television now. Most respondents watched at least an hour a day, depending on the day of the week or their work schedule. One shift worker, born in 1953, said he tended to watch seven to eight hours a day when he was off work. With the exception of the shift worker, the heaviest viewer watched four hours of television a day (a man born in 1964). In many cases, respondents watched more TV on weekends. There were a handful who said they hardly ever watch or do not watch at all. "I really don't watch a lot of TV," said one male respondent, a low viewer born in 1955. "I made a personal choice about 20 years ago to no longer watch prime time network TV. I just decided it was garbage and I just quit watching it."

One woman born in 1957 said she only watches TV when she travels. "I enjoy my free time more with other things—I much prefer to read or see friends, or do other things. I think a lot of the stuff on TV is so much trash and it's a waste of time. It's offensive." One person, born in 1959, said she and her husband do not own a TV. Another woman, born in 1948, owns a TV, but does not watch it because she does not want to run an antenna or attach a satellite dish to her historic home. Still other respondents said that while they do not watch much, if any, network or cable TV, they enjoy watching DVDs of classic TV shows and old movies. Many said the television might be on in the background while they were doing other things, including the heaviest viewer. A few said they only watch the news or special events such as the president's State of the Union address.

Favorite Adult Programs and Characters

Respondents were asked to name their favorite shows and characters. Again, there was some commonality in favorite programs and regional differences seemed minimal, as did age differences. The most popular program seemed to be *Law & Order* and its various spin offs: *Law & Order: Special Victims Unit, Law & Order Criminal Intent*. Several respondents enjoyed nature and educational programs broadcast on PBS, while others mentioned favorite programs that are shown on cable TV, such as *The Daily Show*, *Nip & Tuck* and *South Park.* Also on cable, the *Discovery Channel* and the *History Channel* were particular favorites for several male respondents, although some women mentioned enjoying these channels as well. The inclusion of cable programs and channels seemed to reflect the growing popularity of cable over network programming.

On network TV, favorite programs included *CSI: Las Vegas* and *CSI: Miami, House, Monk, Survivor* and *Lost.* Four male respondents, who were moderate to heavy adult viewers, named the network program *24* as a favorite show and said they liked the main character, Jack Baur. In the words of the self-described non-conformist born in 1955, Baur "embodies the no compromise mentality—he's not politically correct. He's not afraid to push the envelope. I guess again, he's a non-conformist." Another male respondent, born in 1956 and a moderate to heavy viewer, said of Baur, "He's a good guy, he's always saving the country. It's lots of action, kind of intriguing."

Adult Attitudes Toward Television

Respondents were asked whether they enjoy watching TV as an adult and if they felt the same way about it that they did as children. On the whole, TV is still seen as a medium

that provides entertainment, or something to fill time. "I probably watch TV for the same reasons I did as a kid," said one male respondent, a low viewer born in 1953. "I watch shows I like because I identify with the characters." Among his favorite programs, he cited the *Law & Order* franchise, shows where he felt the "characters are very well defined, very authoritative, in-charge type of people. Those particular programs I like, and I will make a special effort to see them. TV by and large, however, annoys me. I can't stand the reality shows. I don't have any patience for that kind of stuff. I steer clear of those."

However, several respondents said that although they still enjoy watching TV, they do not have the same feelings toward it now as an adult that they did as a child. "When you're a kid, you find it so amazing and mysterious," said a male respondent born in 1955. "I don't find it to be either anymore. I find it to be just capitalism now. That's why I watch nature shows and sports; they're real. Most of this other stuff isn't real." His comments were echoed by a male respondent born in 1948. "When I was a kid, TV was something new and wondrous and now of course, it isn't. There's nothing I really look forward to that much or anticipate on TV."

One male respondent, a low viewer born in 1961, approaches TV more analytically now than he did as a child. "I probably enjoy it more now, even though I watch less of it. I understand more of it now. Because of what I do for a living, I look at TV and even commercials differently. I see the popular shows and trends and ask what makes this type of show so popular. *CSI, House, Criminal Minds, Lost;* the puzzles are what attracts people."

Several respondents who are low viewers felt they had more enjoyable things to do than watch TV. As one male respondent, born in 1949, said, "I still don't particularly like sitting and observing somebody else do something, especially when the people seem to be

not very happy and well adjusted. I deal with unhappy, not well-adjusted people professionally on a continuous basis, and watching for recreation is not what I need to do." Another male respondent, born in 1953, said he was "mistrustful of spending too much time watching TV, because I quite often end up regretting it." Other respondents made similar comments, including a low viewer born in 1960 who said that although she enjoys watching TV, she sometimes thinks "it's kind of a waste of time. I don't mean a waste of time in the sense it's bad, but if your life is very busy and you spend a lot of time with the TV, you're not accomplishing the goals you need to do. I have a lot of time pressure in my life, if I were to watch TV all day, I wouldn't get my work done."

Childhood Career Dreams

To probe the possible influence of television on career paths, respondents were asked a series of questions about their work experiences. The first question of this nature asked respondents to think back to age 15 and remember what they had wanted to be occupationally as an adult. This age was subjectively selected as a time when many teenagers receive some school education on careers, possibly including a skills or interest test. Respondents were also asked what inspired them to want this kind of job as an adolescent.

The answers to these questions indicated that although most respondents had definite career dreams as adolescents, these dreams may not have been fulfilled. There was also some indication that the media, including TV, magazines and books, influenced some respondents' career dreams. In other cases, respondents were influenced both positively and negatively by an adult, either someone they knew personally, such as a parent or teacher, or a public figure. There were also some common career dreams. For example, four male respondents, two born

in 1949, one in 1953 and one in 1963, dreamed of becoming pilots. Two had fathers who were pilots and both also recalled watching TV shows that included pilots: *Sky King* and *Whirlybirds.* Of these four respondents, one became a pilot for two branches of the military and also flew as an airline pilot; another earned his private pilot's license; one pilots hot air balloons as a hobby, and the fourth never earned his pilot's license. One of these respondents, born in 1963, as well as another male respondent, born in 1960, were also interested in becoming astronauts, partly based on their interest in the NASA space program, and their interest in *Star Trek.*

National Geographic magazine fueled the adolescent dreams of two male respondents: a respondent born in 1948 wanted to be a volcanologist based on reading about it in the magazine, and a male respondent born in 1956 wanted to be a travel or nature photographer. He also enjoyed *Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom* and its segments on animals. "*National Geographic* had images of places I'd never been, I'd never known about." This respondent also had adolescent/young adult dreams of being a pilot and had pursued it for several years as a serious avocation by earning a private pilot's license as well as other flight ratings.

One male respondent born in 1961 had wanted to be an architect and pursued architectural drawing for a few years. A fan of *The Brady Bunch,* he realized his "fascination (with architecture) may have started with the Brady house. I loved that house. Plus, Mr. Brady was an architect and I loved that Mr. Brady had his office in his house." In addition, his father's real estate company was located next to an architect's office. Another respondent, born in 1962, also had aspirations of becoming an architect, based on his enjoyment of high school drafting courses.

One female respondent, born in 1952, wanted to be a nurse, based on her desire to help people, as well as her interest in *Dr. Kildare*, played by the actor Richard Chamberlain. She later became an assistant manager in claims support for the health division of a financial services company.

Several respondents' childhood career dreams were born of their love for books. A male respondent born in 1953 was inspired to become a writer by two favorite childhood authors, Albert Payson Terhune, who wrote *Lad, a Dog,* and Jim Kjelgaard, who wrote *Big Red.* "Those two guys are who I really aspired to be." A female respondent born in 1958 also dreamed of being a writer, based on her love for the writings of Louisa May Alcott and the Bronte sisters. A female respondent born in 1959 wanted to be a lawyer, "because I wanted to save the world. I was idealistic enough to think that's what lawyers did. My heroes were people from books—the school librarian believed in me."

Other respondents' early career dreams were fostered by someone they knew personally. A female respondent born in 1948 recalled being inspired about writing by her high school English teacher who was "very good looking, very persuasive, had interesting classes. We'd read lots of books, we wrote essays. He would write on my papers that I had lots of potential to become a writer. I'd always been a big reader and liked to write." Still another female respondent, born in 1960, said her interest in becoming a journalist was partly born out of a desire to "inspire people and tell the truth." She added, "There was in fact an inspiration, a conservative journalist we knew who had given up being a lawyer. He was very close to being finished with a law degree, but he felt it was important to be a journalist who was a moral person." Additionally, "as a child, I read a book when I was about nine about a lady who was a young journalist. I thought I really want to do that. It wasn't so much of a TV

movie as a book. Also, at age 14, I took a test and it said you have the traits to be a forest ranger or a journalist. Becoming a journalist was much more exciting. I did everything they recommended."

Several respondents wanted to become teachers, in part because of teachers they had enjoyed. One male respondent, born in 1947, recalled a high school geometry teacher who inspired him to pursue teaching. A female respondent born in 1954 said "I wanted to be a teacher because they were the only people who were nice to me." This respondent also mentioned a media influence. "I was very moved by the Helen Keller special that was on TV with Patty Duke. By that stage, we watched *Bonanza* and *The Virginian* and there were schoolteachers in those old westerns who were usually very pretty and very kind. I pictured myself being that kind of a person. Also, the teachers in *Leave it to Beaver* were pretty and young and kind."

A woman born in 1953 wanted to become a teacher because she "just liked the idea of helping kids learn." However, she said the school guidance counselor did not encourage her career dream. "Based on the background I had as a child, because of my family life, not because of me or my abilities, the school guidance counselor suggested that I couldn't do anything more than be a secretary. That I would probably, oh, it just makes me so mad when I think about it, that I would probably be no better than my mother and live on welfare and raise a bunch of illegitimate children. And that is just outrageous, now."

Another female respondent, born in 1953, also felt she was somewhat hampered by her school in pursuing her childhood career dream. "I wanted to do something with writing, I knew that. I wasn't completely clear on what the path would be, but it was what I knew I did well and enjoyed." But the high school she attended "tracked people, without them coming

out and saying they tracked. Because I was an anti-war activist, I got kicked off the school newspaper for my efforts, and I became derailed in terms of being considered college material. I didn't receive any career counseling. I was kind of on my own in determining, discerning, praying."

A male respondent born in 1958 had a strong adolescent interest in designing cars but was put off by the necessary educational requirements. "I was fascinated with cars. I couldn't wait for new ones to come out. I thought I could do it better. I'd get a magazine, look for car ads and trace them with tracing paper, re-design the dash, etc. But someone said I'd have to go to engineering school and my interest dropped."

Parents and public figures also influenced childhood career dreams. For example, one male respondent born in 1953 said he had wanted to be either a lawyer or a politician. "I was very inspired by my parents" (his dad was a lawyer and his mother was a journalist who worked for NBC). "I was also inspired by a kind of controversial playwright, a Methodist minister on Cape Cod who used to create a lot of controversy with plays about the current scene. I would go to those and get involved and eventually did get involved one summer with them. That was very much an inspiration. I was very, very inspired by the whole Martin Luther King period and his efforts, his speeches and his books."

A female respondent born in 1952 was encouraged in her childhood dream of becoming a fashion designer by her father, who noticed how much she liked to sew and suggested she pursue this field in college.

Adult Career Paths

While a few respondents' current occupations are somewhat similar to their childhood dreams, many other respondents took another path. In some cases, career paths, like the course of true love, "never did run smooth" (Shakespeare, *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*). In other cases, respondents knew quite clearly what they wanted to do as an adult, set the course and followed it. Respondents' career paths were influenced by a combination of real-world experience, education, advice or recommendations, and occasionally, outside circumstances. Media influence, particularly TV, did not seem to be an important factor in shaping respondents' current jobs or careers. Respondents were also asked if there was anything else they would rather be doing to earn a living, and if so, what that would involve in terms of responsibilities and total compensation, including pay and benefits.

The male respondent born in 1953 who dreamed of being a lawyer or politician and was heavily influenced by his parents as well as a local playwright and the works of Martin Luther King, today is a bond strategist for an international research firm that studies the world economy and world markets. He characterized the job as "different in many respects" from his childhood dream, "but similar in some small respects." Immediately before taking his current job in 1995, he was a housing coordinator for a homeless shelter. He also worked as a bond trader and recalled that at one point, his father strongly recommended he "stick with a research position, because from his point of view, it was more credible. He felt trading was more like rolling the dice." This respondent also felt his education had played a role in helping build his career. He majored in psychology and later earned an MBA. "I find that understanding what's going on in the world economically and politically has a lot to do with

psychology, so that's been really helpful." He said the MBA helped him "gain the specific skills that are most conventionally associated with this work."

While he felt "the process of studying what's going on in the world economy and markets is very satisfying," he admitted that his position as a senior partner created " a lot of side issues as a manager that can be very frustrating."

Accordingly, he planned to make another career switch in a year or two when his children were out of college. "It's hard for me to define what that would be, but I think it would be something related to certain issues that I think are important in the country, and getting involved as some kind of lobbyist for those issues."

The male respondent born in 1949, who had fulfilled his childhood dream by becoming both a military and commercial pilot, today is an attorney specializing in constitutional law and appellate work. He felt his career path had just kind of happened, rather than being recommended to him. "Nobody in my family is a lawyer; my family doesn't particularly like lawyers. They didn't like aviation either. Maybe that was just a rebellion. I always had some tendency to stand up for people who were the subject of official repression and oppression; constitutional law is a good way to do that."

He explained how his career moved from being a pilot to being an attorney. "After I flew for the Navy, I was an airline pilot for awhile. That started to get very boring very quickly. I went back on active duty in the Coast Guard and flew for the Coast Guard for six years. I kind of got forced out of that. I always had an interest in the law, and at that point, I had a chance to go to law school, so I did. I'd saved enough to be able to afford to go to law school. After law school, I worked briefly for a prosecutor, opened my own office for awhile, went to work doing special projects for a public defender's office, then came here."

His education had included components of both career paths: a bachelor's degree in history, followed by a master's program in aviation safety and law school. He also graduated from an aviation safety program at a Naval postgraduate school, which he explained is not a degree, but rather a certificate program. "It's a big deal if you're involved in aviation safety," he said.

Overall, he finds his work as an attorney satisfying and said there is nothing else he'd rather be doing to earn a living. "It's intellectually very satisfying, very much like the sciences; you don't get answers so much as you get more questions. Eventually you've got to get to an answer because you've got to take a position and support it. Sometimes you have to say, 'I've researched this enough, this is what the rule seems to be, this is how we're going to proceed.'"

A woman born in 1952, whose father had encouraged her to follow a career in fashion design, actually majored in interior design in college largely due to the influence of her roommate who was pursuing that degree. Interior design "seemed like a more practical solution for me. The professors said to make it in fashion design, you'd have to go to New York or Texas. I couldn't see it happening. To go to big cities like those would be way beyond my scope. She (the roommate) seemed to be enjoying what she was doing. I changed (my major) because it seemed more practical, something I could do from home at some point. I wanted to have a family."

She married while still in college, dropped out and then went back to finish her degree as an adult. After graduating from college in her 30s, she worked for a commercial interior design firm and a furniture store, but later lost an interior design job and was divorced. "I decided it was time for a change in my life. I knew people who were staffing

agents, so I signed up and took exams to see what kind of skills I had to offer." Today she is a human resources assistant at an engineering firm that designs and manufactures compressor controls for the oil, gas and chemical industry. The company has international offices, and as part of her job, she handles the travel visas and residency visas for their engineers.

She characterized her current job as being a "totally divergent path" from her childhood dream, although she said the "biggest connection would be the interest I have in the world and exchanges between countries. Travel has been very interesting to me. I always loved to travel. My parents loved to travel and I've had some good opportunities for travel. Working for a company with offices throughout the world, I find it very interesting. There are some things that make the job more challenging because of the cultural differences and how people operate."

She also said there were some parallels between her work in HR and that in interior design. "Design is very detail oriented and HR work is also very detail oriented. You have to stay on top of it. You can get snowed under very quickly."

She does not regret making the career change from interior design to HR, and is largely satisfied with her current position. "It would have been nice if I could have made a better footprint as far as interior design is concerned—I worked at it for so long. I wasn't willing to make interior design my life. Mostly the real successful ones, that's their life. I have too many diverse interests; my family is a bigger priority to me than my job. The job (interior design) really has to come first, especially for those who are working for themselves. You definitely have to put more time into it."

A woman born in 1955 recalled that at 15, she dreamed of becoming a professional cellist. Although she still plays in an orchestra, her career path took a different direction in

part due to other interests, and in part due to her education. "I became interested in travel while in high school and college. I wanted to go to other places in the world, and I wanted a profession that allowed me to go to other places and travel professionally. I grew up watching ABC's *Wide World of Sports.* I loved that stuff, loved that they were in different countries. That was one of the things that fueled my interest in international sports administration. But when I went into grad school, there wasn't such a program." She receive a bachelor's degree in economics, a master's in the diplomacy of international commerce, and completed another year of graduate work at the University of Bonn in Germany. Today she is a private banker serving clients in Latin America. She also received banking and credit training through her first employer, and worked in Europe for that firm for about eight years. Regarding her current job, she said, "I had the education and the kind of background they were looking for."

Although she finds it "extremely satisfying" to take care of her clients, she would eventually like to become the director of a charitable foundation, possibly one with a third world orientation. She admitted the idea of a dream job, or at least her next career move, is on her mind because the company she works for is about to be taken over by a rival bank. "Our clients are fleeing for the exits, so we are doing the same, I imagine. Our job is not safe at all. The (rival) bank is going to buy us on May 1, and everything's going to change totally. There's no security at all."

A female respondent born in 1954 felt that her career path had been shaped in part by her husband's occupation as a minister. Her childhood aspiration had been to become a teacher, and she did some teaching "on and off for 19 years," including teaching at grade levels kindergarten through college. She is currently an office administrator/media director

for a medium-sized church. Her background includes positions as a newspaper reporter and general manager for a small-town newspaper, as well as a restaurant manager. She also managed a theater troupe. "The job I have right now utilizes all the skills I've learned, combined, in all my previous jobs," she said. "I designed the job and then they asked me to work for them. It's probably kind of a unique situation that way." Her education includes bachelor's degrees in literature and English, journalism and marketing and in theater. "I would say the background experiences I had through those different majors were all part of why I have my current job."

She estimates she averaged about three years in any one job, "because we moved all the time in the ministry." As a result, she did not feel she had had good opportunities for advancement and financial gain in her profession. "My job seeking has always been impacted and totally related to wherever my husband moved. I have had really, really good jobs that I had to leave, and then I have to start all over again. I'm just stuck wherever we move to, whatever jobs were available, without having the mobility to go where I could find a job. There's jobs I've had that I really liked, that I was very successful in, that if I'd have been able to stay, I would have advanced and achieved a good economic level. But since I was always forced to leave because we were moving, you just kind of take what you could get. Education may have helped me get a job, but rarely was it a job that put me in a position that I would have been in if I'd been there for the number of years I've been working."

Another female respondent, also born in 1954, commented on her education and said she felt it had not entirely helped her in the way she had expected. In her current job as a college counselor, she was not certain that she has good opportunities for advancement and financial gain. "For most women my age, it's a decent livable salary with benefits. I'm very

aware that there are many people who do not have that. But, for example, if I wanted to advance where I'm at, I'd have to get my Ph.D. It would cost as much as $50,000 to get the Ph.D., and probably only add $5,000 to my salary," she said. "It used to be if you had a Ph.D. in counseling, it was really lucrative. That's not true anymore. While I'm aware of the fact that I have an education that gives me more tools and a lot better salary than many middle aged women, and a lot more opportunity, I don't feel like it's given me what I was promised when I got the education. When I was growing up, the idea was that if you got a college degree, you were set for life. It's not true anymore."

Outside circumstances impacted the career path of a male respondent, born in 1964. His childhood dream had been to either follow his father's footsteps as a farmer, or to go into law enforcement. "In high school, we had a career test that showed I would be suited for a career in law enforcement, emergency medical services (EMS), fire prevention, or some type of public service type agency." After high school, he took several criminal justice courses in college and also worked part-time in security. "My plan that was all scoped out and was working wonderfully was that I was going to get a job with (the local) police department, get in as a part- timer, put in about 30-40 hours a week working 12 hour shifts, then I could farm. I had that all lined up. I had the job and everything and then I got hurt and I couldn't meet the qualifications. It was going to be the best of both worlds." Today he raises cattle and farms an operation that includes 42 cows, three bulls, and 38 calves. On the advice of his father, he also worked with a division of the United States Department of Agriculture in agricultural stabilization and conservation, and had a position with an insurance agency where he verified agricultural insurance claims.

On the whole he is satisfied with his career although he admitted he still has some dreams of going into law enforcement. "When I make great decisions and sell when the grain is high and make a nice profit, and know that I've done better than I could have done, I feel good. When I've held onto a cow that's looking a little sick and have the vet out there, spend $700 on her, and she dies anyway, and I'm saying, well gee, I lost $1,200 when I put all the fees and costs together, it's not so much fun.

"I still would have liked to have gotten more involved in law enforcement. Every now and then I toy with the idea of trying to get back in, but it doesn't seem very practical. And also, of course, there's a lot of negative involved with that. It probably wouldn't be very wise. The pay is extremely poor. So, the only time it starts evening out is if you do lots and lots of overtime. I don't really care for that."

Some respondents felt that their careers had just happened, rather than being part of a larger plan. One male respondent, born in 1955, has worked 28 years for a Fortune 500 financial services company. Although his childhood dream was to be either an athlete or in broadcast journalism as a disc jockey, today he works in sales distribution to help sell small retirement plans. A self-described non-conformist, he said, "I can't say that I've done what I thought I would have wanted to do when I was 15, and I can't say I haven't. I really don't have any regrets. I actually feel pretty lucky for a person of my mentality and personality to have had a long career here and done fairly well. I've raised two kids and been able to have a lot of good results from my efforts here. I'm happy with my career; it's not ideal, but it never is."

After a four-year stint in the Navy, where he worked in personnel and did administrative work, he answered a want ad from his current employer. "I've never been a

handy guy. I basically had a blue-collar upbringing, but just never had the natural inclination to do blue collar jobs. I did enough of them over the years. So when I got out of the service, I thought I would pursue that (administrative work). I just basically read the want ads and started applying. (His current employer) was the first one to offer me a job. Three weeks after I got out of the military, I started here."

After briefly considering what had shaped some of his job decisions, he said, "I don't listen to other people. I follow my own instincts. A lot of it was just instincts. I've looked at life as just being an experience as much as anything. I've never had a lot of master plans. I never sat down and tried to figure out where I could make the most money. I never have worried about money, I don't know why. It seems to have worked out. I don't worry about it."

A female respondent born in 1959 had taken a circuitous route to finally land in what she considers her dream job, owning her own retail bookstore. She also offers other services, such as shipping and helping customers with eBay auctions. She also creates and hosts a radio show that showcases authors. Although her childhood dream was to become an attorney, she admits her current job is "not something I even imagined when I was 15." She graduated from high school a year early, at 17, and immediately had a full-time job as an abstractor. "The abstractor position happened because the company was looking to hire someone who was bright, but who probably wasn't going to college. The high school gave them my name." She later became a truck driver, then worked in a sawmill before going to college and majoring in occupational safety.

"In college, if I could have had my dream job, it would have been to be a photojournalist. But I was a single parent in college with kids to support, and I knew it would

never happen." She switched her major from elementary education to occupational safety, a job she described as "traditionally a man's job, but it paid really well.

"It required an ability to think logically. It appeals to women, because we care about people. It seemed to fit my world view." She was the top safety graduate in the nation and was recruited by a Fortune 500 company where she worked 12 years. Although she was on a management track and received additional training in management development, management systems, quality controls and statistical process control, "the job wasn't that much fun anymore." She took early retirement and then worked for a while at a small-town newspaper doing graphic design before deciding to return to her hometown and open a bookstore. "I studied the town and tried to identify products and services no one else was offering. As a result, I decided to do graphic design, printing, UPS shipping, eBay. But I realized I needed a retail offering to bring people in. That's why I added books.

"Basically I'm living my dream now. I tell stories in words and pictures through my radio show and my graphic design. I find the best books out there, and put them on my shelf. I'm very satisfied with the job I have. I'm doing exactly what I want to be doing. It's what I decided after retirement."

Adult Career Dreams

To further probe the factors influencing adult career paths, including the possible role of television, respondents were asked if there was something else they would rather be doing to earn a living. A few respondents indicated they considered their current job a dream job, including the woman born in 1959 who owned a retail bookstore, and the man born in 1949 who is an attorney and said he "thoroughly likes the practice of law." There were also a few

respondents who said they were satisfied with their current job, but hoped to build on it in some way. For example, a financial planner born in 1947 said he could not imagine doing anything else, but was interested in getting "into a division of my actual work and teaching, with ministry in mind." Instead of using one-on-one methods, he hoped to multiply himself by "training other people to do basically what I do." A woman born in 1948 has been a museum curator for 28 years and indicated she would like to build on her varied interests in history, travel and writing possibly by becoming a professional tour guide someday. "The world just interests me," she said.

A few respondents indicated they were not necessarily satisfied with their current jobs, but they did not have a dream job, either. Still others seemed to be seeking something other than their current job, but did not have anything specific in mind. For example, a male respondent born in 1956 said his job used to be extremely satisfying, "but now it's become too familiar, and less challenging. I always want to look for something more." He saw this as a byproduct of the industry experience he had built, as well as "simply the age I'm in, too, where there could be other options, probably on my own." He admitted he had not quite decided on what to do, even as far as a dream job. When questioned on what a dream job might involve in terms of responsibilities and compensation, he said, "As far as income and benefits, whatever it is I need and keeps me happy. It all boils down to security, whether it's long-term or short term. You'd want to make enough to meet your current needs and save enough for your needs later on. Retiring at 50 right now is not an option. I guess at some point, I'd really like to travel to different places, but I would also like to know people in those areas."

Several respondents mentioned an adult dream job that was nearly identical to their childhood dream job—becoming a pilot, returning to full-time ministry, becoming a best-selling fiction author, writing more on a freelance basis or in a way that would allow them to structure their own time and income more. There was some media influence among those who had an adult dream job. For example, a male respondent born in 1961 said his dream job would probably involve racing motorcycles, as he had seen on *Wide World of Sports* as a child. "But the fact is, not very many people are able to do that. If I can make a good living and support my family with something having to do with motorcycles, yeah, I think that could be a real passion for me. But that's not intended to express dissatisfaction with what I do. My life is not all about my job. That's not to say that I don't have passion for it, and don't find it interesting, but in an ideal world, you know, like the little kid that wants to grow up and be a professional football player, whatever the case may be, I'd probably be a motorcycle racer if I could do that."

RQ1: Views of the Work Ethic

To explore research question one, respondents were asked to define what the words "work ethic" meant to them, and to characterize their own work ethic. To provide a point of generational comparison for the study, they were asked to characterize their parents' work ethic. They were also asked what kind of work their parents did, and whether they thought their parents had enjoyed their work or would have preferred to be doing something else. As a further measure of the respondents' work ethic, they were asked how long, on average, they had worked for a particular company.

Most respondents' definitions of "work ethic" were similar to the definition used in this study, which included the traits of hard work, dependability, personal responsibility and perseverance. The study's definition also included the idea that work has value for its own sake, both for individuals and for the greater societal good. While respondents had comparable definitions of the work ethic, in terms of similarity to the study's definition and similarity to other respondents' definitions, one male respondent, born in 1953, had a strikingly different definition. "I associate the term with an ideology—it's a loaded question to me. I think it means you find work you enjoy, and you do it well. In 2007, it's a political rationalization for cutting social welfare." In characterizing his own work ethic, he said, "I work very hard and enjoy my job; I'm committed to it." He is a bond strategist for an international research firm, but immediately before this position, he worked as a housing coordinator for a homeless shelter.

Other respondents had more conventional definitions. A financial planner born in 1947 said, "it means doing the best job I can for the people I'm responsible to, and responsible for. There's a lot of people who have a job and think the job owes them everything under the sun. We should do the best job for people in authority over us; do everything we can to help them succeed. There's real value in doing that."

Regarding his own work ethic, he said it was good, "aside from the fact that I don't make the best use of my time, I'm not as efficient as I could be and not always as organized as I could be." He characterized his parents' work ethic as "very strong" and said his dad, who worked in middle management as an expeditor, loved his job. Of his mother, who worked in printing for Lockheed, he said, "I think she was very conscientious in her work,

but as far as coming home and singing the praises of what she did, we didn't hear that." This respondent has worked as a financial planner for close to 30 years.

A male respondent born in 1956, who is a lead pressman for a greeting card company, defined the work ethic as "putting in an honest day's work for an honest day's pay. You're getting paid for what you're doing. Not that they own you, but whoever's paying you deserves full value." He described his own work ethic as being "probably more workaholic. I don't feel good about not proving or producing. I don't think I could consciously take advantage of anyone I work for by milking it, so to speak."

He characterized his parents' work ethic as good, but felt there was a slight difference between his mother's work ethic as a keypunch operator for a magazine subscription service company, and his dad's work ethic as a postman. "I never heard any complaints out of my dad—I think he liked what he was doing. I never heard any complaints out of my mom, either, now that I think about it, other than not being able to make enough money. At some point, they wanted to do better for themselves."

Regarding their work ethic, he said, "All you have to do is ask my mom to show up to the house to help you do anything and she's taking over. She rolls up her sleeves and gets busy. I think she's got more of a farm work ethic—you just get it done, just do it, do it quickly. My dad, I think his work ethic was probably reasonably good, but I think he found a job that suited him enough to where he could pay the bills. He was happy with less than what my mom would be happy with. But I think he was more content with what he was doing; he didn't really think that he needed to do anything more." This respondent said he had worked on and off (enduring some layoffs) for the same company for 28 years.

A female respondent, born in 1960, who followed her childhood dream of being a journalist by eventually becoming a bond reporter, defined the work ethic as "get up, pay your dues, work, work, work. I've been working my whole life since age 12, delivering newspapers. It's an honorable thing. It's a tremendous characteristic in a person, I believe." She felt her own work ethic was very good. "Maybe I'm a workaholic. I really don't like vacations, to be honest with you. I actually feel uneasy to be away from work. I'm afraid of losing touch with the bond market, I suppose."

She said her parents, who were Irish immigrants, were really hard workers. "Irish people are very hard working. Really more so my mother than my father, but my father had a very good work ethic, too. The idea of taking welfare was beyond the pale. Nobody in my family has ever taken welfare."

Her mother taught deaf children before becoming a homemaker, then later worked in retail sales. Her father was an engineer. "I think they tolerated their jobs. Dad was an engineer and had five kids in Catholic school. The money had to come in the door, a lot of money. I never got the feeling that he jumped out of bed and said 'Yahoo, let's go be an engineer.' It was something he had to do. It's very different from the way I feel about my job; it's who I am." This respondent has averaged three years tenure in most jobs she has held, with the exception of her current job where she has worked for eight years.

A male respondent born in 1953, who has worked 10 years in his current job as a heavy equipment operator for a worldwide gold mining company, said the work ethic meant "that you work at your job; if your boss isn't around, you work the same as if he was standing there watching you. It's being as honest as you possibly can in your work. It's not stealing from your employer. It's not being lazy on the job because that's basically stealing,

and it's showing up for work on time, and doing the best you can while you're there." He characterized his own work ethic as outstanding and explained that when he had worked for other mining companies or in construction, he felt "it was important to establish a good work reputation. Having a good work ethic, establishing a good reputation, that was my goal as I started working and it turned out to be a good thing because one's reputation goes with you. New employers are likely to hire you if they've heard about you and heard you are a good worker." This respondent's mother was a homemaker and his father was an airline pilot. He characterized their work ethic as excellent.

For a male respondent born in 1948, the work ethic means "holding onto a job to support yourself, doing the best you can at the job, meeting your responsibilities, whether it's to pay for the mortgage or paying off your debts, that sort of thing." As a copy editor for an international news service, he characterized his own work ethic as dependable. "I think I'm a dependable, honest worker. I do enjoy my free time, so I don't like to work excessively. I think I'm probably about average, or maybe slightly above average when it comes to the work ethic." This respondent's father was a journalist and his mother was a secretary. He characterized their work ethic as being above average and said his parents were dependable and responsible employees. He said that at the time his parents worked, "overall there was a sense that if you did a good job, if you had a good work ethic, and the company was doing OK, that you would be treated fairly and humanely. I think there's less of that now, even if you do a good job and work hard." He has worked 22 years for his present employer and said he had averaged 10-12 years at other jobs.

A female respondent born in 1954 said she struggles a bit with her own work ethic. As a full-time university guidance counselor, and an ordained Presbyterian minister who

works part-time in a church, she thinks, "that I'm very good, very authentic with people. Being real." However, she said sometimes she does not feel good about her work ethic, "and it's because I'm torn. I feel like at times I get lazy. I'm never sure whether that's a rhythm I should follow because it provides more balance between my work life and my personal life, or if I'm being lazy."

Her mother was a secretary in a hospital but her father "was laid up and didn't work for five years of my childhood." He later became a draftsman. She characterized her parents' work ethic as strong. "My mom was real good at having the balance. My dad worked around the clock. My grandfather told my mother she didn't need to work, that she could come back and live with him, and she took it to heart. She worked hard and excelled, but when the day was over, she left. She put in her time. Her employer didn't own her." This respondent has worked for eight years in her current position and averaged three years each in previous jobs, although she made a point of saying she is still a licensed minister and has maintained that position while working elsewhere. "So in one sense, I've been with the same company since I started, although it's now a part time position. I'm exploring the possibility of going back full time."

Only two respondents, a woman born in 1952 who has worked for a Fortune 500 company for 34 years, and a male respondent born in 1949 who has worked in construction, mentioned a "Midwest work ethic." The female respondent has worked in both the Midwest and the Southwest and drew a distinction between the work ethic in those regions. When asked to define what the words "work ethic" meant to her, she said, "The first thing I will say is Midwest. There's a difference in work ethic between the Midwest and the Southwest. In the Midwest, people will come to work and work as hard as they can to earn their salary. In

the Southwest, it's I'll come to work, give me my salary and maybe I'll work. It's just very, very bad."

The male respondent born in 1949 had also worked in several states and observed that "anytime they heard you were from Iowa, they'd hire you on the spot because of the work ethic Midwesterners have. It's what everything is built on. Do the best you can; you'll feel good about yourself afterward. It's everything."

One female respondent born in 1954, who has lived and worked in several states, felt her work ethic had been very influenced by being "a military brat." Her father was a nuclear physicist for the military and her stepfather was an army drill sergeant for Special Forces. Her mother did "all kinds of work, from factory work to secretarial work to working as an artist and ended up being a librarian."

To this woman, who now works as a church office administrator/media director, the work ethic "means that you value work, that you gain satisfaction from work. You can have what I consider a good work ethic, which would mean you do your best whether somebody's watching or not. You take pride in your work. You work somewhere where you can believe in what they're doing. If you have nothing good to say and all you do is complain, get out. You don't undermine your fellow employees to make yourself look good.

"People can have a really bad work ethic—they take from the company and justify it, like people do nowadays. I think my work ethic is very much influenced by being a military brat." She has worked for her current employer for two years, but said she had worked three years at each of her previous jobs on average "because we moved all the time in the ministry."

Among the respondents' characterization of their parents' work ethic, there were some outliers. For example, a self-employed male respondent born in 1960 characterized both of his parents as "having an impeccable work ethic," and went on to say that "if they did anything outside of the envelope, it was for better reasons than what were acceptable." His father worked on the railroad while his mother was a beautician who later worked in hospital administration. He elaborated: "Somebody may say, this is how this job is done, don't ever do it any differently. Then under circumstances, you realize you can do that job temporarily, or once in awhile, in a different way and it's not wrong; it's not cheating, it's not unethical, it's just not acceptable but it ends up getting the job done faster and better, more efficiently."

He gave the example of a situation his father faced while working on a railroad. "Dad happened to be on this particular train where they were backing up in the yard, doing some switching. Somehow the signal didn't get conveyed to the engineer, and the last car went off the end of the track in this particular area. They were going to have to bring in a crane and all kinds of crews to get it back on the track. My Dad surveyed the situation, took all the information that his career had taught him, and gave a signal to the engineer. At that time they didn't use radios, and nobody saw the signal, but the engineer a quarter a mile away up front responded to it. He drove the train forward, which pulled the car back up on the tracks. It saved the company a lot of money, a lot of time and got it done. There was nothing wrong with what (my dad) did. He might not have been loved for it if they'd known he did it, but nobody found out who did it. It might not be the most ethical thing to do, but it worked. That's what they (my parents) do; things like that."

In his own construction and remodeling work, he felt his work ethic involved "giving people what they paid for, in the time they were told, being on time, being honest with

people. If I tell them a figure, I stick to my figure." He admitted that "once in a blue moon, sometimes I have been tempted to cut a corner, but those are very few times, because the few times I've thought about doing it or tried it, it ended up costing me more time and money to go back and fix it. So I've learned that any time that temptation arises, I nip it in the bud because I know it's not gonna fly. I've learned over the years, just do it right the first time, take the time, make the effort and everybody's gonna be happier for it; you never have to think about it again. It's never going to come back to haunt you." This respondent has been self-employed eight years and said he had worked for his previous employer eight or 10 years.

A female respondent born in 1959 said she saw a difference between her parents' work ethics. She said her mother, who was a homemaker and later ran a café, had a very strong work ethic. Her father's work ethic was "cyclical." In her father's job as an insurance salesman, "he'd work really hard, and then just stop. Some of that is the nature of sales. As I became older, I realized how frustrating it was to my mom. We either ate steaks or oatmeal for a week. That's just how he was." She said her dad also "had a quick temper and changed jobs a lot. I'm not sure it was his employer's problem."

This woman, who owns her own bookstore and previously worked for a Fortune 500 corporation, said her own work ethic was strong. "You have to have that kind of work ethic if you're really going to be successful in a start-up business like this." She felt her college education was one of the main reasons her career path had been very different from that of her parents. "My parents only had an eighth grade education. In terms of jobs available to me vs. to them, working as an insurance salesman is a pretty good job for someone who only has an eighth grade education."

A few respondents seemed to indicate their own work ethic was not as strong as their parents' had been. A male respondent born in 1958, who is self employed as a financial advisor, admitted his own work ethic has been "pretty poor" recently. Although he said he enjoys the job "when it's working, lately it's been kind of frustrating." He demurred when asked if the job was satisfying to him. "It's a complicated question. My personal life is having an effect on my business life and vice versa." He has been in this profession 12 years and previously sold cookware for 17 years.

His dad worked for his grandfather on a family-run poultry farm and his mother gave piano lessons and was a church organist. He said they were "pretty hard working" and added, "they're from a different generation."

A male respondent born in 1953 who works as a magazine editor, said his parents' work ethic was "probably better than mine." His mother was an insurance rater and his father was a teacher as well as a minister. He felt the work ethic involved "an element of personal responsibility. As a healthy adult, I believe I'm responsible for my own well-being and that involves working to support myself." He characterized his work ethic as "moderate to good. I truly believe I'm the best at what I do in terms of editing a sporting dog magazine. At the same time, I'm not a driven person to the extent of working 60-80 hours a week, pushing myself to accomplish more, that kind of thing."

In comparing his parents' work ethic to his own, he said, "one of the reasons I'm content is because I'm single, I don't have a family to support, I don't have to put kids through college. I think that was always a concern for my parents. I think they were more driven than I am to work. Dad worked two jobs a lot of years to help make ends meet. I've not done that."

He has worked for his current employer eight years. Previously, he said he averaged five years each in other jobs, but said there were a number of the times he changed jobs or left "due to other circumstances, like the company relocating, or something going out of business."

A male respondent born in 1964, who works as a farmer, said his dad's work ethic "was the best." His father worked for the USDA and farmed, while his mother was a substitute teacher and homemaker. Referring to his dad, this respondent said, "He had no hesitation in getting started and getting the project done." Of his own work ethic, "I try to keep things running and I guess I'm not expanding on some of the things that I should as far as around the farm and stuff. I've got a number of projects I'm thinking of and I really haven't gotten the handle on doing them. I'm probably not being as ambitious as I should." This respondent has farmed his entire life, but said he had held other jobs an average of three years.

RQ2: Mainstreamed Attitudes Toward Work

As part of research question two, respondents were asked a series of questions designed to explore mainstreamed attitudes toward work based on television messages. These questions asked whether respondents enjoyed what they do and how satisfying it was to them. They were also asked whether they felt they had had good opportunities for advancement and financial gain in their profession. Other questions asked whether they considered their profession exciting, glamorous, prestigious or high status in any way. Based on their answers to these questions, respondents were asked if they felt they should have a better or more prestigious job. Moreover, some questions elicited whether they felt respected

and valued by their company and their co-workers. They were also asked if they had ever been unemployed, and if so, how they felt about themselves during that time and how their family and friends treated them. A related question asked if there had ever been a time when they decided not to take a job when it was offered, or a time when they just decided not to work for a while. The question series also asked respondents if they would rather be doing something else to earn a living, and if so, what.

Prestige, Status, Excitement and Glamor

Only a few respondents characterized their jobs as prestigious or high status. For example, a woman born in 1955 who works as a private banker felt her job was prestigious and high status and that she was well-known in her company by upper management and a lot of her co-workers. However, she also felt she should have a better or a more prestigious job, "because I'm on the ball. I'm a hard worker with high values and high personal standards." A male respondent born in 1961 who works as an archaeological collections manager for a natural history museum said he also considers his job prestigious and high status. "I think being a scientist, and I'm considered the scientist of the department, is kind of prestigious, and archaeology is a respected profession. I'm certainly respected among people familiar with my work." He also said he felt the job was exciting, although it was not glamorous, with the exception of excavations. However, although he enjoyed the work and found it satisfying, he felt the position should be better paid.

A more typical response was expressed by a man born in 1956, who said although he was known in the company where he worked, "most people don't know what I do, or how I do it." Another male respondent, also born in 1956, felt fairly well known in his work as an engineering manager, but did not believe he should have a better or more prestigious job. "I

think it's suited. I don't have an engineering degree; I have some technology background. I think it fits what I'm doing pretty well. I'm not big on prestige anyway. I'm a doer."

 Several respondents actually laughed when asked if they considered their jobs glamorous. However, several respondents did say their jobs had elements of excitement. A male respondent born in 1948, who has been a reporter and copy editor for an international news service, said of his job, "It is sometimes exciting; it can be glamorous. A few times I've had opportunities to be around celebrities and national figures as a reporter."

A male respondent born in 1961 commented on the glamour, excitement and status of his job as a real estate portfolio manager for an asset management firm. He said his job was "fairly high on the status scale" and that it can be exciting and glamorous on occasion. "You're dealing with big sums of money and important clients, and it can be very dynamic, which I guess I would equate with being exciting. From a glamour perspective, I get to travel quite a bit and it's usually to big cities—New York, for instance, I spend a lot of time there. I've done a fair amount of international travel to Western Europe; I will be traveling periodically to Tokyo. That probably sounds more glamorous than it really is. The opportunity to be exposed to other countries and cultures is overall a benefit of the job. It's a great, great opportunity for me." However, there is a caveat. "There is a glamour element to that, but it's also a grind to sit on a plane for 10 or 14 hours to get to where you're going. It does tend to raise eyebrows when you tell people you're traveling to Europe or Japan on business."

Experiences of Unemployment

Although many of the respondents have held steady jobs for several years, several remembered periods of unemployment that lasted for a few weeks or a few months. Others

had only experienced unemployment during college or for short periods. Those who had experienced longer periods of unemployment discussed its effects on their self-esteem, as well as the way they were treated by friends and family. A female respondent born in 1953 said her periods of unemployment had made her feel "like a worthless piece of dreck, a failure. Not like the world owed me a living or anything, but it's more about what did I do wrong that this happened to me." A female respondent born in 1954 said her periods of unemployment were "terrifying, just from a financial perspective."

A male respondent born in 1953 said that before being hired for his current position 10 years ago, his average tenure at a job was one to two years before he would be laid off. "I had quite a few periods of weeks and weeks of unemployment. It was awful; I hated it. It made me feel worthless, like a worthless piece of crap, that I couldn't support my family adequately. It definitely caused some tension in the family." He said there has never been a time when he decided not to work, "because I always had to work if work was available. I have had quite a few times when I was offered a job while I was already employed. The only time I would turn a job down is if I was already employed."

Although he enjoys his current job and finds it satisfying, he surmises, "It's been very physically hard, so as I get older, my body obviously is wearing out and I have a lot of pain to deal with." He did not feel like he'd had good opportunities for advancement and financial gain in his profession, however, and he did not feel respected by his company or his co-workers. "The company doesn't respect anybody." He also did not feel the job was prestigious or high status, but said he did not "really have a desire for a prestigious job. I don't know if I should or not, either, really. I guess having a job that's more in the peon category keeps the stress level down."

He also had concerns that he could lose his job "anytime someone decides to fire me. I've seen it happen to really good people—somebody doesn't like them and they get fired. There's a lot of bickering among the employees and there's a lot of jealousy among the employees. And that sometimes leads to people getting changed or sometimes being fired. It's a brutal place."

A female respondent born in 1952 was fired from a retail job and said it made her feel terrible. "There wasn't any logical reason to fire me. I was doing more than the other employees were doing and they still fired me. They said my sales weren't good enough. I've since found out they're the kind of business where nobody stays longer than two years. I felt insecure not having an income." However, she said her friends were very caring to her at this time and a couple even offered to help her financially if needed.

A male respondent born in 1956 said he has worked steadily since 1979, but has also been laid off and then rehired a few times by his current employer. Even though he always found other work quickly, "I don't think I like not working. If you have a job, I think you're more valuable. I'm always trying to have some job of value. Nothing against Wal-Mart, but I don't think I could handle a job like that if there's nothing you could improve on." He said his friends and family did not treat him any differently when he was out of work, but commented, "That's my own judgment against myself."

For a few respondents, there had been occasions when they had chosen not to work. Most of these respondents were women. A female respondent born in 1952 had several periods where she chose not to work. "I always worked my career around my husband's career. He had travel opportunities and did public speaking. I liked to travel along and the company allowed that. You can't hold a full-time job with one to two weeks of vacation a

year and be able to do that. I tried to work my life around his; that was something we had in common when we first got married. I liked going along." One time she said she quit a job because she was having child care issues.

A woman born in 1953 said she could not work when she went through her divorce and did not work for six months at that time. "I knew I had to heal and get my head on straight so I could be there for my children. My focus was on my kids and myself. Money was coming in; I was able to survive financially." She also recalled a time during her marriage when she turned down a job that was offered even though the family needed the money. "I was offered a job that paid really well, too. It was a factory job and I thought I really wanted it. They had an office job and a factory job open in this place, and they offered me a factory job and I just couldn't take it. I just couldn't see myself wearing steel-toed shoes and a hard hat, and doing that kind of work."

A woman born in 1958 recalled a period when her children were small when she stayed out of the job market for two years. She had gone through an extended period of family stress, including the death of her grandmother and putting her husband through college for two degrees. "I had two babies, I had my job and all these other things going on. Five years later, everything crashed. When my older child was five, I finally just came apart. I got to the end, I was 33 and my doctor was saying things like 'I just put a 33-year-old in the hospital with a heart attack and he might not survive. You might not be that lucky.' I stopped working. I freelanced off and on. For about two years, I didn't do much; I hung out with my kids."

A male respondent born in 1961 who is self employed as a "blog coach" creating web-based communities of customers for his clients, took a planned two-month hiatus from

working when he left a corporate job in the internet industry. He characterized this period as a time of "rest and re-creation." This experience was very different from a period when he was 19 and unemployed for two months. "I hated it. I was probably starting to question what I was doing. I never went back into the restaurant business."

A male respondent born in 1953 recalled a period of unemployment in1988 that had a silver lining for him. "I had just remarked to a friend that I longed for college and high school when you had the summers off, and all of a sudden, the company I worked for went out of business abruptly, and I had the summer off. It wasn't as much fun as if I was kind of covered due to job security. But I don't regret it at all. It was a very, very important step in my life, which was forced on me, but I'm really glad." Apart from this period, he had never taken a job sabbatical.

A male respondent born in 1955 said he had been off work once because of some health problems and gone on short-term disability. He said he felt worthless during this time even though he received strong support from his employer, co-workers, family and friends. "That's the first time I'd ever felt worthless and felt like I wanted to be working rather than just sitting around. It makes you feel like you're out of touch with life in general. That's one thing about getting up every day and answering the bell and fighting it out every day. You certainly feel like you're part of the plan; even if you might not particularly enjoy your lot in life, you know you're in it."

Respondents' Work Experiences Vs. Parents' Work Experiences

As a further point of comparison, respondents were asked to compare their own working experiences with that of their parents. Several respondents felt there was a difference in the amount of respect they received from their employers vs. the amount of

respect their parents had received. One male respondent, born in 1948, said that although he does feel valued and respected by some of his co-workers and within the company in general, "I do think that many companies don't really value their workers much and are always looking for ways to eliminate them. I think that's a change that's come about over the last 10 or 15 years. It's not true only of my company, but also of others. For example, in my company, they are doing work now in India that used to be done in the United States and Britain because they can pay the workers so much less. In that sense, I don't feel they're valuing workers very much."

In the words of a male respondent born in 1949, "For employers now, we're just a number; we're very disposable."

Many respondents felt the number of hours they worked vs. the number of hours their parents worked were comparable, with a few exceptions. "I probably work longer hours than my dad," said a female respondent born in 1960. "He knew all the time what time he'd be home." She recalled waiting out in the driveway, along with her brothers and sisters, for her dad to drive in. "That's sure different from my life." As a reporter, she said she usually works 50 hours a week and sometimes more. "I have to read up on newspapers on weekends. There's a lot of work and preparing for work, too," she said.

Conversely, a male respondent born in 1960, who is self employed, indicated he may work fewer hours than his parents did. His father worked on the railroad and "was on that train until the train reached its destination." His mother worked shifts in rotation, but never more than 40 hours a week, he said. "Not always, but I've tried to run my budget on a 35-hour workweek. I always force myself to put 40 hours in, because if I don't, I'll take advantage of me. I make myself put in eight hours a day, or I try to. If I sleep in, that's fine if

I don't start until 10 a.m., but I can't quit until 6 p.m. I put my eight hours in no matter what. I always get my 40 hours in, and I try never to work on weekends. Saturdays and Sundays are for family purposes and I maintain that philosophy today for rest, relaxation and social interaction."

Some of the greatest differences between respondents' working experiences and that of their parents were in the area of compensation, particularly retirement packages, and job security. A male respondent born in 1947 commented, "My parents were of the age where work, job and all the rest was your security, you had either your company or union retirement plans, you had the health insurance benefits and all the rest of that. When you retired, you knew you had certain security. Much of that is not available anymore." As a financial planner for a Fortune 500 insurance company, he provides all his own benefits and schedules his own vacation time. "If I'm taking time off for vacation, I have residuals. But if I'm not actually working, I'm not getting any new (money in). On the other hand, that's part of the value in what I'm doing. If I feel like I want to take a day off, or a week off, I don't have to run to anybody to do it, I can schedule it accordingly."

A woman born in 1954 said she felt her parents' job security and retirement benefits were better than hers. "If you worked for the state or federal government, it would take dynamite before you lost your job. That was the perception I had. It used to be gosh, if you got in with the state or federal government, you had a good thing, you had good benefits. Now, it's like you're a bureaucrat."

A male respondent born in 1953 felt his parents had better benefits. "My company kind of gives the bare minimum they can give. There's two segments to our company: the hourly wage people and the salaried people. The salaried people have an excellent retirement

package. I don't know the details of it, but it's a lot better than the hourly employees." He said his parents probably had more secure jobs than he does. "Nowadays you can be terminated or laid off with no notice whatsoever, no matter how big a company you work for."

A few respondents who had spent the majority of their working lives at one company felt they had better benefits than their parents, but they too commented on the insecurity in today's corporate world. "While I really respect the company, there are a lot of initiatives that have been put in place over the last 10 to 15 years which I think really can set you up for job loss," said a male respondent born in 1955 who has worked at the same Fortune 500 company for 28 years. "It's just the reality of the longer you work at a place like this, the greater chance you have of working for someone who doesn't like you. People get railroaded out of here, that's a fact. That's the way it is.

"I don't know if any of us have that great of a job security around here anymore," he continued. "I really think that the key to being a long-term employee around here is to be on top of what's going on, anticipating where the ball's rolling to and get to that point first. If you just think, hey, I'm a long-term employee, well, you're going to find yourself out of a job."

Television Occupations

In an effort to determine how much TV's messages about work and its portrayal of occupations had resonated with the baby boomers, respondents were asked if they had worked in any of the occupations typically shown on TV, or known anyone who had. These occupations were enumerated as detectives, police officers, attorneys and doctors. Based on the reply to this question, respondents were asked how their knowledge of those occupations

compared with what was shown on TV. They were also asked if they had ever considered going into any of those occupations.

A few respondents had worked in these occupations, but felt the reality of their experiences were quite a bit different than the images shown on TV. For example, a male respondent born in 1949 had worked as a criminal lawyer for a number of years and also knew a lot of police officers and judges. "Edison said 'invention is 1% inspiration and 99% perspiration,'" he said. "What you see on TV is the 1% inspiration. I wish I could do a good 30-second closing argument. I've never figured that one out yet."

A male respondent born in 1961 had worked as a fireman and an EMT before transitioning into archaeology. "I think the actual experiences were very exciting and rewarding in their own way but not like what's shown on TV."

Another respondent born in 1961 had worked in some of the other occupations portrayed on TV. "I was a sports writer for a while, thank you Oscar Madison (of *The Odd Couple*). I drove a taxi for a while because I wanted to see if *Taxi* was real. It is. TV had some influence on my younger jobs," he said. However, today, "there's nobody on TV that does what I do" as a blog coach.

Even among respondents who had not worked in the most common TV professions, but known people who had, there was a recognition that the TV portrayal was far from realistic. A woman born in 1952 said she has known doctors and attorneys and found they were not "as high profile or as aggressive or as outstanding type of personalities" as shown on TV. "They were much more reserved, quiet people in real life. Their experiences were not nearly as critical, but more day-to-day, more mundane. There were not so many deep

mysteries that needed to be solved. Some of it they might run into once in a while, but not week after week."

A male respondent born in 1953 said his best friend is a forensics chemist for the Illinois State Police. "He delights in telling people it's nothing like *CSI*."

One respondent, born in 1961, said he felt TV portrayals of work were more realistic now than when he was growing up. "I grew up next to a cop; he was nothing like the guys on *Adam 12*. In recent years, I've known cops, and their lives are more like TV now. There's more realistic storytelling going on."

A male respondent born in 1956 said he felt there was no comparison at all between TV's portrayals of certain occupations and the work-a-day reality of the people he knows. "I can think of a surgeon I know—he's constantly juggling lack of sleep and working hours with his partners. He's up any given time of the night or day when he's on call, 24 hours a day, and always busy. Sometimes he's looking a little haggard."

A financial planner, born in 1947, said he had several clients who were in law enforcement, or attorneys or doctors. "Any resemblance is strictly coincidental."

Although most respondents had not worked in TV occupations, a few said they had considered going into them, but not seriously. They may have taken a course or two in a field they were interested in. For example, a male respondent born in 1949 said he thought it would be "cool" to be an attorney. "I think I could argue a case pretty good." However, he said he never gave it serious consideration. A male respondent born in 1953 said he had briefly considered becoming a police officer or investigator and took a few law enforcement administration courses in college, but wound up majoring in communications with a broadcast emphasis because at the time, he wanted to become a disc jockey. He has since

become a magazine editor, which is more related to his childhood dream of becoming an author.

A female respondent born in 1960 said she was always intrigued by the detectives and spies on TV. "I liked spy movies that dealt with Russian stuff—I thought they were super cool. I wanted to be a Russian foreign correspondent." However, she never actively pursued this beyond studying Russian for a few years and living overseas for a period as a financial reporter.

RQ3: Television Images of Social Upheaval

As part of research question three, to further assess the resonance effect of TV respondents were asked to share their memories of historical and social events from the 1960s and 1970s, particularly the events they saw broadcast on TV. They were also asked to discuss how these events made them feel at the time. Respondents were also asked if they had ever been drafted or served in the military.

Depending on their birth year, respondents recalled many of the same events. For example, many respondents remembered seeing news coverage of the assassinations and/or funerals of John F. Kennedy, Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King. A male respondent born in 1948 remembered there was only one non-news show airing during the weekend John Kennedy was assassinated. "One of the channels showed monster movies. That was the only thing shown on TV all weekend that wasn't to do with the JFK funeral." He also remembered seeing President Kennedy address the nation on the Cuban missile crisis. "That was one of the closest we'd ever come to nuclear war. And that was quite scary."

The same interview subject also remembered hiding under his desk during the Cold War period. "We used to practice duck and cover. You may have seen some of the old films where kids would actually slide down, duck under their desks. I can remember doing that. It made you real uncertain about it. It was kind of scary." Of this same period, a woman born in 1953 said, "I was just scared to death, thinking, how is hiding under my desk with my hands on my head gonna stop me from getting blown to pieces or burned up in a nuclear war? I came to realize there's not a lot anybody could do about it. If it happened, it happened."

The male respondent born in 1948 said he remembered watching the Army-McCarthy hearings, which took place when the Army drafted a McCarthy staffer. "They (the McCarthy camp) wanted him assigned to the New York area so he could continue to work part time for them. The Army wouldn't allow it. So McCarthy accused the Army of having Communists. The entire time was a witch-hunt."

Respondents' other common memories included the March on Washington for civil rights, Woodstock, the National Guard firing on the students at Kent State University, Watergate and the moon landing in 1969. Of the space program, a woman born in 1959 said, "They brought TV into our classroom for Apollo 11, in fourth grade. Apollo 11 was inspiring for a whole generation. America was pretty optimistic in those days. That radiated everywhere. It made me feel optimistic about myself."

A female respondent born in 1952 remembered the Beatles coming to America and appearing on *The Ed Sullivan Show.* "I remember a lot of things about Elvis Presley, when he went to Germany for the service and then came back and some of the news focus that was on that." She also mentioned "all the hippie movement, peace, love, and all that kind of stuff."

A male respondent born in 1956 recalled "a period of strife in the '60s with race. I remember the church we attended would talk about social issues regarding that. Having talked about that from the church's standpoint at least makes you think about what's right, what's wrong. I think that was good."

Many respondents also vividly remembered the Vietnam War, which a female respondent born in 1953 characterized as "just overkill." A woman born in 1952 said she was in high school when "they were talking about if the war should end." She had classmates who were drafted. "It was so far away, it didn't necessarily affect how I felt about life here except people came home and the effects were so far reaching. The emphasis was on if we don't stop them over there, they're going to come over here eventually. The idea was to keep the world from communism. (President Lyndon) Johnson was pushing this."

A male respondent born in 1961 said Vietnam and Watergate brought "a bit of an awakening" for him. "I grew up at a time in school where we said the Pledge of Allegiance every day and those sorts of things. I was old enough to kind of grasp the fact that we as a nation aren't perfect necessarily and there can be big divisions. It definitely led me to not take things at face value and to try to gather facts, and come up with my own thoughts and opinions as it kind of related to political, geopolitical, national type of things. And probably Watergate had the same sort of effect on me."

Of the events of the 1960s and 1970s, a male respondent born in 1949 said, "There was nothing good and wholesome, that's for sure. It made you feel uneasy, uncertain, rebellious, doubtful of what's going to happen in the future, a real uneasiness." He had been drafted and then enlisted in the Marine Corps, serving from 1969-1971 in Vietnam.

A male respondent born in 1955 enlisted in the Navy but did not serve in Vietnam. "There's basically a military tradition between my dad and all four of us boys," he said. "He was a veteran, all four of us boys were veterans. That's where it ends. We didn't encourage our children (to join the military). I respect people in the military, but I'm not going to encourage my children to do that."

Regarding the social and historical events he saw on TV as an adolescent, he said, "I think what they probably did was just make me question more. I think the turbulence that went on through the '60s and '70s, kind of coming of age during that period of time, it made me question things more. They made me realize that life wasn't just as kind of routine as maybe what I was exposed to. I experienced the conservatism of the 1950s and the '60s. It was very stifling, and seeing these things, certainly the Vietnam War you saw on TV, really allowed me to realize hey, there's different ways. There's stuff that's going on that shouldn't happen, I don't have to feel like I'm a bad guy if I'm outside the lines a little bit. There's terrible things that go on in this world and you better be aware of it."

Of this era, a woman born in 1952 said, " I think our future was very much blurred. People did not know what the future would bring because of the Vietnam War. We were a generation that kind of got things the way we wanted them during high school and where should we go from there was kind of a blur. There were the hippies out there, there were the kids going to school, and then there was the whole other group that didn't know what to do. If you weren't in those two, you were kind of floundering."

A woman born in 1954 remembered being scared by the racial rioting, "but by and large, I felt pride as an American. I was a very patriotic little girl." She felt she had been shaped by other images she saw on TV, stereotypical images related to male-female

interaction and marriage and family life. "I feel like I was presented a very romanticized version during my childhood of when you grow up and you anticipate you're going to get married and live very happily ever after. Rock Hudson and Doris Day. I think I had a very romanticized view. Our household was just as dysfunctional as everybody else. I don't know why I believed that. In my head that's the ideal I believed in, but when I got to adulthood it wasn't that way."

Two female respondents, born in 1953 and 1954, seemed particularly affected by the events of the '60s and '70s and indicated it had some impact on early career moves. "I was fine until Bobby Kennedy got killed," said the woman born in 1953. "The combination of Martin Luther King and then Bobby Kennedy (being assassinated) in such a short amount of time, I had this consciousness thing that happened. I started realizing there's something really wrong. I became very upset about that, upset about the war, upset about the way my parents' generation were feeding the stereotype of my generation and slightly over as 'blankety-blank worthless hippies, etc.' The year 1968 had the greatest impact on me. It was a watershed year." As a result, she worked peripherally with the American Friends Service Committee "trying to help with conscientious objectors to the draft." This involvement later led to her being kicked off the high school newspaper and derailed slightly from her college plans.

The woman born in 1954 also commented on these two assassinations. "Martin Luther King and Bobby Kennedy made me feel like social justice was something that must be fought for. To do nothing to bring about change was wrong. People who were willing to take a stand like that should recognize and expect it would cost them. It shouldn't stop you, it shouldn't hinder you. Even though they were assassinated, and I considered it really, really sad and tragic, I felt like that strengthened what they were trying to achieve rather than

ending it. I felt that they were martyrs and historically there was always tremendous power in martyrdom."

She also recalled Watergate, which "revealed that the government that we had always held as kind of sacred, noble and honorable, was dirty, dirty, dirty. It was kind of like the spun glass castles all came crashing down. We became very cynical, very untrusting of government, but also very much activists. We were feeling that we could change things, we could fight, we could make a difference, we could bring about social reform. Seeing people protesting and doing things on TV just enforced that idea—that this is doable, this is what you did. If you cared, you were an activist, you got involved in politics, you voted, you campaigned with people." She said one of her childhood job aspirations had been to become an attorney, like William F. Buckley, whom she enjoyed watching on TV. Ultimately, she went into teaching and also the ministry.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

For perhaps one of the first times in recent history, there are now four generations in the American workplace: the World War II generation, the baby boomers, Generation X and the millennials. The baby boom generation, long a dominant force in society at large, still wields a tremendous impact in the workplace. This generation lived through the tremendous social and political upheavals of the 1960s and 1970s and it stands to reason that these experiences have influenced the boomers in integral ways. Additionally, the boomers experienced television in its own infancy and adolescence, often sharing the family living room with the glowing tube.

Using the tenets of cultivation theory, specifically the concepts of mainstreaming and resonance, the study evaluated the influence of television in shaping the work ethic among the members of the baby boom generation. It also probed the role of social, cultural and historical events, as well as personal experience, in influencing the work ethic and career paths.

Views of the Work Ethic

Research question one (RQ1) considered how the members of the baby boom generation characterize their view of the work ethic, and whether heavy television viewers exhibited a work ethic more closely aligned with television's messages about work. Respondents were asked to recall the amount of television they watched as children, their favorite shows and characters and how they felt about television as a child. As a point of

comparison, they were asked how much television they currently watch, what their favorite shows are, and how they feel about television as an adult. Respondents were also asked to define what the words "work ethic" meant to them, and to characterize their own work ethic, as well as the work ethic of their parents. This provided an additional baseline.

The results suggest that exposure to television during childhood may have had a cultivation effect on respondents' work ethic. Most respondents, whether light, moderate or heavy childhood viewers, had similar definitions of the work ethic that involved doing the best job possible, putting in an honest day's work for an honest day's pay, meeting responsibilities, finding value and honor in hard work, and being honest. Only one respondent had a markedly different definition of the work ethic.

Although respondents certainly seemed aware of their parents' work ethic, and may have been influenced by it, they may have also been influenced by some of their favorite childhood television programs. For example, the most commonly mentioned favorite programs were *The Lone Ranger, The Adventures of Superman, Gunsmoke, Davy Crockett, Leave It to Beaver, Bonanza* and others of that ilk, where morals and values were clear-cut.

In fact, when asked to name their heroes, several respondents named Superman and the Lone Ranger, explaining they were good guys who would make an effort to do the right thing. Additionally, most of these favorite shows and characters included work in some format, whether implied as in *Father Knows Best* (father Jim Anderson had an off-screen role as an insurance agent), or as part of the plot, as in *Gunsmoke* or *The Andy Griffith Show*, which both focused on law enforcement, although in different eras and with different degrees of seriousness. Even *Star Trek* still showed people working, albeit in space. Although a handful of respondents enjoyed *Gilligan's Island*, in most of these cases, the interest seemed

to revolve more around Ginger and Mary Ann as objects of desire, rather than on the Professor or the Millionaire as positive examples, or conversely, on Gilligan, as a negative example. Similarly, *The Many Loves of Dobie Gillis* and its unemployed hippie character Maynard G. Krebs, were enjoyed for entertainment rather than emulated.

The lone respondent whose definition of the work ethic was quite different from all other respondents may have been influenced by his political leanings, which seemed to have been molded by his stated admiration for Martin Luther King. However, he also included a more conventional definition of the work ethic, that of "find(ing) work you enjoy; do(ing) it well."

Adherence to TV Messages

As part of the first research question, respondents were also asked a series of questions to explore how closely their work ethic was aligned with television's messages about work, including the notion that everyone should be able to have a high-status, glamorous, exciting, well-paid profession. The questions also probed job satisfaction and average job tenure, based on TV's implied assumption that unexciting, non-glamorous jobs were not satisfying and therefore may not be worth hanging on to. Personal attitudes and experiences with unemployment were also questioned, as well as the attitudes of friends and family toward unemployment. These latter questions were designed to explore whether respondents felt a sense of self worth during periods of unemployment, and how they were treated during those times. Television messages about unemployment have tended to fall into two camps: that unemployed people may not have "personal worth and moral value" (Kottak, 1990, p. 56-57), or that intentionally unemployed people, like Kramer on *Seinfeld*, are happy-go-lucky and to be envied (Uchitelle, 2006, p. 6).

On the whole, regardless of whether they were light, moderate or heavy TV viewers, respondents did not seem to align themselves with TV's messages about work, specifically its messages that jobs should be high-status, glamorous, exciting and well paid. Most respondents did not characterize their jobs as particularly glamorous. There were a few exceptions, but even those respondents seemed to recognize there were downsides to so-called glamorous jobs. Respondents who said their jobs were exciting nearly always qualified this by explaining the specific circumstances that made it exciting to them. Very often the excitement had to do with unexpected circumstances, new challenges or a frenzied pace. They also acknowledged that not everyone would find their jobs exciting.

In general, respondents had not job hopped in search of more fulfilling careers although one male respondent born in 1962 admitted he had done so when he was younger. Many respondents had been with their current employer for extended periods of time, with one respondent born in 1948 expecting to retire in the spring of 2007. Those who had more movement in their career paths had often been forced to make changes because their companies were sold, or because they were in occupations such as construction where layoffs were the norm. In some cases, personal circumstances such as divorce or moving to another state or city caused respondents to change jobs.

Among those respondents who had been unemployed involuntarily, a few said they felt significantly distressed or even worthless during the experience. Only a few respondents characterized it as being a positive experience on the whole. There were also a few respondents who felt they had been treated poorly by their families and friends. This tended to be in cases where family and financial pressures were great (i.e., respondents who had children). Taken as a whole, these experiences seemed to indicate that respondents who had

been unemployed may have been impacted by TV's dominantly negative messages about unemployment, particularly its implication that unemployed people lack personal worth and moral value. No one said they felt carefree or especially beloved while unemployed, unlike the *Seinfeld* character Kramer.

For the few respondents who had periodically chosen not to work, the experience was largely positive and usually motivated by family considerations rather than a desire to find themselves or have a job that was more glamorous. With one exception, these respondents were female. The lone male respondent who was voluntarily unemployed took a planned two-month hiatus as a transition period between jobs.

Regardless of how much TV they watched, respondents were easily able to distinguish between TV portrayals of certain occupations and actual, real-world experience. All respondents acknowledged that the jobs shown on TV, including police officers, attorneys, doctors and other such occupations, were never as exciting, fast paced or easily accomplished in real life.

Cultivation Effects and Mainstreaming

Research question two considered whether heavy television viewers exhibited greater work ethic cultivation effects than light viewers, if there was an observable mainstreaming effect to their responses, and to what extent mainstreaming was evident.

Although only a small number of respondents were considered heavy television viewers as children, most respondents gave fairly consistent definitions for the work ethic. This indicated the possibility of an observable mainstreaming effect, where "heavy viewing may absorb or override differences in perspectives and behavior that ordinarily stem from

other factors and influences...For example, regional differences, political ideology, and socioeconomic differences are much less influential on the attitudes and beliefs of heavy viewers" (Gerbner, 2002b, p. 201).

The commonality of the definitions provided some evidence of television's role as the "twentieth-century 'melting pot' of the American people" (Gerbner, 2002b, p. 201) and also seemed to transcend other variables, such as whether respondents grew up in a rural setting, a town or a city, as well as their parents' occupations and own attitude toward work. This study did not attempt to narrow the influence of those factors in shaping respondents' work ethic (particularly the influence parents may have had), and thus the actual mainstreaming effect from television may be small. However, the common responses seem to confirm television's ability to "standardize, streamline, amplify and share with virtually all members of society these common cultural norms" (Signorielli and Morgan, 2001, p. 334-335).

Cultivation in Childhood Career Dreams

Some of the strongest cultivation effects found in the study were in the occupational dreams respondents had as children. Many respondents specifically cited a television character as being a sort of role model for a dream profession, or named a specific program that sparked a vocational interest. While this study did not specifically consider the impact of other media, several respondents said characters in books or movies influenced their childhood dream. Moreover, the fact that several male respondents had very similar career dreams (that of becoming a pilot or an astronaut) while only a few actually knew someone in those jobs, indicates that the cultivation effect may have been strong in shaping childhood job dreams. The effect seemed consistent across light, moderate and heavy childhood viewers. Most respondents in this study were light to moderate childhood viewers.

Another cultivation effect was seen in the somewhat stereotypical dream jobs respondents had as children. Few respondents dreamed of becoming an office professional or other type of white-collar professional, although one respondent born in 1960 said she had wanted to become an accountant. As children, many respondents said they wanted to pursue career paths that were more adventurous or high profile, like the careers seen on television, including racing motorcycles, becoming a pilot, astronaut, professional photographer, professional athlete or high profile scientist. Female respondents particularly seemed to cite more gender-specific career dreams, including becoming a nurse, a teacher or an interior designer. One female respondent born in 1954 even mentioned the stereotyped messages she had received from TV about marriage and family life.

Cultivation Effects and Reaction to Social Upheaval

Research question three considered whether baby boomer respondents who had stronger memories of social upheaval from the 1960s and 1970s, either as portrayed on television or personally experienced, showed greater work ethic cultivation effects. Although most respondents indicated they were somewhat impacted by these events, there did not seem to be a particularly strong cultivation effect on their work ethic with a few exceptions. Most respondents had relatively stable recent career histories and realistic views of their jobs, as well as realistic views of other people's jobs, such as the occupations typically portrayed on TV.

A few male respondents said the tumultuous events they saw on TV or experienced had very little impact on them, either positive or negative. One male respondent born in 1956 indicated the fact he didn't react much to these events may have been because he was a

teenager. "There were moments of reflection, I suppose, as much as a teenager does. But I wouldn't say it changed my life, I wouldn't say it made me think totally different about anything." Several female respondents particularly remembered the space program and the first moon landing and said it gave them feelings of patriotism, pride and optimism. Other respondents said that as a byproduct of the events in the 1960s and 1970s, they gained a greater awareness about the world, including its problems and opportunities. The small number of respondents who specifically mentioned the Cuban missile crisis said that the incident made them feel vulnerable, scared, uncertain and aware of their mortality. Respondents who remembered more about the Vietnam War remembered feeling negative, uneasy, and confused about their future. Watergate caused many respondents to feel cynical about the political process.

The study also probed for a possible connection between military service, particularly during the Vietnam War, and work ethic cultivation effects. However, only four male respondents in this study had served in the military. Several men said they had narrowly avoided the draft, or had been deferred from serving. Several male respondents turned 18 after the draft was over. There were no female respondents who had served in the military. All respondents with military experience were currently employed full-time and had fairly stable work histories with the exception of some who worked in industries with a lot of turnover, including construction.

Cultivation Effects on Heavy Viewers

The heaviest childhood viewers (two male respondents) said the social and historical events they watched on TV or recalled did not have too much impact on them. However, there were a few signs of cultivation effect on their work ethic. For example, a male

respondent born in 1960 seemed a little grandiose in some of his thinking regarding the uniqueness of his profession and his particular skill set, repeatedly referring to himself as an "artisan" in his work as a self-employed remodeling contractor. His definition of putting in a full day's work was somewhat varied from the generally accepted practice of working 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. He seemed to feel great freedom in starting work long after 8 a.m., although he said he would then work a full eight hours.

He said the tumult he saw on TV did not change how he felt about himself, but merely made him realize that "everybody screws up no matter who they are, and things change no matter what." However, he said he felt he had been quite influenced by what he watched on TV. "I realize that a lot of who I am is made up of various characters throughout history. I personally think that's kind of who you are, we're made up of people you meet, books we read, what we take in." He also displayed some tendency to job hop before becoming self-employed, although this may have been more related to the field of construction rather than being strictly a cultivation effect on his work ethic.

The other heavy childhood viewer, a man born in 1958, seemed particularly disaffected toward his current job as a financial professional and did not seem to have derived much personal satisfaction from it. He was even less analytical than the other heavy viewer in describing how the historical events he remembered seeing on TV affected him: "The things I see on TV don't faze me." He was dissatisfied with his current job, but he did not have a dream job he would like to pursue. Further, he seemed to lack a certain level of career ambition and drive, as well as a general passion and zeal for life.

The somewhat blasé reactions of these two respondents to the events of the 1960s and 1970s raised a question: had they watched so much television as children that they had

simply become inured to the tumultuous events it portrayed? If so, could this be considered another general cultivation effect?

Cultivation Effects on Moderate Viewers

In contrast, two moderate childhood viewers, women born in 1953 and 1954, respectively, seemed to exhibit greater cultivation effects as a byproduct of their feelings and memories of the 1960s and 1970s. Both women recalled particularly strong reactions to the assassinations of Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King, as well as the Vietnam War. Both pursued some activist or social involvement at that time, and made some educational or job decisions that were influenced by these leanings. Both had also experienced a fair amount of job movement, with an average job tenure of three years. However, one woman's job movement was heavily influenced by her husband's occupation, which dictated repeated moves to different states. The other woman's job movement may have been due to greater dissatisfaction with her jobs. In fact, she said, "I think I've made some very bad choices and undervalued myself." She felt she had been "derailed" from her college plans by her high school, because she was known as an anti-war activist.

Other Findings

As an outgrowth of the intensive interviews conducted with respondents, the study discovered several significant findings unrelated to the original research questions. These findings may serve as the basis for future research.

Mainstreaming in Memories of Social Upheaval

Respondents had very similar memories of specific incidents that took place during the 1960s and 1970s, including the Kennedy and King assassinations, the Vietnam War,

Watergate, Woodstock, the Beatles, Elvis Presley, Kent State, the moon landing and space

program. Additionally, a few respondents recalled incidents from the Cold War period in the

1950s. These memories were based on things respondents had seen broadcast on TV,

although other media influence, such as newspapers and magazines, probably factored in.

The universality of the images recalled seems to indicate support for Gerbner's (2002b)

process of mainstreaming, where "television may have become the true twentieth-century

'melting pot' of the American people—and increasingly of other countries around the globe"

(p. 201). It also reaffirms Signorielli and Morgan's finding (2001) that "the world of

television shows and tells us about life—people, places, striving, power, fate, and family

life...What makes television unique, however, is its ability to standardize, streamline, amplify

and share with virtually all members of society these common cultural norms" (p. 334-335).

Adult Dream Jobs

In other findings, adult dream jobs seemed to be somewhat influenced by TV

messages about work, in somewhat the same way childhood dream jobs were. Several

respondents described dream jobs that were very similar to their childhood dream jobs, which

in some cases had been influenced by TV or another media outlet such as magazines and

books. However, presumably because respondents are now more mature, most admitted they

probably could not pursue their dream jobs because of such issues as family responsibilities

and the need for adequate pay and benefits, including health insurance. A few respondents

said they did not have an adult dream job, either because they greatly enjoy their current job,

or because they had not thought about it.

Role of Education

As a group, the respondents in the study were well educated, with 58% having at least a bachelor's degree. Although not related to the cultivation effects of television *per se,* the study found that many respondents credited their education for helping them achieve career gains and certain financial rewards. There were some exceptions to this however, with a few respondents noting their education had given them general life skills but had not specifically helped them in their current field. Some of these respondents worked in blue-collar professions. However, the study did not specifically categorize respondents by whether they were blue-collar or white-collar workers.

Several female respondents seemed to feel that although they were well educated, they had not achieved satisfying levels of career or financial success. In some cases, this was because of family circumstances; in other cases, respondents felt it might have been because they were women. One female respondent specifically mentioned she felt she had undervalued herself and indicated it had influenced her fairly short average job tenure. This respondent, born in 1953, was also one of the respondents who seemed particularly affected by the upheaval of the1960s and 1970s. Although the study did not specifically probe for cultivation effects on stereotyped work roles, it is possible there was some effect among female respondents.

Feelings of Job Insecurity

Many respondents said they had less job security than their parents did, and that they felt somewhat afraid they could lose their job largely at the whim of their employer. This feeling did not seem to have anything to do with possible cultivation effects based on TV messages. Rather, comments of this nature transcended the amount of television respondents currently watched and may have been based largely on their own working experience. For

example, a few respondents said they had either suddenly lost jobs themselves, or known

people who had, based on downturns in the economy.

Concern About Retirement Benefits

There was also a fairly sharp contrast between the way respondents felt about their

own retirement benefits vs. their parents' benefits. Several respondents felt their parents had

enjoyed excellent retirement packages, but did not feel as confident about their own. The

subject of 401(k) plans (defined contribution) vs. standard pension plans (defined benefit)

came up often. While few respondents, if any, felt their parents were living high on

retirement funds, they did feel their parents had a more secure, larger retirement package.

Respondents who discussed this seemed quite aware of the responsibility they personally

faced for funding their own retirement. In at least one case, a respondent indicated this

responsibility, as well as family obligations, had dampened any dream of an early retirement.

Parental Influence on Career Paths

The study found that parents did wield some influence in shaping respondents' career

paths by suggesting possible occupations or recommending certain types of education.

Several respondents recalled receiving, and taking, career advice from their parents. Others

said they had once wanted a job similar to their parents' job(s). In some cases, respondents

did have a job that was similar to their parents' job(s). Still other respondents with this dream

had not been able to follow their parents' occupational footsteps, for a variety of reasons.

Most respondents said their parents' work ethics were strong and said their own work ethic

was strong as well. There did not seem to be a substantial difference between most

respondents' work ethics and that of their parents, although a few respondents seemed to

have work ethics that were quite different than their parents, either better or somewhat worse.

Other Influences on Career Paths

Many respondents mentioned teachers who had influenced their interest in pursuing certain careers, although this influence did not seem to extend to shaping respondents' work ethics. A few respondents said they had another role adult model outside of parents or teachers who influenced their career dreams and paths.

Implications

Theoretical Implications

The study provided evidence for some cultivation effects on the work ethic of a particular generation, in this case, the baby boomers. In particular, the study indicated that some common definitions of the work ethic may have been influenced by television through mainstreaming. Conversely, there was a fairly strong indication that respondents did not believe television's most common stereotyped messages about work, particularly that all jobs should be glamorous, exciting and well paid in order to have value. However, a few of the respondents who had been unemployed seemed to question their own self worth, somewhat in keeping with TV's standard messages about unemployment.

The strongest cultivation effect was seen in the childhood occupational dreams respondents had. Media influences included television as well as movies, books and magazines.

The study found limited resonance effects based on the impact of the social upheaval televised in the 1960s and 1970s. The heaviest viewers said these events had little impact on them, but they exhibited some small cultivation effects in their work ethic. A small number

of moderate viewers seemed to exhibit greater cultivation effects as a result of resonance, particularly in their job tenure and job choices.

Some of the study's most significant findings were not related to the original research question. For example, the fact that respondents recalled many of the same events from the 1960s and 1970s gave credence to Gerbner's (2002b) idea that TV had "become the true twentieth-century 'melting pot' of the American people" (p. 201) and confirmed TV's ability to "standardize, streamline, amplify and share with virtually all members of society these common cultural norms" (Signorielli and Morgan, 2001, p. 334-335).

In other findings, there was a strong cultivation effect on respondents' adult career dreams, which were also influenced by the media in much the same way as childhood career dreams. Other findings revealed role of education, parents and other authority figures in influencing respondents' career paths, as distinguished from influencing respondents' work ethics.

Respondents also discussed growing feelings of job insecurity, including fears of possibly being laid off or having their jobs outsourced overseas. For most respondents, this fear was not related to concerns over their own work quality, but rather to the caprices of their employers, the possibility of mergers and acquisitions or cost-cutting measures. Respondents felt their parents had enjoyed greater job security on the whole. There was also a lot of discussion about the difference between respondents' retirement packages and their parents' retirement packages, with a general feeling that parents had better retirement plans.

Practical Implications

The study showed the greatest cultivation effects in the childhood career dreams respondents had. In some cases, respondents continued to hold to slightly modified versions

of these dreams even as adults. Most of these career dreams, particularly the childhood dreams, were fairly stereotypical and limited in scope (astronaut, airplane pilot, photographer, spy, nurse, teacher, etc.). This relates to Signorielli and Kahlenberg's (2001), Barber's (1989) and Csikszentmihalyi and Schneider's (2000) concerns that stereotypical images of occupations could ultimately limit viewers' career choices.

Given the strong influence TV seems to have in shaping childhood and even adult career dreams, it may be worthwhile for the television industry to reconsider the range of occupations that are portrayed in programs. Granted, there has been increased realism in the portrayals of certain occupations, notably doctors and law enforcement professionals, but there is still room to show a broader range of occupations, including engineers, accountants, financial planners, human resources professionals, heavy equipment operators, pressmen, and more.

The study revealed that respondents are somewhat dissatisfied with their working experience. Among the baby boomers queried, there was a great deal of discussion about job security and retirement benefits, with the consensus attitude being one of disappointment and or frustration. By and large, the respondents in this study understand they will have to continue working for a number of years to support themselves. Plans for early retirement seemed few and far between, although one or two respondents indicated they had nearly amassed great enough financial resources to pursue a dream job with a non-profit or other similar organization. Still others expressed a general interest in someday finding work that would be more fulfilling, although they were not sure exactly what it was. Some of these desires were born out of a kind of weariness from working in the same profession for 25 years or more, or from an awareness that there had to be more to life than work.

In general respondents' work ethics were strong, by their own account. Even among those who expressed frustration with their jobs, there was little talk of quitting without having something else lined up. Almost universally, respondents said they had never turned down a job capriciously. In the cases where they refused a job, it was usually because it did not pay enough or because it conflicted with another obligation, including family. Most respondents felt they worked as hard as their parents, although there were exceptions on both sides. On the whole, it was clear that these boomers derived satisfaction from their jobs and took pride in their work.

For companies and others who employ baby boomers, or even rely on them for volunteer help, it is worth noting that this group stays consistently employed, and works hard. Since boomers are bound to keep working for a number of years to come, employers would be wise to heed this generation's concerns about retirement benefits and job security. For example, boomer respondents were keenly aware of the burden they face in helping to fund their own retirement through popular 401(k) programs. Several respondents who had changed jobs frequently said they did not have any retirement benefits at all, or very few. By exploring ways to better structure compensation packages and address concerns about job security, employers would likely receive even greater loyalty from this demographic group. It might also be helpful for employers to consider ways to provide some sort of semi-structured dream job experience to loyal boomer employees. Such an experience could possibly combine a boomer employee's work experience with other interests, ultimately benefiting both the employee and the corporation by expanding skill sets and creating a more motivated employee.

Limitations of the Study

One obvious limitation of the study was the fact that respondents who are now between 42 and 60 years old were trying to recall emotions they felt as children and adolescents. It is possible that their recollections are faulty and that they felt more strongly at the actual time of certain televised events and programs. This means that the cultivation effects on respondents' work ethics may have changed with time. It is possible that respondents may have demonstrated greater work ethic cultivation effects, particularly in the areas of job satisfaction and job tenure, if they had been interviewed when younger.

The study did not attempt to isolate the impact of real world experiences on the work ethic from cultivation effects, nor did it attempt to isolate the impact of education or family influence. However, the study indicated that maturation almost certainly tempers the work ethic, as Cherrington, Condie and England (1979, p. 617) found. Moreover, education and family both seemed to influence respondents' work ethic, attitudes and behaviors.

The study may have been somewhat limited by its racial homogeneity since all respondents were Caucasian. The study was also dominated by male respondents. Moreover, although there was some geographic diversity, 54% of the respondents lived in Iowa. The high education level of respondents may have also limited the study by possibly biasing the results toward professional, white-collar jobs. It is not known how the respondents' education compares to the baby boom generation as a whole.

Suggestions for Future Research

This study focused on one generation, the baby boomers, to determine the cultivation effects of TV on their work ethic. Accordingly, this study could serve as a benchmark for

future studies exploring the same issues among the World War II generation, Generation X and the millennials. Future studies could either do cross-generational comparisons, or focus on one particular generation as this study has done. Another suggestion would be to undertake a longitudinal study on one generation, investigating the development of their work ethic over time, the development of career dreams through childhood and into adulthood, and tracing their career paths over time.

Any future studies, particularly on Generation X and the millennials, should probably be expanded to include other media outlets in addition to television. For example, these younger generations may have been more influenced by newer media such as cable TV, the internet, satellite radio, video games, e-mail and even cell phones. While these media outlets fall outside the traditional purview of cultivation theory, they seem very influential for younger generations. In particular, the internet has become a major source of information, news and entertainment. Its messages about the work ethic and possible cultivation effects may be worth probing at some point although this would be a very large undertaking.

Based on the findings of this study, the following future research questions are posed:

FQ1: Is there a difference in the view of the work ethic between Caucasians and non-Caucasians?

FQ2: Are there noticeable gender differences in the view of the work ethic?

FQ3: Are there strong geographic differences in the definition of the work ethic? What is the "Midwestern work ethic" or the "farm work ethic?" Does it exist?

FQ4: Are there differences in the view of the work ethic based on the amount of education?

FQ5: Are there differences in the view of the work ethic based on the type of job, whether blue-collar or white-collar?

FQ6: Are there differences in the view of the work ethic based on birth order in a family?

FQ7: Are there differences in the view of the work ethic based on socioeconomic status?

FQ8: What factors, including education, socioeconomic status, parental influence, media influence, working experience, etc., make it possible for some people to achieve their childhood career dreams, while others do not?

FQ9: Beyond shared memories of social upheaval, as broadcast on TV, what other shared memories or messages are common as a result of TV viewing?

FQ10: Does family influence temper the cultivation effects of social upheaval, either as personally experienced or viewed on TV?

FQ11: How does the definition of "work ethic" change over time?

FQ12: What role does maturation and real world working experience play in the definition of the work ethic over time?

REFERENCES

Atkinson, R., & Flint, J. (2001). Accessing hidden and hard-to-reach populations: Snowball research strategies, *Social Research Update,* 33 (Summer). Retrieved Dec. 1, 2006, from http://www.soc.surrey.ac.uk/sru/SRU33.html.

Barber, S. (1989). When I grow up: Children and the work-world of television. *Media & Values,* (47). Retrieved Feb. 27, 2006, from http://www.medialit.org/reading_room/article31.html.

Beder, S. (2000). Selling the work ethic, *Australian Rationalist,* 55, 8-13.

Bernard, H.R. (2006). *Research methods in anthropology* (4th ed). Lanham: AltaMira Press.

Cherrington, D. J., Condie, S. J., & England, J. L. (1979). Age and work values, *Academy of Management Journal, 22* (3), 617-623.

Clark, L. S., Demont-Heinrich, C., & Webber, S. (2005). Parents, ICTs, and children's prospects for success: Interviews along the digital "access rainbow." *Critical Studies in Media Communication, 22* (5), 409-426.

Creswell, J.W. (1994). *Research design: Qualitative and quantitative approaches.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

CrazyAboutTV.com., retrieved April 7, 2007, from http://www.crazyabouttv.com/

Csikszentmihalyi, M., & Schneider, B. (2000). *Becoming adult: How teenagers prepare for the world of work.* New York, NY: Basic Books.

Demarest, J., & Garner, J. (1992). The representation of women's roles in women's magazines over the past 30 years. *The Journal of Psychology, 126* (4), 357-369.

Downey, K. (2006, March 20). They won't grow up. *Broadcasting & Cable,* Retrieved March 20, 2006, from www.broadcastingcable.com/index.asp?layout=articlePrint&articleID=CA6316998.

Faludi, S. (1999). *Stiffed: The betrayal of the American man.* New York, NY: William Morrow and Company.

Gerbner, G. (2002a). Cultural indicators: The third voice. In M. Morgan (Ed.), *Against the mainstream: The selected works of George Gerbner.* New York, NY: Peter Lang.

Gerbner, G. (2002b). Growing up with television: The cultivation perspective. In M. Morgan (Ed.), *Against the mainstream: The selected works of George Gerbner.* New York, NY: Peter Lang.

Heintz-Knowles, K. (2001). Balancing acts: Work-family issues on prime-time TV. In J. Bryant (Ed.), *Television and the American family.* (2nd ed). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Hill, R. B. (1997). Demographic differences in selected work ethic attributes. *Journal of Career Development, 24* (1), 3-23.

Kottak, C. (1990). *Prime-time society.* Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Co.

Light, P. (1988). *Baby boomers.* New York, London: W.W. Norton & Company.

Lockwood, N. (2004). Leadership styles: Generational differences. Society for Human Resource Management Research. Retrieved October 11, 2006, from www.shrm.org/research/briefly_published/Leadership%20Styles%20Series%20Part.

Lutz, T. (2006). *Doing nothing.* New York, NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

McQuail, D. (2000). *Mass communication theory.* London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage Publications.

Roos, J. (2005, August 28). Generation gap divides Iowans. *Des Moines Sunday Register*, pp. 1-4.

Santos, S. R., & Cox, K. (2000). Workplace adjustment and intergenerational differences between matures, boomers, and Xers. *Nursing Economics, 18* (1), 7-14.

Signorielli, N. (1993). Television and adolescents' perceptions about work. *Youth & Society, 24* (3), 314-341.

Signorielli, N. (2004). Aging on television: Messages relating to gender, race, and occupation in prime time. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media, 48* (2), 279-301.

Signorielli, N., & Kahlenberg, S. (2001). Television's world of work in the nineties. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media, 45* (1), 4-22.

Signorielli, N., & Morgan, M. (2001). Television and the family: The cultivation perspective. In J. Bryant (Ed.), *Television and the American family.* (2nd ed). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Smola, K. W., & Sutton, C. D. (2002). Generational differences: Revisiting generational work values for the new millennium. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 23,* 363-382.

Steinhorn, L. (2006). *The greater generation.* New York, NY: Thomas Dunne Books, St. Martin's Press.

Tang, T. L., & Tzeng, J. Y. (1992). Demographic correlates of the Protestant work ethic. *Journal of Psychology, 126* (2), 163-170.

Terkel, L. (1974). *Working: People talk about what they do all day and how they feel about what they do.* New York, NY: Pantheon Books.

Uchitelle, L. (2006, July 31). Men not working, and not wanting just any job. *The New York Times.* Retrieved July 31, 2006, from www.nytimes.com/2006/07/31/business/31men.html?ei=5070&en=05ee0dcfefad81.

Wentworth, D. K., & Chell, R. M. (1997). American college students and the Protestant work ethic. *The Journal of Social Psychology, 137* (3), 284-296.

Wikipedia. Retrieved April 7-8, 2007 from www.wikipedia.com

Wimmer, R. (2006). Brief guide for focus groups. Retrieved November 11, 2006, from www.rogerwimmer.com/mmr/mmrfocusgroups.htm.

APPENDIX A:

ISU NEW HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW FORM

| For IRB Use Only | Review Date: 2 March 2007.
 Approval Date: 2 March 2007
 Approval Expiration Date: 1 March 2008
 EXEMPT per 45 CFR 46.101(b): _____ Date: _____
 EXPEDITED per 45 CFR 46.110(b) 1
 Category 6, 7 , Letter ✓ | IRB ID: 07-070 ___ **IRB**
 Length of Approval: One year
 FULL Committee Review: no FEB 06 2007
 Minimal Risk: ✓
 More than Minimal Risk: _____
 Project Closed Date: _____ |

ISU NEW HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW FORM   ~~ORIGINAL~~

SECTION I: GENERAL INFORMATION

Principal Investigator (PI): Jenny L. Herring	Phone: 515-283-8841	Fax: 866-850-4024
Degrees: MS - pending 2007	Correspondence Address: 8820 Woodmayr Cir., Norwalk, IA 50211	
Department: Greenlee School of Journalism and Comm.	Email Address: herring@iastate.edu	
Center/Institute:	College: Liberal Arts and Sciences	
PI Level: ☐ Faculty ☐ Staff ☐ Postdoctoral ☒ Graduate Student ☐ Undergraduate Student		

Title of Project: Media Influence on the Work Ethic Among the Baby Boom Generation

Project Period (Include Start and End Date): [mm/dd/yy][01/26/2007] to [mm/yy/dd][05/04/2007]

FOR STUDENT PROJECTS	
Name of Major Professor/Supervising Faculty: Dr. Lulu Rodriguez	Signature of Major Professor/Supervising Faculty: ▓▓▓▓▓
Phone: (515) 294-0484	Campus Address: 214 Hamilton Hall
Department: Greenlee School of Journalism and Comm.	Email Address: lulurod@iastate.edu
Type of Project: (check all that apply) ☐ Research ☒ Thesis ☐ Dissertation ☐ Class project ☐ Independent Study (490, 590, Honors project) ☐ Other. Please specify: _____	

KEY PERSONNEL

List all members and relevant experience of the project personnel. This information is intended to inform the committee of the training and background related to the specific procedures that the each person will perform on the project.

NAME & DEGREE(S)	SPECIFIC DUTIES ON PROJECT	TRAINING & EXPERIENCE RELATED TO PROCEDURES PERFORMED, DATE OF TRAINING
Jenny L. Herring, BS, Journalism, University of Colorado, 1982. MS degree in progress, ISU, expected 2007. 1/25/07	Interviewing subjects, analyzing data, writing thesis	ISU web training for human subjects research, social & behavioral sciences module, 1-25-07
Lulu Rodriguez, Ph.D. 3/11/03	Thesis adviser	ISU web training for human subjects research, social & behavioral sciences module, 3-11-03

Add New Row

Research Assurances 12/01/2005

1

APPENDIX B:

INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

Part 1: Establishing TV's role as an agent of socialization

1. Do you remember how much television you watched a day while you were growing up? For example, did you watch TV before you went to school, after school or with your family in the evening?

2. Did you have your own TV or was it pretty much just a family TV in the living room or den?

3. What were some of your favorite shows and characters? Did you have any TV heroes? What did you like about them?

4. What did you like best about television when you were a kid?

5. When you were 15 years old, what did you want to be when you were an adult? Why? Was there anyone who inspired you to want this kind of job, either anyone you knew personally or perhaps someone you saw on TV?

Part 2: Current exposure and attention to television

1. Let's talk about how much TV you watch now. How much time would you say you spend watching TV every day? This could include time you spend watching the news in the morning while you're getting ready for work or just a show to relax in the evening.

2. What are some of your favorite programs and characters? What do you like about them?

3. Do you enjoy watching TV? Do you feel the same way about it you did as a kid?

Part 3: Exploring mainstreamed attitudes, beliefs and experience

1. Let's talk about your job. Where do you work and what do you do there?

2. How long have you worked there?

3. Tell me about the company you work for – what does the company do, approximately how many people does it employ, how many customers or clients does it have, etc.?

4. How old were you when you started working full-time, 40 hours a week?

5. How close does your current job come to what you wanted to do when you were 15?

6. How did you wind up working for this particular company? What were some of the other jobs you had before you got this job?

7. What shaped some of your job decisions – were they based on experiences you had as you started working, or things people told you? In other words, did anyone recommend that you go into this field or did it just kind of happen over the years?

8. On average, how long would you say you've worked for a particular company?

9. What is your education/training and how did it help you get this job?

10. Do you enjoy what you do? How satisfying is it to you? Do you feel you've had good opportunities for advancement and financial gain in your profession?

11. Is there something else you'd rather be doing to earn a living, and if so, what? What would your dream job involve? What would your responsibilities be?

What would you be seeking in terms of total compensation (pay and benefits),

hours, work/life balance, etc.?

12. Do you feel valued and respected by your company and by your co-workers?

13. Would you characterize your job as prestigious or high status in any way? For

example, are you well-known in your company by upper management or by a lot

of your co-workers?

14. Do you believe you should have a better or more prestigious job? What makes

you feel this way?

15. Is your job exciting or glamorous? In what way?

16. Do you ever feel afraid you'll lose your job? Or are you fairly confident that

you'll be able to work there as long as you want or need to? If you don't feel

secure in your job, what do you think might cause you to lose it?

17. Have you ever been out of work for a few weeks or a few months? How did you

feel? How did your family and friends treat you?

18. Has there ever been a time when you decided not to take a job when it was

offered to you? Or perhaps a time when you just decided not to work for awhile?

If so, what made you decide that way?

19. What do the words "work ethic" mean to you?

20. How would you characterize your own work ethic?

Part 4: Determining resonance in personal or family experience

1. Let's talk about the kinds of occupations typically shown on TV. For example,

there's a lot of shows where the characters are detectives or police officers or

attorneys or doctors. Have you ever worked in some of those occupations, or known anyone who has? If so, how did your/their experience compare with what was shown on TV?

2. Did you ever consider going into one of the professions shown on TV?

3. What kind of work did each of your parents do? Did they seem to like their jobs or did you get the idea they wanted to be doing something else?

4. How would you characterize your parents' work ethic?

5. How would you characterize your working experiences with that of your parents, in terms of:

    a. How your employer treats you (respect and value for you as a person) vs.

       how   your parents' employers treated them?

    b. Number of hours you work vs. number of hours they worked

    c. Your total compensation package (pay and benefits such as health insurance, vacation, retirement plan) vs. your parents' compensation

    d. Your job security vs. your parents' job security

Part 5: Historical/Social events

1. Thinking back to when you were growing up, what are some of the national or international historical or social events you remember seeing on television?

2. How did they make you feel about yourself and about your future?

3. Were you ever drafted, or did you serve time in the military? Were any of your siblings drafted or did they serve time in the military?

Part 6: Demographics

1. Your gender: male/female

2. Your year of birth:

3. Your level of education:

    a. less than high school

    b. High school graduate (includes equivalency)

    c. Some college, no degree

    d. Associate degree

    e. Bachelor's degree

    f. Graduate or professional degree

4. Your race/ethnicity:

    a. White

    b. Black or African American

    c. American Indian or Alaska native

    d. Asian

    e. Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander

    f. Hispanic/Latino

    g. Multiracial

    h. Other, not specified

5. Did you grow up in a city, town or rural location?

6. Where do you live now: city, town or rural location?