

PARTICIPATION, IDENTITY, AND SOCIAL SUPPORT  
IN A SPIRITUAL COMMUNITY

by

LA DORNA MCGEE

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of  
The University of Texas at Arlington in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements  
for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN SOCIOLOGY

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT ARLINGTON

December 2005

Copyright © by La Dorna McGee 2005

All Rights Reserved

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my mom who always supported me in my endeavors. I would also like to thank Kathy Rowe, Jane Nicol, and Suzanne Baldon for their support. Lastly, I would like to thank my committee members for their extreme patience and guidance through this process.

April 22, 2005

ABSTRACT

PARTICIPATION, IDENTITY, AND SOCIAL SUPPORT  
IN A SPIRITUAL COMMUNITY

Publication No. \_\_\_\_\_

La Dorna McGee, M.A.

The University of Texas at Arlington, 2005

Supervising Professor: Frank Weed

Paganism is a loosely organized community whose religious ideology incorporates the immanence of Deity. As a religious association with an ideology different from traditional Judeo-Christian faiths, members are often labeled as deviant and subjected to various negative sanctions. By relying on survey data collected on April 9-12, 1996 and in depth personal interviews collected on October 10-13, 1996, this study presents a model that best describes and explains acceptance and participation in Pagan spiritualism. This study identifies three characteristics associated with positive ratings of childhood religious affiliation (church disaffection, family closeness, and

membership role), three characteristics associated with feelings of belonging to the Pagan community (church disaffection, social support, and participation), and finally examines a member's disclosure of their Pagan identity as being a function of occupational prestige, weighing the costs of negative sanctions versus the Pagan value of openly expressing a Pagan identity, and self-efficacy.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....   | iii |
| ABSTRACT .....  | iv  |
| LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.....  | ix  |
| LIST OF TABLES.....   | x   |
| Chapter   |     |
| 1. INTRODUCTION .....   | 1   |
| 1.1 Statement of the Problem.....                                   | 1   |
| 1.2 Major Divisions of the Study.....                               | 2   |
| 1.2.1 Paganism, Its Organization, and Theoretical Perspective ..... | 2   |
| 1.2.2 Data Collection .....   | 3   |
| 1.2.3 Analysis of Data .....  | 3   |
| 1.2.4 Conclusion .....  | 4   |
| 2. PAGANISM AND ITS ORGANIZATION .....                              | 5   |
| 2.1 Introduction.....   | 5   |
| 2.2 Organizational Boundaries .....                                 | 7   |
| 2.3 Institutional Causation.....                                    | 10  |
| 2.4 Pagan History.....  | 12  |
| 2.5 Pagan Ideology .....  | 15  |
| 2.5.1 Values and Beliefs .....                                      | 15  |

|  |    |
|--|----|
| 2.5.2 Holidays.....                                    | 17 |
| 2.6 Theoretical Orientation.....                       | 20 |
| 2.6.1 Travis Hirschi’s Social Bonds.....               | 20 |
| 2.6.2 Edwin Sutherland’s Differential Association..... | 21 |
| 2.6.3 Robert Merton’s Strain Theory.....               | 22 |
| 2.6.4 A Synthesis.....                                 | 23 |
| 2.7 Hypotheses.....                                    | 23 |
| 3. METHODS.....  | 26 |
| 3.1 Data Collection.....                               | 26 |
| 3.2 Research Setting.....                              | 28 |
| 3.3 Sampling.....                                      | 29 |
| 3.4 Variable Measurement.....                          | 31 |
| 3.4.1 Participation Scale.....                         | 32 |
| 3.4.2 Family Closeness Scale.....                      | 34 |
| 3.4.3 Reference Group Scale.....                       | 35 |
| 3.4.4 Prestige Scale.....                              | 36 |
| 3.4.5 Church Disaffection Scale.....                   | 37 |
| 4. RESULTS.....  | 41 |
| 4.1 Demographic Characteristics.....                   | 41 |
| 4.2 Multivariate Analysis.....                         | 47 |
| 5. CONCLUSION.....                                     | 57 |
| 5.1 Theoretical Evaluation.....                        | 57 |

|  |    |
|--|----|
| 5.2 Concluding Remarks .....                 | 65 |
| Appendix                                     |    |
| A. THE SURVEY .....                          | 68 |
| B. INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR BELTANE 1997 ..... | 78 |
| REFERENCES .....                             | 80 |
| BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION.....                | 87 |



## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

| Figure   | Page |
|--|------|
| 3.1 Map of the Research Setting .....                          | 29   |
| 3.2 Percentage of Social Participation in Pagan Holidays ..... | 33   |
| 3.3 Graph of Participation Scale with Normal Curve .....       | 34   |
| 3.4 Graph of Family Scale with Normal Curve .....              | 35   |
| 3.5 Graph of Reference Group Scale with Normal Curve .....     | 36   |
| 3.6 Graph of Prestige Scale with Normal Curve.....             | 37   |
| 3.7 Graph of Church Disaffection Scale with Normal Curve ..... | 38   |

## LIST OF TABLES

| Table   | Page |
|---|------|
| 3.1 Summary and Level of Measurement for Variables used in this Study .....   | 40   |
| 4.1 Social Characteristics of the Sample.....   | 41   |
| 4.2 Respondent’s Childhood Religious Affiliation.....   | 42   |
| 4.3 Comparison of Sex Between McGee, Pagan Census (2004),<br>Jorgenson and Russell (1999), Kirkpatrick (1986), Orion (1995),<br>and CMA (1996) .....                    | 44   |
| 4.4 Comparison of Age of Respondent Between McGee, Pagan<br>Census (2004), Reid (2001), and CMA (1996).....   | 45   |
| 4.5 Comparisons of Age of Respondent Between McGee and<br>Jorgenson and Russell (1999) .....  | 45   |
| 4.6 Correlations, Means, and Standard Deviations for Ratings<br>of Childhood Religious Affiliation, Church Disaffection,<br>Family Closeness, and Spiritual Guide ..... | 49   |
| 4.7 OLS Coefficients for Regression of Rating Childhood Religious<br>Affiliation on Selected Independent Variables .....  | 50   |
| 4.8 Correlations, Means, and Standard Deviations for Community<br>Member, Church Disaffection, Social Support, and Participation.....                                   | 52   |
| 4.9 OLS Coefficients for Regression of Community Member on<br>Selected Independent Variables .....  | 53   |
| 4.10 Correlations, Means, and Standard Deviations for Not Disclosing,<br>Occupational Prestige, Openly Expressing, External Influences,<br>and Negative Reaction .....  | 53   |
| 4.11 OLS Coefficients for Regression of Not Disclosing on Selected<br>Independent Variables.....  | 55   |

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Statement of the Problem

Paganism is a coalition of loosely organized associations brought together by a common religious ideology and a common adversary. While Paganism is drawn from many different faiths, members share a belief that incorporates the immanence of Deity, that is, a subjective understanding of Deity as a part of nature. This belief runs counter to traditional Judeo-Christian ideologies and it is the threat of conflict with traditional religious authorities that binds the various Pagan faiths together into a distinct coalition (Coser 1956; Becker 1973). By relying on survey data collected on April 9-12, 1996 and personal interviews collected on October 10-13, 1996, this study uses the concepts of **elective affinity**<sup>1</sup>, strain, social bonds, and differential association to help explain

---

<sup>1</sup> The term elective affinity was developed in the field of chemistry by Tobern Olof Bergman (1785) to explain the attraction or pull between chemical elements.

Suppose  $A$  to be a substance for which other heterogeneous substances  $a$ ,  $b$ , and  $c$  have an attraction; suppose, further,  $A$ , combined with  $c$  to saturation, (this union I shall call  $Ac$ ), should, upon the addition of  $b$ , tend to unite with it to the exclusion of  $c$ ,  $A$  is then said to attract  $b$  more strongly than  $c$ , or to have a stronger elective attraction for it; lastly, let the union of  $Ab$ , on the addition of  $a$ , be broken, let  $b$  be rejected, and  $a$  chosen in its place, it will follow, that  $a$  exceeds  $b$  in attractive power, and we shall have a series,  $a$ ,  $b$ ,  $c$ , in respect of efficacy. What I here call attraction others denominate affinity... (Bergman 1785: 6-7)

The term was adopted as a metaphor for social behavior by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe in Elective Affinity (1809), a novel describing conflicts between commitment

acceptance and participation in Pagan spiritualism. Relevant survey and interview data will be included as supporting material throughout this thesis. This study identifies three characteristics associated with retrospective positive ratings of childhood religious affiliation (church disaffection, family closeness, and membership role); three characteristics associated with feelings of belonging to the Pagan community (church disaffection, social support, and participation); and finally examines a member's disclosure of his/her Pagan identity as being a function of occupational prestige, weighing possible costs of negative sanctions, belief in the value of openly expressing one's identity, and self-efficacy.

## 1.2 Major Divisions of the Study

### *1.2.1 Paganism, Its Organization, and Theoretical Perspective*

The second chapter of this thesis explains the history of the Pagan movement as well as the ideology of the Wiccan tradition. This includes a description of norms and values and an explanation of their religious holidays. Further, Chapter 2 attributes the rise of the Pagan movement to the mostly western idea of religious freedom and religious marketplace (i.e., structural conduciveness) and to the tension between spirituality as a value or goal and the means to achieve spiritual fulfillment (i.e., strain).

---

and passion. Max Weber adopted the term from Goethe and used it in The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (2002) to explain how specific religious beliefs are more likely to result in certain types of economic relationships.

...the virtues cultivated by Calvinism appear to stand in a relationship of greater elective affinity to the restrained, strict, and active posture of capitalist employers of the middle class (Weber 2002:89).

Following the discussion of Pagan history and organization, a synthesis of three competing theoretical models will be presented which has the potential to explain motivation and participation in Paganism. One model, developed by Travis Hirschi (1969), proposes that participation in deviant activities is the result of weakened social bonds. The second theoretical model, developed by Edwin Sutherland (1939) posits that participation in deviant activities is a result of differential association based on learning deviant definitions in small social groups. Lastly, Robert Merton's (1938) strain model proposes individual adaptations to institutional norms and values. Several hypotheses are developed from each theoretical model and presented for testing.

### *1.2.2 Data Collection*

Chapter 3 discusses the methods used to collect data for this thesis. Respondents were interviewed and surveyed on specific identity claims, i.e., being related to Wicca and identifying as a Spiritual Guide or member within the Pagan "community." This data includes demographic characteristics, levels of participation, attitudes about social institutions, membership in a Pagan "community," and acceptance of a Pagan identity.

### *1.2.3 Analysis of Data*

Chapter 4 discusses the results of three regression analyses related to motivation to join Paganism, acceptance of a Pagan identity, and openness about that identity. A Pagan identity will be determined by a participant's belief in a Pagan "community" which is a function of disaffection with traditional religious institutions, social support, and participation in Pagan events. The Pagan identity is seen as the motivation for

openly displaying affiliation. However, the choice to be open about this identity is moderated by assessments of possible societal reactions.

#### *1.2.4 Conclusion*

Chapter 5 proposes a synthesis of the theories described in Chapter 2 and the statistical results discussed in Chapter 4. Following this theoretical explanation and application are suggestions for future research in the area of alternative spiritual orientations.

## CHAPTER 2

### PAGANISM AND ITS ORGANIZATION

#### 2.1 Introduction

In order to adequately communicate the social boundaries of Paganism, several concepts need to be explicitly defined in advance of supporting arguments. For our purposes, the organizational concepts of **voluntary association** and **social movement** will be used interchangeably to refer to *a coalition that is actively organized by at least one common feature (i.e., belief); progressing towards some common goal (e.g., self-actualization); and, must struggle against at least one common rival* (Coser 1956; Weber 1966).<sup>2</sup> Due to different religious ideologies, the relationship between traditional Judeo-Christian organizations and Paganism is typically adversarial with each attempting to discredit the legitimacy of the other. Therefore, **deviance** and **deviant** *are negative terms attributed to socially weak groups (i.e., Paganism) by groups with more social power (i.e., traditional religious authority) and will always imply a conflict between groups*. The uses of these terms are to *prevent* socially weak groups from *obtaining* legitimacy. Further, weaker groups in a conflict can only directly attempt to discredit the *existing legitimacy* of more powerful groups. **Power** is *the ability of one*

---

<sup>2</sup> The relationship need not be violent. Flexible systems with segmental involvement will be less likely to result in intra-group conflict as informal sanctioning tends to be adequate in re-aligning an actor. Inter-group conflict in a flexible system will generally be adversarial. However, with increasing rigidity and personality involvement in a group, the greater the degree of animosity and possible violence between groups (Coser 1956).

*social group to assure the execution of their will despite opposition* (Weber 1966). While power and legitimacy are positively related, viability of a valid legitimate order is greatly increased by elements other than power, such as, obligation based on belief or custom (Weber 1966). Lastly, sociological research has historically tended to *link religion and church as a single concept* which has been called “**church religion**” (Besecke 2005; Luckmann 1967). Luckmann (1967:27) states that “once the sociology of religion uncritically takes it for granted that church and religion are identical it blinds itself to its most relevant problem.” By this he means that, traditionally, the sociological study of religion “fails to concern itself with the most important, essentially religious, aspect of the location of the individual in society” (Luckmann 1967:27). The problem with conceptually linking religion and its organizational expression results in the following: If a social pattern appears to be religious in nature but does not easily fit into the organizational structures of church, sect, or cult, then either a) it is not a religion at all, b) we must force it into one of the organizational structures (usually cult) or c) the social pattern is placed in some residual category and referred to with terms like privatized, secularized<sup>3</sup>, mysticism, and individualism. For our purposes, **religion** and **spirituality** will be used interchangeably to refer to a *belief in a sentient entity beyond the realm of human experience who interacts with humanity through that which they*

---

<sup>3</sup> Secularization should not be confused with rationality (Rationalität) as proposed by Weber (1966). It is used here as understood by Luckmann (1967:23): “Secularization is typically regarded as a process of religious pathology to be measured by the shrinking reach of the churches.”



*can experience*. Therefore, religion and spirituality will be conceptually distinct from any type of organizational form.

## 2.2 Organizational Boundaries

Recent research tends to classify Paganism as a new religious movement (Jencson 1989; Hutton 1991; Hutton 2000; York 1995). Modern day Paganism's origins and historical progress appears to have an **inner affinity**<sup>4</sup> with spiritualism, the New Age Movement, civil rights movements (e.g., feminism) and the occult with their primary membership largely comprised of the disenchanted white middle class (Bednarowski 1992; Carden 1978; Marty 1970; Nelson 1969; Whitehead 1974). In fact, Wuthnow (1998:60) proposes that "for many people, these new ways of thinking about spiritual freedom can be traced to the civil rights movement." Despite the similarities, Paganism has evolved into a distinct and independent mode of spiritual expression. For example, Ludeke (1989) indicates that the feminist movement (which grew out of the 1960s civil rights movement) and the Pagan movement are indeed two distinct movements even though they address similar problematic areas. Specifically, members

---

<sup>4</sup> The term, as used by Weber, can be defined as

...an internal connection between two different phenomena rooted in a shared feature and/or a clear historical linkage (for example between certain religious beliefs and a vocational ethic). The causal relationship is not strong enough to be designated "determining." (Kalberg 2002: lxxvii)

The term is used in this research to draw attention to the possibility that there is a common causal element between Paganism, spiritualism, the New Age Movement, and the Civil Rights Movement. Even though spiritualism is an historical antecedent to Paganism, the New Age Movement, and the Civil Rights Movement, it could be proposed that there is a more distant heritage. For example, capitalism could be at least causally sufficient for the rise of these various world views.

of both movements are brought together by their grievances regarding male domination in Judeo-Christian religions. Women are attracted to Pagan philosophy due to its holistic belief in environmentalism, equal rights, and self-help (Bednarowski 1983; Carden 1978; Feher 1992; Ludeke 1989; Neitz 1995). Likewise, Michael York (2001) proposes that while the New Age movement and Paganism are similar and often grouped together under one rubric, they are indeed two different world views.

Paganism itself subscribes to an immanent understanding of the godhead or divine, which allows—or even centralizes—the natural world as manifest sacrality. New Age, on the other hand, descends from a competing theological perspective, namely, a Gnostic/Theosophical and New Thought Tradition via the American Metaphysical Tradition which views nature as an obscuring obstacle to hidden spiritual truth. The physical world becomes, accordingly, either an illusion or at least something of secondary and lesser importance (York 2001: 366).

Because of the New Age belief in higher consciousness and, in particular, guided spiritual quests, there is an increased likelihood of producing self-contained social units with rigid boundaries, authoritarian leadership and isolationist tendencies that typically and these units typically require the total commitment of members (Bromley, Shupe, and Busching 1981; Campbell 1972; Catton 1968; Cohen 1964; Harper 1982). The organizational style of these types of social units has been termed cult or sect and their nature was discussed by Cohen (1964) as follows.

Groups engaged in continued struggle with the outside tend to be intolerant within. They are unlikely to tolerate more than limited departures from the group unity. Such groups tend to assume a sect-like character: They select membership in terms of special characteristics and so tend to be limited in size, and they lay claim to the total personality involvement of their members (Cohen 1964:103).

On the other hand, because Pagans locate spirituality as the responsibility of the individual, closed social units dominated by a single spiritual leader are less likely to

occur. The Pagan belief system is an open and flexible knowledge system and therefore is quite different from the rigid and closed systems formed by cults. Pagans, on the other hand, tend to maintain social bonds as is evident in the sample used for this study (with an average of five years on the job and a median income of \$30,384). Further, as will be discussed later, the respondents in this study maintain ties with their families of origin. Therefore, terms such as cult or sect do not seem to apply to Paganism (Nelson 1969).

Even though this movement appears loose and porous, there is a sense of solidarity and community which derives from collective and personal identity construction (Foote 1951; Jorgensen 1996; Hunt, Scott, Benford and Snow 1994; Wuthnow 1998). The Pagan belief system is sufficiently flexible to accommodate belief and explanation of auras, palm reading, spirits, faith-healing, mysticism, psychic reading, talking to the dead, and so forth while still offering a its own more comprehensive world view (Donahue 1993; Simmons 1964; Whitehead 1974). Further, while the movement consists of many diverse traditions with varying belief systems, they share several common values and generalized beliefs which serve to create a single collective identity known as Paganism. Lastly, personal and collective solidarity and community result from the framing of experiences like harassment and intolerance into a narrative discourse that establishes definite antagonists or out-groups (Becker 1973; Cohen 1964).

### 2.3 Institutional Causation

While the Pagan movement itself is relatively new, a general progression of religious symbolism as noted by Max Weber (2002) and reiterated by Robert Bellah (1964) provided structural conduciveness for the rise of this new and modern form of spiritual symbolism (Kalberg 2002; Melucci 1985). In fact, adherents seem to be reacting to what Max Weber noted as world-rejecting religious belief which he termed disenchantment. This progressive change in mankind's relationship with nature (and the supernatural) can also be viewed as a gradual adaptation in value orientation from symbiotic to domination as described by Florence Kluckhohn (1961). Disenchantment and rationalization of modern life and knowledge have resulted in a continuing objectification of the environment, scientific detachment, and removal of emotion from religion thereby alienating the human actor from nature and himself or herself in a type of spiritual alienation. Pagans appear to be compensating for these historical processes by attempting to synthesize earlier religious symbolisms, such as monism, into a modern spiritual orientation (Bloch 1997). With the adoption of a monistic world view, there is no longer a distinction between the empirical world and a transcendent spiritual universe. Such a world view also dissolves any distinction between the sacred and profane as all becomes sacred in a single, holistic, and united existence (Watzke 1969).

However, even with the adoption of a spiritual world view, Pagans do not appear to reject scientific and rational knowledge. Pagans tend to accept the scientific method as a valid mode of discovery that can coexist with spirituality. In fact, the Pagan belief system is flexible enough to continually integrate scientific discovery much like

the constant revision of knowledge in the scientific community. The scientific and the spiritual coexist in that those things left unexplained by science are completed with spiritual understanding. The only criticism that Pagans might have of scientific advancement is the inherent objectification and domination of the natural world.

Paganism is a loosely-coupled organization based on segmental participation in which adherents are allowed to develop distinct spiritual beliefs (i.e., autonomy) as well as strong community ties (Bellah 1964; Bloch 1998; Cohen 1964). Unlike groups directly associated with the New Age Movement, Pagan organizations do not proselytize or encourage the acceptance of their belief system (Jencson 1989; Hutton 1991; Hutton 2000; York 1995). Paganism is a consumer's religious choice made possible in a social system that values freedom of religion. Such a social system can develop and provide direct access to an open spiritual market place (Besecke 2005; Roof 1999). This results in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century ideal of understanding spirituality through the self because "the self must be refashioned in a way that gives it authority to make [spiritual] decisions" (Wuthnow 1998:147). However, information about the many traditions within this spiritual movement is readily available to anyone interested. While today one can find Pagan books in mainstream outlets like Barnes and Noble, publishers originally utilized existing New Age distribution networks. In fact, Howell (1997:147) refers to New Age bookstores as "nodes for the 'do it yourself' practitioners and informal spiritual groups." New Age bookstores still serve as outlets for Pagan magazines, journals and books as well as small group and individual newsletters. The dissemination of this information is not intended to serve as dogma nor is it necessarily

designed to improve the position or perception of the movement as a whole. Instead, the information is intended for self-directed learning for those individuals embarking on a spiritual path and can be seen as a “conversation about transcendent meaning” (Besecke 2005:181; Courtenay, Merriam, and Baumgartner 2003).

#### 2.4 Pagan History

The history of the Pagan movement is relatively easy to trace. Its public presence can be attributed to the replacement of England's Witchcraft Act of 1736 (which itself was lenient towards mystical practices) with the Fraudulent Mediums Act in 1951. This change was due to influences brewing decades before this legislative decision and the precipitating event was the prosecution of Helen Duncan in 1944 under the old statute of 1736 (Hutton 1997). The Fraudulent Mediums Act established a fine for anyone convicted of *purposefully* deceiving a consumer by using magical practices and given the difficulty of proving intent beyond reasonable doubt, this code change allowed magical practitioners to come out of the “broom-closet.”

The 1951 legal statute change can be seen as the result of interest in religious orientations of past societies. For example, in 1921, Margaret Murray published Witch Cult in Western Europe followed in 1933 by God of the Witches. Claiming to be an anthropologist, Murray believed she had found one of a few viable religious organizational forms dating into the pre-Christian era and, indeed, believed it to date 25,000 years into Paleolithic times (Buckland 1995; Kelly 1992). She further believed she was able to reconstruct the specific nature and organization of small social units or

"covens" which she had found in England. This description included roles and role relationships, the specific nature of worship, and even the use of sacrifices.

It is generally accepted that Gerald Gardner, either along with or initiated by Dorothy Clutterbuck, reflected or recreated Murray's depiction of the pre-Christian religion. However, after his death, Gardner's notes and papers were examined and it was determined that his was less of a recreation of Murray's Celtic traditions than a collage of ritualistic belief systems from Malaysia and Asia as well as influences from the ideology of the Freemasons and Aleister Crowley. However, despite skepticism about the historical roots of Paganism, Gardner stimulated and is credited with the rise of a new form of religious expression—that is, twentieth century witchcraft or Paganism.

Gardner joined or formed, again depending on the source, the coven called the Corona Fellowship of Rosicrucians in 1939 in New Forest, England at which time Dorothy Clutterbuck held the esteemed position of High Priestess (Buckland 1995; Kelly 1992). In 1949 he wrote High Magic's Aid which was published as a novel in order to circumvent the anti-witchcraft laws, but, in fact, this book described the practices of his coven. Shortly after the repeal of England's last anti-witchcraft laws, Gardner began publishing books about witchcraft such as Witchcraft Today (1959) and The Meaning of Witchcraft (1954).

Gerald Gardner's influence was introduced to the United States by one of his students, Raymond Buckland. Buckland's attraction to the movement began at an early age. He grew up marginalized in that he was raised in the Church of England but his

father was a gypsy. Further, his uncle was an avid reader of spiritualist books and introduced Buckland to Margaret Murray's God of the Witches (1933). Several years after reading Murray, Buckland read Gardner's Witchcraft Today (1954). The book, having intrigued him, Buckland wrote to Gardner and they established a close friendship which culminated in Buckland's (and his wife, Lady Rowen) induction into Gardner's Coven around 1962.

Moving to America, Buckland established the New York Coven and, in 1966, opened a museum dedicated to witchcraft. This was a manifestation of Buckland's efforts to make witchcraft more visible and dispel many misconceptions. To this day, Buckland calls for greater understanding and tolerance for witchcraft. He has written numerous books such as A Pocket Guide to the Supernatural (1969), Buckland's Complete Book of Witchcraft (1995), and Witchcraft from the Inside (1995). He is no longer associated with the Gardnerian tradition as he has formed his own tradition known as Seax-Wica which is said to have as many as 4,000 members (Melton 1991).

Gardner and Buckland are the driving force behind the tradition within Paganism known as Wicca. One might think of the general makeup of the Pagan Movement in the following way: All Wiccans are Pagan but not all Pagans are Wiccan. There are, indeed, many traditions within the movement itself. In fact, in interviewing over 200 Pagans in previous research, the tabulated responses indicated over 40 different paths. While all traditions tend to share the general beliefs previously described, each maintains tradition specific rituals, holidays, beliefs, values and vocabularies of motive resulting in a fairly heterogeneous coalition (Coser 1956).



While it appears that there is no pre-Christian religious pedigree, it is clear that members of this association use many diverse pre-Christian beliefs and artifacts to solidify their own modern belief system and, possibly more important, that the claim of a pre-Christian origin is used to legitimize individual and organizational identities. This legitimization implies that since ancient Paganism existed before Christianity and was subsequently oppressed by Christianity, it has the same rights as Christianity if not a greater religious value. Further, members use persecution stories or atrocity tales in a type of moral, emotional, and spiritual capital exchange. Atrocity tales are not only involved in a type of capital exchange, they also serve as a method of socialization and to strengthen group cohesion because an association “defines itself by struggling with other groups” (Coser 1956:87).

Wicca is the most common form of Paganism, a group of modern Earth religions which borrow and adapt from pre-Christian Pagan religions, sometimes with additions from contemporary religious thinkers (Covenant of the Goddess pamphlet).

## 2.5 Pagan Ideology

### *2.5.1 Values and Beliefs*

The Wiccan belief system is based on the duality and immanence of divinity. That is, it is a belief and deep respect for the feminine in nature which is honored and symbolized by the moon and the masculine, honored and symbolized by the sun. It is through this respect for the feminine and masculine in nature that participants are connected to nature’s rhythm.

The Wiccan ethical code is made of two main tenets. The first tenet is ‘and hurt none, do as you will’. This applies not only to actions towards other people and nature,

but to oneself as well. This ethical standard places the determination of moral or immoral actions on the individual as opposed to external forces and affords adherents to its philosophy a degree of leniency. However, this code of conduct is backed by sanctions. Specifically, it is backed by the “law of threes.” This belief states that anything an actor does, either in accordance with or in violation of the Wiccan tenet, will be returned on the actor threefold.

The second tenet is known as ‘in perfect love and in perfect trust.’ While this tenet is generally a taken-for-granted expectation, its violations can bring about open discussion. In fact, during a formal group event and subsequent meeting in 1995, heated discussion erupted around the perceived violation of the tenet. The interaction was captured in the researcher’s field notes as follows.

While at the final business meeting on Sunday, there was a debate regarding the new rule excluding animals from the gathering. The reasons for the new rule were not clear but the reason for the new debate seemed to center around a female who brought her parrot to the gathering even though she knew of the pet ban. She had to leave her pet at the front gate during her stay. Having stated her grievances regarding the events a second female stood up and said the following-- ‘I understand you are upset...but to have brought [your bird] even though you knew of the pet ban violates my expectation of ‘in perfect love and in perfect trust.’ (Field observations 1995)

This tenet is a direct reaction within the Pagan community to their perception of the current state or nature of society. The nature of society is perceived as that of an increasing number of statutes which take the place of otherwise taken-for-granted expectations. It has been hypothesized by Robert Park (1967) that as the number of laws in a given society increase, the security of its individual members decrease. Park’s

proposition seems to reflect Pagan beliefs as is exemplified in the following newsletter excerpt.

Whatever happened to “perfect love and perfect trust?” These aren’t just words we spout to make ourselves feel good about each other.

We pride ourselves in being Pagan. To most of us, the word reflects a lifestyle strong in values. These values include honor, dignity, integrity, reverence for all life, respect for all paths, and commitment. Listen up, folks: these values are slipping away! So, what are we to do? Create more rules? We already have too many! (Moondragon 1996).

Normative expectations help give human interaction a sense of predictability and assists in developing trust among participants. When normative expectations are violated, statutes regarding human interaction are created thereby calling into question a basic trust in human nature. This produces a state of alienation, or in Park’s (1967) conception, a lack of security for the individual members of society. However, given the segmental nature of participation in Paganism

...conflict is less likely to be disruptive. Such groups are likely to experience a multiplicity of conflicts. This in itself tends to constitute a check against the breakdown of consensus: The energies of group members are mobilized in many directions and hence will not concentrate on one conflict cutting through the group (Coser 1956: 153).

Conflict as it occurs inside coalitions of segmentally involved members serves as more of an integrative function by reinforcing existing normative expectations or by creating new norms. Conflict can be seen as a method of socialization as it is “an essential element in group formation and the persistence of group life” (Coser 1956:31).

### *2.5.2 Holidays*

Pagans celebrate eight Sabbats which include four agricultural markers and four solar festivals based on two solstices and two equinoxes. The Sabbats are generally a

celebration to honor the masculine in divinity which is often referred to as “god.” The feminine in divinity (“goddess”) is honored through the celebration of Esbats, that is, full and new moon celebrations. Whereas Sabbats are generally large group holidays like family reunions, Esbats are small celebrations by individuals or covens (Murray 1921). More succinctly, the goddess is represented by the moon and honored during Esbats in small or private ceremonies and the god is represented by the sun and honored at large gatherings (Buckland 1995).

The eight Sabbats make up the Pagan wheel of the year and this year begins with the first day of winter. The year starts with the celebration of **Samhain**, or November Eve, on October 31. Samhain is the time of year when the veil between the past, present and future is the thinnest and because of this weakened temporal barrier, Samhain is a time to connect with loved ones who have passed onto another life. Field observations at Samhain 1995 indicated one way of symbolizing this interconnectedness of life and death; poles were arranged in a circle and each pole was tied to each of the others with a different colored string. Samhain is also the time of year to rid oneself of weaknesses or negatives. Symbolically, Samhain is associated with death, or better put, from this date until after Yule, the days grow shorter which symbolize the retreat of the god.

**Yule** is the winter solstice and falls on December 21. This is the year’s longest night and marks the time when the god is born from the goddess or, put another way, begins to reemerge. From this day forward, the days become longer and the god grows stronger. **Imbolc**, also known as February Eve or the Feast of Lights, is the time of year

when the goddess recovers from giving birth to the god during Yule (Buckland 1995). It is a festival of purification and a time when rituals are performed to help the god, or the sun, on his journey reclaim his dominance. **Ostara**, the spring solstice, occurs on March 21 when day and night are of equal time and therefore the god and goddess are equal. It is considered a time of rebirth and fertility or of awakening from a long winter sleep.

**Beltaine**, also known as May Eve, occurs on May 30. It is the festival of the young god venturing into manhood. The young god and maiden goddess join together to produce the living things found in nature. It is a time to celebrate fertility and pleasure as well as the interconnectedness of life. This connection of all life is generally symbolized by the creation of a maypole. Different colored and types of string, yarn, rope and streamer is connected to the top of a tall pole. The pole is then planted in the ground and each person takes hold of a single string while forming a large circle around the pole. Every other participant will then walk counter-clockwise weaving to the left and then right of a participant who is proceeding clockwise. This continues until the pole is covered from top to bottom with a patchwork of string representing the interconnectedness of life.

**Midsummer**, the Summer Solstice, occurs on June 21 and is considered the noon of the Pagan year. This is the longest day of the year and marks the time when nature is at its peak. It is a time to enjoy the bounty that was created by the union at Beltaine. **Lughnasadh**, or August eve, occurs on July 31 and is the time to harvest and give thanks to the god and goddess for the bounty they produced. **Mabon**, or the Autumn Equinox, occurs on September 21 and is, once again, a time when the day and

night, and therefore the god and goddess, are equal. It is the time of the second harvest and a time to give thanks to the god and goddess for providing enough bounty to last throughout the winter. The god begins to recede in preparation for Samhain as the days grow shorter.

## 2.6 Theoretical Orientation

### *2.6.1 Travis Hirschi's Social Bonds*

In 1969 Travis Hirschi proposed a social bonding theory which attempted to account for why members of society **do not** engage in deviant behavior. In other words, Hirschi's model assumes that human beings would engage in deviant behavior except for the existence of social bonds. He presented four elements of social bonds which include: commitment, attachment, involvement, and belief. **Commitment** refers to an actors "stake in conformity" such as a prestigious job. This "stake in conformity" refers to a calculation by all social actors regarding what they might lose if they engage in deviant activities. For example, homosexual military officers may choose not to disclose their sexual orientation for fear of being discharged and Pagans may not reveal their spiritual choice because of fear they might lose their job. Hirschi's second element of social bonds is **attachment** which refers to the emotional ties that an actor may have with conforming others. The stronger the emotional attachment with conforming others, the greater the fear of losing that attachment and, therefore, the less likely one will engage in deviant behavior. Examples of emotional attachments include parents, siblings, significant others, and friends. The third bond element is referred to as **involvement** which refers to the amount of time an actor spends in conventional or

acceptable activities and can include the amount of time one spends a week in a conventional job or in traditional relationships. Hirschi's fourth bond is **belief** which deals with an actor's belief in the morality of normative values (or, for Hirschi, law). In other words, if actors do not believe in the righteousness or validity of law, they are less likely to conform to the expected behavior dictated by those laws.

### *2.6.2 Edwin Sutherland's Differential Association*

In 1939 Edwin Sutherland attempted to explain deviant behavior as the result of learning processes. That is, all behavior is learned through interaction and communications with others in an association (i.e., social network). Such a perspective implies that human nature is tabula rasa or a "blank slate" that is filled through interaction with other social actors (and which could be erased and re-written). This process includes the learning of vocabularies of motive, rationalizations, generalized beliefs, attitudes, values, and techniques. Sutherland described four elements of associations including frequency, duration, priority, and intensity. **Frequency** refers to the number of times an actor engages with an association. An example of frequency would be the number of times an actor attends church in some defined time frame. The second element, **intensity**, refers to the strength of an actor's identity with a given association. **Priority** is the third element of Sutherland's differential association and refers to how early in life an actor is exposed to a particular association's world-view. The final element is **duration** or the amount of time an actor spends with role models in an association. Whereas the element of frequency dealt with the number of times an

actor might engage with a particular association, duration deals with the length of time one spends during each encounter.

### *2.6.3 Robert Merton's Strain Theory*

Robert Merton (1938, 1968) proposed a model of adaptation which attempts to locate the individual actor in a larger social structure. Merton's theory begins with the assumption that social actors would prefer to conform to societal expectations except in the presence of strain. **Strain** is seen as a disjunction between an actor's belief in culturally valued goals (i.e., an end) and the institutionalized means for achieving those goals. For Merton, the culturally desirable goal in American society is monetary success which implies that his model applies to competitively based systems such as capitalism. There are, then, socially prescribed means of obtaining material success such as education and working hard. It is the actor's belief or lack of belief in either the valued means or ends that create strain and, therefore, a frame of reference for individual action. Merton proposed five modes of adaptation including conformist, innovator, ritualism, retreatism, and rebellion. The **conformist** experiences no strain as he/she believes in both the socially acceptable means and goals in society. The **innovator** believes in the valued goals of society but not the means to attain them. The **ritualist** believes in the means prescribed by society but not the ends or goals. The **retreatist** rejects both the means and end values in society. Merton's final category is that of **rebellion**, referring to rejection of both the means and ends in a society and active attempts at replacing them with new means and goals. While Merton used his model to explain material success, the model can be used to explain the relationship between



individual actors and other valued goals and means. For our purposes, a valued goal in American society is spirituality and religion and valued means of achieving that goal are through traditional Judeo-Christian churches.

#### *2.6.4 A Synthesis*

While the theories of Hirschi, Sutherland, and Merton diverge in terms of human nature and motivation, it is possible to utilize all three theories in a comprehensive theoretical perspective. If an actor is experiencing some type of strain between valued goals and appropriate means, then identity claims and actions could be determined by the strength of bonds and the strength of differential associations. Robert Merton's (1938) theory of strain and modes of adaptation guides us to locate specific disjunctions between valued goals and institutionalized means. If a disjunction can be located such that Pagans do value spirituality but are disaffected from traditional religious institutions, then the Pagan mode of adaptation could be determined as innovative. This strain could be seen as a frame of reference for action and identity. If, then, Pagans are innovators, the area of inquiry involves determining the strength and type of bonds which might or might not allow an actor to participate in alternative means for attaining spiritual fulfillment. Further, if a Pagan is free to engage in alternative means, they must learn about those means through differential association.

### 2.7 Hypotheses

From the foregoing discussion, Social Bonds Theory directs hypotheses one through six and Differential Association Theory directs hypotheses seven through ten.

1. Disaffection from traditional religious affiliation is related to belief in a Pagan community; the more respondents are disaffected, the stronger their belief.
2. Disaffection from church is related to ratings of childhood religious affiliation; the more respondents are disaffected, the more negative their ratings.
3. Family closeness is related to ratings of childhood religious affiliation; the closer respondents are to their family, the more positive their ratings.
4. Occupational prestige is related to not disclosing a Pagan identity; the higher the occupational prestige, the less likely the respondent will be open about their identity.
5. Belief that external forces influence one's decisions is related to not disclosing one's identity; the stronger the belief in external forces the less likely the respondent will reveal his/her identity.
6. Negative reactions to previous displays of identity are related to not disclosing; respondents with previous negative reactions will be less likely to continue to reveal their Pagan identity.
7. Pagan social support is related to belief in a Pagan community; stronger social networks, result in stronger beliefs.
8. Being a spiritual guide is related to ratings of childhood religious affiliation; spiritual guides will be more positive regarding their childhood religious affiliations.
9. Participation in Pagan events is related to belief in a Pagan community; the greater the participation, the stronger the belief.

10. Belief in openly expressing a Pagan identity is related to not disclosing one's identity; the stronger the belief in expressing identity, the more likely the respondent will be open about his/her identity.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODS

#### 3.1 Data Collection

In pursuing the collection of data for this research project, several key decisions had to be made regarding research design. The most important of these decisions regarded Pagans being a hidden population due to the threat of harassment because of their religious choice. Regardless of personal experiences, the Pagan belief system utilizes the witch hunts of previous centuries as a type of atrocity tale. Due to the perceived persecution of non-Christians, many Pagans choose not to reveal their spiritual choice.

At the time of this study, little empirical research had been conducted or published on Paganism. Due to this deficiency, the initial method used was to conduct content analysis of popular Pagan literature and to carry out field research. There were several other considerations which made the initial use of field research highly attractive and applicable. Field research methods are appropriate for studying attitudes and behaviors which are best understood in a natural setting. They are also quite useful for topics that defy simple quantification, such as, the distribution of prestige within a group when the basis for social prestige is not known. Field research further allows the researcher to observe social processes or settings over a period of time. In fact, the researcher would be more inclined to recognize nuances that might go unnoticed when

using other research methods. When a previously unexplored phenomenon is the focus of new research, concepts must be derived and variables operationalized, and the obvious choice is to do so inductively.

Once field research is determined to be an appropriate research technique, an observational method is chosen based on conceptual, practical, and ethical concerns. For the initial study, it was determined that the role should be that of observer. That is, the researcher directly observes the activities of the individuals and groups being studied. This method was considered important because there are numerous workshops and rituals scheduled during the course of the Pagan gatherings and in order to get an accurate understanding of the processes involved, it was deemed important to observe those events firsthand. It would have been difficult if not impossible to discern the patterns which are discussed in this study without having personally observed the workshops and rituals. Initial field observation was scheduled and conducted during a Pagan organized event known as Samhain on October 14-15, 1995.

After completing this initial field research and analysis of Pagan literature, new design methods were employed. Based on knowledge obtained from the first expedition, both quantitative and qualitative methods would be developed in order to gain a fuller understanding of Paganism and its members. Correspondingly, data was subsequently collected during two organized holiday celebrations known as “gatherings” in the Pagan community. Both gatherings, which serve as the sampling frame, were organized and sponsored by The Council of Magickal Arts (CMA), a nonprofit Texas corporation founded in 1980 with approximately 1000 members.

Survey instruments were distributed and collected during the Beltane gathering of April 9-12, 1996. Later that same year during the Samhain gathering of October 10-13, personal interviews were conducted, recorded, and, later, transcribed. While the surveys are used to statistically test propositions in this study, the interviews are used to develop and substantiate the theoretical argument.

### 3.2 Research Setting

On April 9-12, 1996, in celebration of Beltane, 761 members of CMA gathered on a private 35 acre rural site known as recreation plantation which was located approximately 10 miles, or 25 minutes, from the nearest town. The site contained a 2-3 acre lower field which was flat and bare in the middle of which was a large fire known by the participants as “revel fire.” Most of the Pagans camped on this part of the property in order to be at the center of the activities. The remainder of the property was to the north and above the lower field (see Figure 3.1). This northern area extended for many acres and had many mesquite trees and other Texas brush which allowed attendees to establish campsites with more privacy and less noise. The area immediately overlooking the lower field was the established location for vendors to show and sell their merchandise. The restrooms and showers were to the west and facing the vendor area and also overlooked the main field.

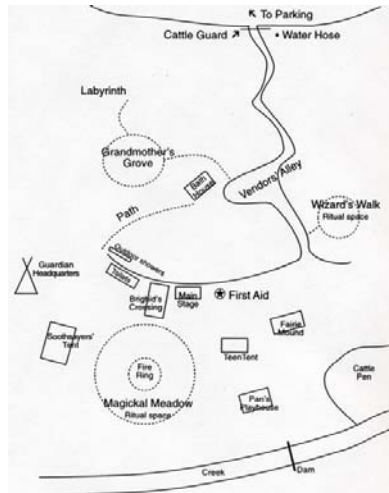


Figure 3.1 Map of the Research Setting

In terms of things to do and see, participants attended workshops, rituals, and seminars or shopped in the vendor area. For distribution and collection of surveys, the location with the best visibility and highest foot traffic was a section of the vendor area directly in front of the restrooms and showers. A card table and chairs were set up at that location and surveys and pencils were provided to respondents. This location posed a key problem in that some people might not be inclined to visit the vendor area. In an attempt to compensate for this bias, surveys were hand delivered to and collected from different camp sites throughout the lower field. In an interesting chain of events, several participants who noticed the survey taking place in the vendor area literally ran to the lower field to inform others who, in turn, immediately ran to the vendor area to take the survey.

### 3.3 Sampling

When confronted by a hidden population, new and unorthodox research methods must be developed and utilized (Heckathorn 1997). A major consideration in

terms of sampling Pagans is the fact that the population size is unknown and estimating population parameters is inaccurate with standard statistical methods unless one can draw a very large sample. Locating a single respondent, let alone finding such a large sample size, generally requires an intermediary due to the respondents' unwillingness to publicly announce their deviance.

Other than issues associated with studying a hidden population, the gathering selected for this study provided a limited sample of the voluntary association's membership. Given the size of the site and the number of working toilets and showers, CMA had to limit the number of participants to 750, or 75% of their total membership at that time. Given this constraint, there could have been some type of selectivity bias associated with the sample. That is, those who bought their tickets promptly may have different characteristics than those who attempted to buy their tickets late and were turned away. Further, traveling to the event required reliable transportation and a job which allowed the necessary time off work. Given all these issues, it is clear that the sampling method employed is convenience not random selection.

In sum, concerns with sampling method include the problem of sampling only those who attended the event as compared to those who did not attend and the specific nature of the data collection. The first calls into question generalizations which may be advanced regarding participants in the voluntary association (CMA) while the second deals with conclusions that might be drawn more generally about Paganism. This does not mean that studies of hidden populations should give up pursuit of a random sample and avoid all generalizations. In fact, in the case of these data, demographic



comparisons can be made with other published research studies on the Pagan movement that have larger sample sizes to evaluate representativeness.

For survey purposes, this study used attendees at the gathering as the sampling frame, from which a convenience sample of 220 persons, or 29% of the attendees, filled out questionnaires. Only those respondents who identified their belief system to be related to Wicca were kept in this study. As described earlier, Paganism has many traditions or “paths.” While all Pagan paths tend to share some common themes, each maintains its own specific rituals, holidays, beliefs, and values as well as its own inclusive communications network. Further, each tradition maintains a discernable boundary for identifying, classifying, and comparing itself with other Pagan traditions (Becker 1973). This fact became evident during the initial field observations where the researcher was able to locate over forty distinct Pagan traditions. Therefore, the survey for this study (see Appendix A) included a question asking the respondent if his or her belief system was related to Wicca (question 7). Only those who responded “yes” are included in this study. Therefore, this paper will utilize 138 cases, or 62.2%, of the original sample.

### 3.4 Variable Measurement

The survey instrument distributed during Beltane of 1996 consisted of 51 questions and statements with response categories ranging from open-ended to Likert scaling. It included questions regarding demographic characteristics such as age, education, gender, income, city of residence, and occupation. Further, the survey probed issues regarding self-efficacy, openness about a Pagan identity, reaction to that identity,

and attitudes towards the institutions of family, politics, religion, education, and economics (see Appendix A for the survey instrument).

The main variables in this study include six indices: Social participation in Paganism, closeness to family, reference group/social support, church disaffection, and occupational prestige.

### *3.4.1 Participation Scale*

The participation scale is based on nine questions regarding participation in social celebrations of Pagan holidays. Respondents were asked to identify whether they celebrated Pagan Esbats and Sabbats privately, with a small group (13 people or fewer), a large group of 14 or more, or if they do not celebrate a particular Pagan holiday. The questionnaire inquired about seven of the eight Sabbats (question 9) which include: Yule, Imbolc, Ostara, Midsummer, Lughnasadh, Mabon, and Samhain.<sup>5</sup> Responses to the seven holidays were then recoded to reflect solitary (value = 0) or social (value = 1) behavior and the resultant scale has a reliability alpha of .898. Survey question 8 asked the respondent to indicate the number of Esbats (i.e., full and new moons) they celebrate in a given year with a total possible score of 26. Question 8a then asked if they generally celebrate Esbats privately, with a small group (13 people or fewer), or with a large group (14 or more people). The ordinal scale for questions 8a (Esbats) was recoded to reflect solitary (value = 0) or social (value = 1) behavior. Figure 3.2 indicates the results.

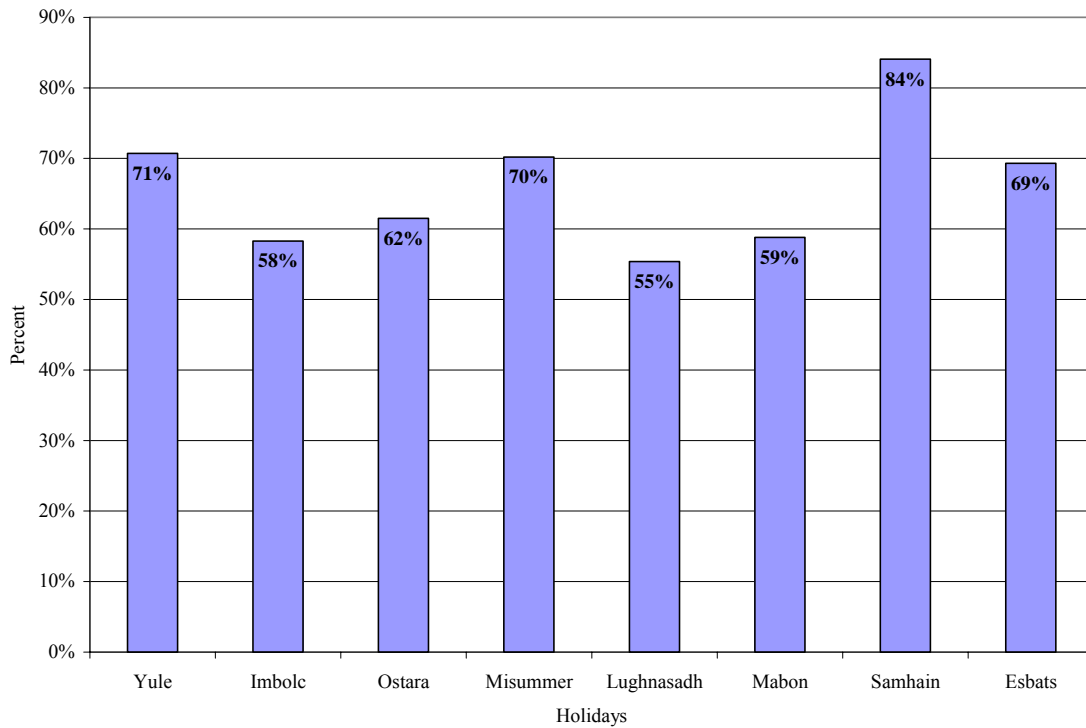


Figure 3.2 Percentage of Social Participation in Pagan Holidays

The Esbat solitary/social score was then multiplied by the number of Esbats the respondent indicated celebrating in question 8. Lastly, the Sabbats score and the Esbat score was added together to yield a total participation index which ranged between zero and thirty three. The index has a standard deviation of 8.59 and a mean of 11.82 (see Figure 1). The index curve is positively skewed (skewness = .525) and slightly platykurtic (kurtosis = -.386). The concurrent validity of this index was confirmed by correlating it with question three which asked respondents how often they participate in group activities (.610,  $p < .001$ ).

---

<sup>5</sup> The survey did not ask about Beltane because it was the gathering during which the

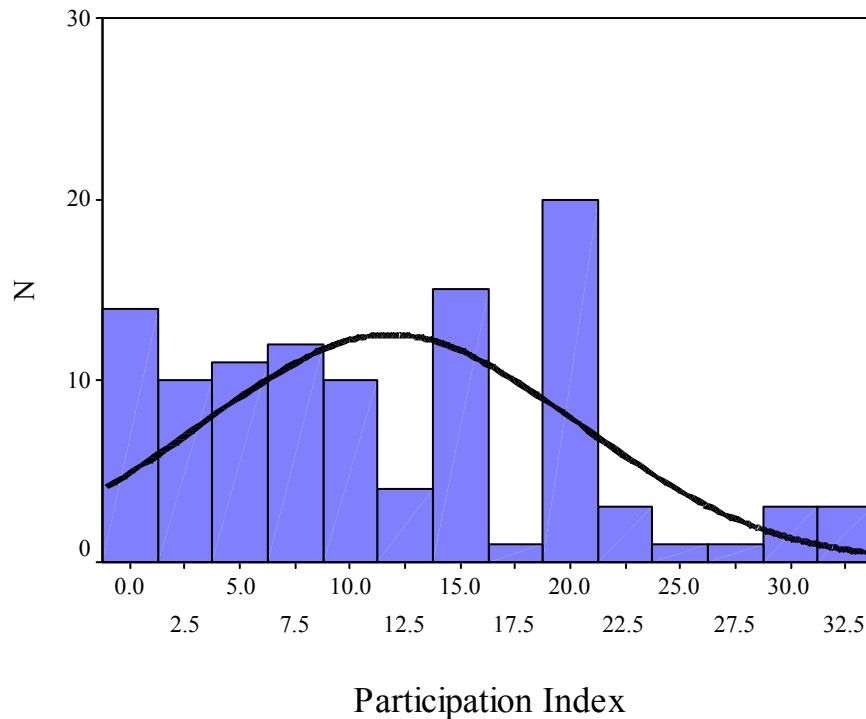


Figure 3.3 Graph of Participation Scale with Normal Curve

### 3.4.2 Family Closeness Scale

The closeness to family scale is a summated Likert scale derived from three questions probing issues regarding closeness to relatives, including mother, father, aunts, uncles, siblings, and cousins (alpha = .8531). The scale included questions 31 (“I am very close to my relatives”), 36 (“I enjoy getting together with my relatives”), and 40 (“I do not visit my relatives often”). For question forty the scoring was reversed. While the survey only presented five ordinal categories from which to choose (i.e., strongly disagree, somewhat disagree, undecided, somewhat agree, and strongly agree), many of the respondents chose two adjacent categories. Therefore, instead of a five

---

questionnaires were distributed.

point Likert scale, each question/response was coded on a nine point scale resulting in a score ranging from 3 to 27. The scale's distribution has a standard deviation of 3.83 with a mean of 16.75, and an alpha reliability score of .851. The data are negatively skewed (skewness =  $-.285$ ) with a platykurtic distribution (kurtosis =  $-.275$ ).

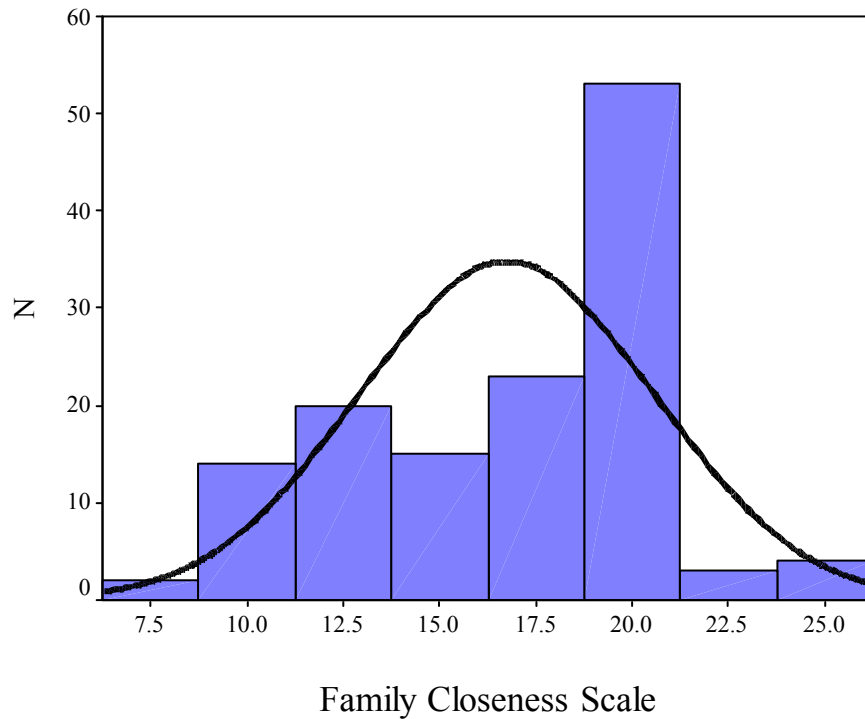


Figure 3.4 Graph of Family Scale with Normal Curve

### 3.4.3 Reference Group Scale

The reference group scale uses four questions that take into account belief in a Pagan community and Pagan friendship (alpha =  $.657$ ). The scale includes questions 30 (“My closest friends are Pagan”), 32 (“There is a Pagan community”), 34 (“I get most of my emotional support from my Pagan friends”), 39 (“I am a member of a Pagan community”), and 47 (“Others are more important than my Pagan friends”). The scoring

for question 47 was reversed. These questions were provided with Likert type response categories ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. It should be noted that these questions generally elicited positive (agreeable) responses producing a minimum score of 25 as opposed to a range of five to forty five. In terms of the distribution of the scale, it has mean of 39.04 and standard deviation of 5.25. The curve is negatively skewed (skewness =  $-.797$ ) and is slightly platykurtic (kurtosis =  $-.174$ ).

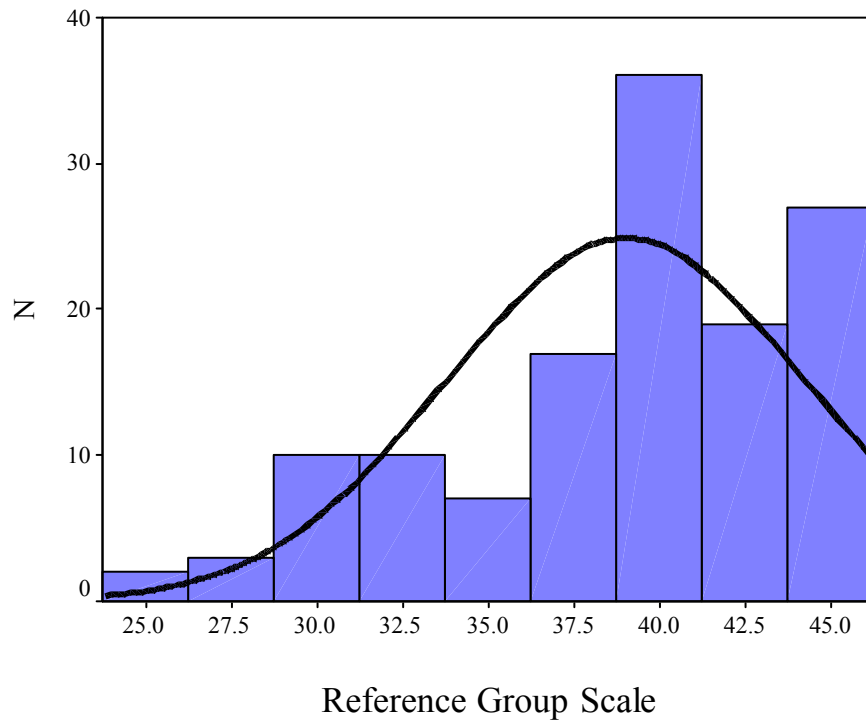


Figure 3.5 Graph of Reference Group Scale with Normal Curve

#### 3.4.4 Prestige Scale

Beltane respondents were asked to list their occupation which was subsequently categorized using the occupational codes and prestige scores developed by the National Opinion Research Center for the General Social Survey (Nakao, Hodge, and Treas

1990; Nakao and Treas 1990; Nakao and Treas 1992). The mean prestige score for the Beltane sample is 51.97 and a standard deviation of 13.75 and the curve was very negatively skewed (skewness = -.136) and is highly platykurtic (kurtosis = -1.02).

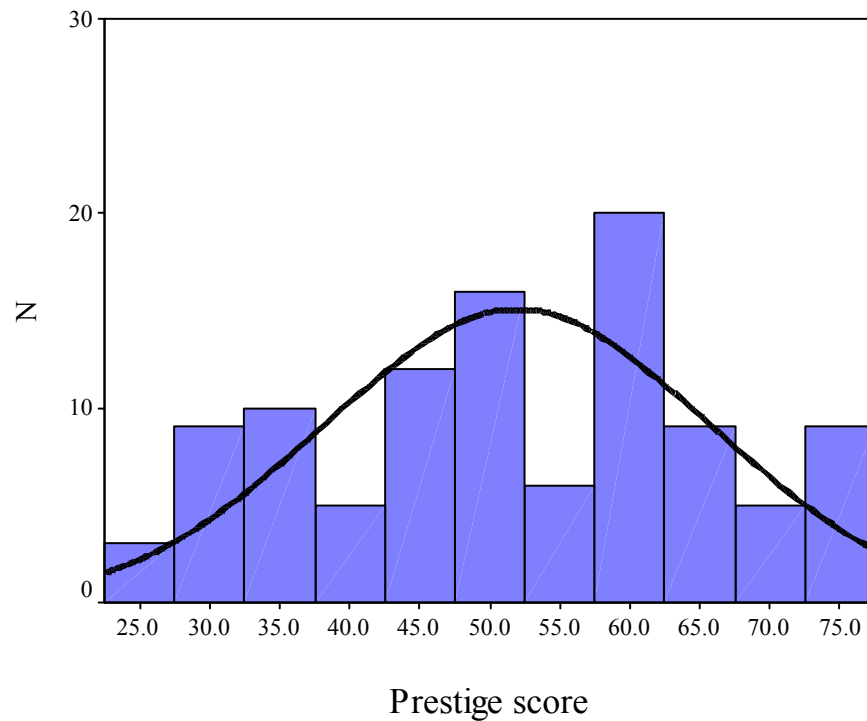


Figure 3.6 Graph of Prestige Scale with Normal Curve

#### 3.4.5 Church Disaffection Scale

Church disaffection is a scale derived from Likert scoring to two survey items and has a reliability alpha of .626. These items include question 38 (“Traditional churches neglect the spiritual needs of individuals”) and question 43 (“Traditional churches are too repressive and rigid”). The distribution has a standard deviation of 3.36 and a mean of 14.27. The curve is negatively skewed (skewness = -.694) and platykurtic (kurtosis = -.408). The concurrent validity of the church disaffection scale was

confirmed (.336,  $p < .001$ ) by correlating it with question 10a (“How would you rate your experience with your childhood religious affiliation”).

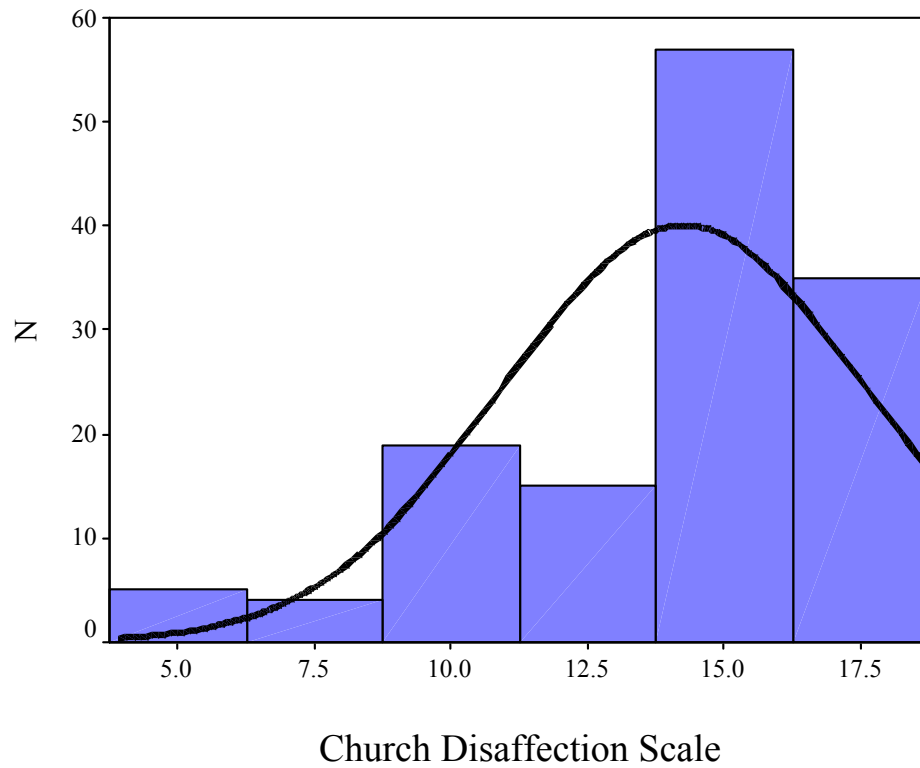


Figure 3.7 Graph of Church Disaffection Scale with Normal Curve

The variables for this study are summarized in Table 3.2 below.



Table 3.1 Summary and Level of Measurement for Variables in this Study

| Variable Name                | Question Number | Variable Summary                                    | Level of Measurement |
|------------------------------|-----------------|---|----------------------|
| <b>Spiritualism</b>          | 1               | Importance of spiritualism                          | Ordinal              |
| <b>Membership Role</b>       | 2               | Membership role of respondent                       | Nominal              |
| <b>Group Events</b>          | 3               | Participation in group activities                   | Ordinal              |
| <b>Publications</b>          | 4               | Receiving Pagan publications                        | Nominal              |
| <b>Organizations</b>         | 5, 5a           | Membership in Pagan organizations                   | Interval             |
| <b>Display</b>               | 6               | Engage in public displays                           | Nominal              |
| <b>Negative Reactions</b>    | 6a              | Negative reactions to display                       | Nominal              |
| <b>Negative Effect</b>       | 6b              | Effect of reactions                                 | Nominal              |
| <b>Participation</b>         | 8, 8a, 9        | Social behavior in the community.                   | Interval             |
| <b>Religious Affiliation</b> | 10              | Respondent's childhood religious affiliation.       | Nominal              |
| <b>Rate Affiliation</b>      | 10a             | Respondent's rating of their childhood affiliation. | Ordinal              |
| <b>Age</b>                   | 11              | Respondent's age                                    | Interval             |
| <b>Sex</b>                   | 12              | Respondent's biological sex                         | Nominal              |

*Table 3.1 Continued*

|                               |                |   |          |
|-------------------------------|----------------|---|----------|
| <b>Marital Status</b>         | 14             | Respondent's marital status             | Nominal  |
| <b>Children</b>               | 15             | Number of children                      | Interval |
| <b>Education</b>              | 16             | Respondent's educational level          | Ordinal  |
| <b>Rate School</b>            | 16a            | Respondent's rating of their school     | Ordinal  |
| <b>Voluntary Associations</b> | 21, 21a        | Number of voluntary associations        | Interval |
| <b>Occupational</b>           | 22             | Respondent's occupation                 | Nominal  |
| <b>Occupational Prestige</b>  |                | Prestige of occupation                  | Interval |
| <b>Income</b>                 | 24             | Respondent's income                     | Ordinal  |
| <b>Family Closeness</b>       | 31, 36, 40     | Respondent's closeness to family        | Interval |
| <b>College Disaffection</b>   | 37, 45         | Attitudes towards colleges              | Interval |
| <b>Reference Group</b>        | 30, 32, 39, 47 | Respondent's reference group            | Interval |
| <b>Church Disaffection</b>    | 38, 43         | Attitudes towards traditional churches. | Ordinal  |

---

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

#### 4.1 Demographic Characteristics

The social characteristics of the respondents for this study are summarized in Table 4.1 and include sex, age, marital status, number of children, educational level, prestige, and income. Further, the respondent's childhood religious affiliation is presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.1 Social Characteristics of the Sample

| <u>Sex (N=136)</u>                    | <u>Percent</u> | <u>Number of Children (N=137)</u> | <u>Percent</u> |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------------------------|----------------|
| Male                                  | 47.8%          | None                              | 64.2%          |
| Female                                | 52.2%          | One                               | 19.0%          |
|                                       |                | Two                               | 10.9%          |
| Mean age 33.6                         |                | Three or more                     | 5.8%           |
| <u>Marital Status (N=138)</u>         |                | <u>Income (N=135)</u>             |                |
| Single (never married)                | 20.3%          | Didn't disclose                   | 14.8%          |
| Single, living with SO                | 16.7%          | Under \$14,999                    | 23.0%          |
| Married                               | 47.1%          | \$15,000-\$24,999                 | 17.8%          |
| Divorced                              | 15.9%          | \$25,000-\$34,999                 | 19.3%          |
|                                       |                | \$35,000-\$44,999                 | 11.1%          |
|                                       |                | \$45,000-\$54,999                 | 3.7%           |
| <u>Educational Level (N=138)</u>      |                | \$55,000-\$64,999                 | 3.7%           |
| High School or GED                    | 4.3%           | Over \$65,000                     | 6.7%           |
| Some College                          | 19.6%          |                                   |                |
| Two years of College                  | 29.0%          | Median Income \$30,384            |                |
| Four years of college                 | 32.6%          | Average Prestige 52               |                |
| Advanced Degree                       | 14.5%          |                                   |                |
| Respondent's median educational level |                | Two years of College              |                |
| Father's median educational level     |                | Four years of College             |                |
| Mother's median educational level     |                | Some College                      |                |

Table 4.2 Respondent's Childhood Religious Affiliation (N=136)

| <u>Affiliation</u> | <u>Percent</u> | <u>Affiliation</u>              | <u>Percent</u> |
|--------------------|----------------|---------------------------------|----------------|
| Roman Catholic     | 21.3%          | Protestant (total) <sup>6</sup> | 46.3%          |
| Unitarian          | 5.1%           | Church of Christ                | 3.3%           |
| Jewish             | 2.9%           | Baptist                         | 26.2%          |
| Latter-Day Saints  | 1.4%           | Episcopal                       | 8.2%           |
| Pagan              | 5.1%           | Lutheran                        | 11.5%          |
| No affiliation     | 13.0%          | Methodist                       | 22.9%          |
| Other              | 5.1%           | Presbyterian                    | 14.7%          |
|                    |                | Pentecostal                     | 5.0%           |
|                    |                | Other                           | 8.2%           |

These data illuminate several important characteristics of participants in Pagan gatherings. However, as discussed earlier, generalizations from this study to Paganism in general are tenuous. This deficiency can be addressed by comparing the demographics of the present sample to data collected from other Pagan samples. By doing so, a more comprehensive picture of Pagan adherents will emerge. Several studies can serve as comparisons, including: a mail survey of the entire Council of Magickal Arts membership, The Pagan Census (Berger 1994), Jorgenson and Russell (1999), Reid (2001), Kirkpatrick (1986), Ludeke (1989), and Orion (1995). Because of the differences between studies in the creation of interview questions and response categories, only the demographic characteristics of sex and age can be compared directly via tables. Beyond those two demographic categories, comparisons will be made in discussion with other available studies and the General Social Survey (GSS).

Table 4.3 compares the sex of respondent in this study with that of the Pagan Census (1994), Jorgenson and Russell (1999), Kirkpatrick (1986), Orion (1995), and CMA (1996). First and foremost is an attempt to determine whether the sample for this

study is representative of the membership in CMA. As indicated earlier the location for the gathering used as the sampling frame for this study can only accommodate approximately 75% of the association's membership and given financial, time, and travel considerations for attending the gathering, the sample may not be representative of the total membership. In 1996, CMA conducted included an informal mail survey with its Samhain issue of Accord. In terms of sex, out of 97 mailed in responses, 42% indicated male and 58% female. A Z-test for differences in proportion indicates that there is not a significant difference between the CMA sample and the sample for this research project nor are there significant differences with Jorgenson and (1999), Kirkpatrick (1986) and Orion (1995). Of interest, however, is that a Z-test of proportions indicates a significant difference with the Pagan Census (2004). The Pagan Census was a survey distributed by national and regional organizations, published in Pagan journals, made available on the internet and distributed at Pagan gatherings and is by far the largest reported sample of Pagans (N=2089). Many would point to this difference as indicative of Paganism being a female religion but the significant difference between this sample and the Pagan Census could be attributed to the fact that it was a mail survey and, in general, women tend to complete and return mail surveys more often than men. This latter explanation has the benefit of also explaining why the other samples presented here are similar to the sample collected for this study.

---

<sup>6</sup> The total number of responses for the Protestant denominations is 61 because of two missing responses.

Table 4.3 Comparison of Sex Between McGee, Pagan Census (2004), Jorgenson and Russell (1999), Kirkpatrick (1986), Orion (1995), and CMA (1996)

| Sex    | McGee | Pagan Census (1994) | Jorgenson and Russell (1999) | Kirkpatrick (1986) | Orion (1995) | CMA (1996) |
|--------|-------|---------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|--------------|------------|
| Male   | 47.8% | 33.9%               | 42.3%                        | 50%                | 38.0%        | 42.3%      |
| Female | 52.2% | 68.4%*              | 56.8%                        | 50%                | 58.0%        | 57.7%      |
| N      | 136   | 2089                | 585                          | 144                | 181          | 97         |

\* Significant Difference

Table 4.4 compares the age of respondent in this study with the Pagan Census (1994), Reid (2001), CMA (1996), and Jorgenson and Russell (1999). In terms of age it is evident that this sample is significantly younger than the general membership of CMA. Several reasons might explain this difference including the fact that older individuals would be more likely to return mail surveys as compared to younger individuals. Further, this sample was collected during a gathering that required participants to camp in rather primitive conditions. CMA has a membership of approximately 1000 of which this project's sample included 136 and the CMA mail survey sample netted 103 respondents. It is quite possible that this research project's sample and the CMA sample are of two distinct sets of members. Further, the Pagan Census (2004) and Jorgenson and Russell (1999) both found significantly older Pagans. While the Pagan Census was a mail survey and therefore subject to the same explanations given above, Jorgenson and Russell distributed their survey at gatherings across the United States. It is unclear why their sample has a significantly higher proportion of Pagans between the ages of 41 and 47.

Table 4.4 Comparison of Age of Respondent Between McGee, Pagan Census (1994), Reid (2001), and CMA (1996)

| Age          | McGee | Pagan Census (1994) | Reid (2001) | CMA (1996) |
|--------------|-------|---------------------|-------------|------------|
| 29 and under | 36.3% | 32.8%               | 39.3%       | 28.1%      |
| 30-39        | 40.8% | 34.3%               | 31.2%       | 27.2%*     |
| 40-49        | 18.7% | 24.5%               | 22.6%       | 30.1%*     |
| 50 and over  | 4.2%  | 10.2%*              | 6.9%        | 14.6%*     |
| N            | 138   | 2033                | 186         | 103        |

\* Significant Difference

Table 4.5 Comparison of Age of Respondent Between McGee and Jorgenson and Russell (1999)

| Age          | McGee | Jorgenson and Russell (1999) |
|--------------|-------|------------------------------|
| 25 and under | 23.9% | 15.2%                        |
| 26-34        | 29.7% | 26.7%                        |
| 35-40        | 24.6% | 25.0%                        |
| 41-47        | 10.9% | 20.1%*                       |
| 48 and over  | 10.9% | 12.0%                        |
| N            | 138   | 585                          |

\* Significant Difference

In terms of sex, age, and marital status, Ludeke interviewed only women and they were more likely to be single, 44%, or living with a significant other, 22%, as opposed to being married, 18%. As indicated in Table 4.1, however, the Beltane participants are more likely to be married, 47.1%. In terms of marital status, the NORC reports 55% of their sample to be married and 19.2% to be single. The problem, of course, is how to define those who are living with a “significant other.” In terms of constraints or social bonds, status would likely have similar effects on behavior as being

married, though; most of these respondents would indicate they are single rather than 'married.' Conceptually, combining the categories into attached or unattached would show that 63.8% of the sample is attached compared to only 36.2% unattached. Lastly, the majority of the sample, 64.2%, has no children while 35.7% have one or more. Given this information, the participants at Beltane appear to be young couples, the majority of whom have no children.

Although Ludeke indicates her respondents have some college experience (23%) the Beltane sample shows a substantially larger portion, 48.6%, to have some college (the categories of some college and two years of college were combined). In terms of college degrees, the GSS reports 21.8% of their sample has at least four years of college and 9.4% of the respondents claimed advanced education compared to the Beltane sample with 32.6% and 14.5%, respectively. This indicates that the Beltane sample is more educated than the general public. This assessment is supported by Ludeke's study as well in that 55% of her sample has at least a four year degree. Further, parents' educational level is higher in the Beltane survey compared to the GSS.

In comparing income with the NORC data those respondents in the current sample who did not disclose their income were excluded, reducing the total number of valid responses to 115. Approximately 27% of the Beltane sample indicated earning less than \$14,999 and 20.9% indicated earning between \$15,000 and \$24,999 compared to 33.8% and 25%, respectively for these categories, on the GSS. However, 22.6% of the Beltane sample earns between \$25,000 and \$34,000 and 29.4% earn over \$35,000 as compared to the GSS with 17.6% and 23.7%, respectively. The median income for the



Beltane sample is \$30,385 and indicates they earn slightly more than would be expected in the general public.

In terms of childhood religious affiliation, most respondents indicated having either affiliated with the Roman Catholic Church, 21.3%, or having come from a Protestant background, 46.3%, as compared to the relatively small number of respondents who identify as growing up Pagan or having no religious affiliation. This indicates that direct socialization of children into Paganism is rare and implies that participants are more likely to be drawn to Paganism as a reaction against more traditional forms of religious expression. In comparison, the NORC reports their sample to be 25.5% Roman Catholic and 59.5% Protestant. However, in terms of specific Protestant denomination, 26.2% of the Beltane sample claimed a Baptist background compared to 34.9% of the GSS respondents. A second interesting category of Protestantism includes 22.9% of the sample indicating a Methodist affiliation as compared to 15.9% from the GSS. Again, the respondents from Beltane most often come from a traditional religious background which suggests that Paganism is an alternative new religious choice for them.

The descriptive data tends to show the current Pagan sample to be young, attached, better educated middle class persons who made a choice to become Pagan and are active in group celebrations.

#### 4.2 Multivariate Analysis

The first finding deals with the Pagans' attitudes towards mainstream churches. In attempting to interpret these relationships, it should be remembered that most Pagans

have had traditional religious affiliations in their childhood, implying that they have chosen to become Pagan. As indicated by the zero order correlations in Table 4.6, positive ratings of childhood religious affiliation is negatively related to disaffection from traditional churches, positively related with closeness to family, and positively related to being a Spiritual Guide. Respondents who agree that mainstream churches are repressive and dogmatic are more likely to rate their childhood religious affiliation negatively. Those who are closer to their family also rate their childhood affiliation more positively. Since only 5.1% of the sample grew up Pagan, family of origin can be seen as the avenue through which the respondent gained childhood experience with mainstream churches. If families had positive attitudes towards these churches, respondents who felt close to family may have had more of a stake in accepting religious institutions.

Ratings of childhood religious affiliation are positively related to being a Spiritual Guide possibly because Spiritual Guides participate in the movement for reasons other than those of other members. Spiritual Guides are respondents who claim to offer spiritual guidance and organize and promote Paganism, in contrast to other members who claim to be seeking only personal growth and spiritual guidance. In the current sample, 28.3% identified themselves as Spiritual Guides while 71.7% claimed to be simply members or participants. If membership in the Pagan movement is partially attributed to defining mainstream churches as problematic, Spiritual Guides, who rate their childhood religious affiliation more positively than other members, appear to be members of the movement for other reasons.

In Table 4.6 the three variables related to ratings of childhood religious affiliation are independent of one another. Lack of significant covariation between church disaffection, family closeness, and being a Spiritual Guide which to their independent contributions to understanding ratings of childhood religious affiliation.

Table 4.6 Correlations, Means, and Standard Deviations for Rating of Childhood Religious Affiliation, Church Disaffection, Family Closeness Index, and Spiritual Guide

|                        | 1    | 2       | 3       | 4       |
|------------------------|------|---------|---------|---------|
| 1) Rate Affiliation    | 1.00 | -.283** | .310*** | .317*** |
| 2) Church Disaffection |      | 1.00    | -.059   | -.044   |
| 3) Family Closeness    |      |         | 1.00    | .009    |
| 4) Spiritual Guide     |      |         |         | 1.00    |
| Means                  | 2.94 | 7.58    | 5.75    | 1.28    |
| SD                     | 1.30 | 1.77    | 2.42    | .45     |

Two tailed significance levels \*p < .05 \*\*p < .025 \*\*\*p < .001

When the variables are combined into a regression equation, disaffection with traditional churches, closeness to family, and Spiritual Guide are all related to the rating of childhood religious affiliation (See Table 4.7). Spiritual Guide is the strongest predictor of ratings of childhood religious affiliation (Beta= .295). One possible explanation is that those who claim to be Spiritual Guides are more comfortable with their spiritual choice and not just reacting to negative experiences with traditional churches. Also, given that Spiritual Guides are role models in the community, they may have more tolerant attitudes towards alternate forms of spiritual expression. Further, ratings of childhood affiliation are associated with disaffection from traditional churches. Every unit increase in church disaffection results in a .246 standard deviation decrease in positive attributions made to childhood religious affiliation independent of

family closeness and being a Spiritual Guide. Finally, closeness to family influences attitudes towards childhood affiliation. This offers support for the idea that family ties and church are linked and create greater acceptance of childhood experience; conversely, freedom from family ties make rejection of conventional church easier.

Table 4.7 OLS Coefficients for Regression of Rating Religious Affiliation on Selected Independent Variables

| Independent Variables         | Coefficients | (SE)  | Beta  |
|-------------------------------|--------------|-------|-------|
| Church Disaffection           | .179**       | .0557 | -.246 |
| Family Closeness              | .155***      | .0412 | .288  |
| Spiritual Guide               | .857***      | .2223 | .295  |
| (constant)                    | 2.317        | .5909 |       |
| Adjusted R <sup>2</sup> =.234 |              |       |       |
| Cases N=132                   |              |       |       |

\*p < .05 \*\*p < .025 \*\*\*p < .001

Table 4.8 deals with group membership. Belief in being a member of a Pagan community is positively related to church disaffection, social support, and frequency of social participation in Pagan holidays. Identifying with a Pagan community is positively associated with belief that traditional churches are repressive and dogmatic. This disaffection from traditional religious avenues could result in the sampling of various positively sanctioned religious avenues or denominations, or disaffiliation altogether. Disaffiliation is unlikely as it should be remembered roughly 99% of the sample believe that spirituality is important. Also, implied in the positive association between belief in being a member of a Pagan community and church disaffection is a need for individual freedom for spiritual expression which is perceived to be obstructed in mainstream churches thus making sampling other churches improbable. Joining the Pagan community as a spiritual avenue can be seen as a rejection of traditional churches and a

source of a new spiritual identity. As expected, social support and participation are positively correlated with belief in being a member. The more a respondent utilizes social networks for social support the more they feel they are a member of a Pagan “community.” Close friends who also serve as emotional support tend to form strong bonds and in the Pagan community these bonds are commonly expressed in reference to close friends as “family.” In relying on close friends for emotional support, individuals learn appropriate coping styles for dealing with life situations thereby developing bonds of trust and these personal networks offer support for a Pagan identity.

An objective measure of group membership is level of participation in group social events. Whereas close friends are considered “family,” participation in Pagan social events are considered “family reunions.” By attending these events, individuals find other like-minded Pagans who share similar experiences and through these avenues of communication they develop an understanding of the expectations and “vocabularies of motive” which reinforce group solidarity or increase feelings of membership and “community.” Participation in social events, integration in Pagan social networks, and disaffection with traditional religious institutions are independently and positively associated with feelings of being a member of the Pagan community.

Table 4.8 Correlations, Means, and Standard Deviation for Community Member, Church Disaffection, Social Support Index, and Participation

|                        | 1    | 2      | 3      | 4       |
|------------------------|------|--------|--------|---------|
| 1) Community Member    | 1.00 | .265** | .229** | .305*** |
| 2) Church Disaffection |      | 1.00   | .117   | -.025   |
| 3) Social Support      |      |        | 1.00   | .147    |
| 4) Participation       |      |        |        | 1.00    |
| Means                  | 8.19 | 7.58   | 7.37   | 3.25    |
| SD                     | 1.25 | 1.77   | 1.56   | 1.77    |

Two tailed significance levels \*p < .05 \*\*p < .025 \*\*\*p < .001

When the variables are combined into a regression equation, church disaffection, social support, and participation are all related to belief in being a member of a Pagan community (see Table 4.9). Of particular interest are the results which show that associated with feelings of membership is church disaffection (B= .240). The more disaffected with church, the more the respondent identifies with the “community,” therefore part of one’s identity is not being associated with mainstream religion. Membership is also supported by participation in Pagan social events (Beta= .265) and receiving social support. Taken together, seeing membership as the rejection of traditional religious institutions offers a salient out-group and, along with the utilization of Pagan networks in the form of social support and frequency of participation, establishes group solidarity, a community, and support for a Pagan identity.

Table 4.9 OLS Coefficients for Regression of Community Member on Selected Independent Variables

| Independent Variables         | Coefficients | (SE)  | Beta |
|-------------------------------|--------------|-------|------|
| Church Disaffection           | .170*        | .0556 | .241 |
| Social Support                | .152*        | .0651 | .185 |
| Participation                 | .187**       | .0559 | .265 |
| (constant)                    | 5.138        | .6177 |      |
| Adjusted R <sup>2</sup> =.168 |              |       |      |
| Cases N=136                   |              |       |      |

\*p < .05 \*\*p < .025 \*\*\*p < .001

Table 4.10 deals with some of the social costs of being Pagan. The correlations indicate that the choice not to disclose a Pagan identity is positively associated with occupational prestige and belief that one's decisions are influenced by external forces while inversely associated with the Pagan value of openly expressing a Pagan identity and having had previously received a negative reaction due to publicly displaying the Pagan identity. Implied by these correlations are two coping styles, those who have a stake in conformity and hide their identity and those who have their group membership, or identity, reaffirmed through being publicly defined as Pagan.

Table 4.10 Correlations, Means, and Standard Deviations for Not Disclosing, Occupational Prestige, Openly Expressing, External Influences and Negative Reaction

|                          | 1    | 2     | 3       | 4      | 5       |
|--------------------------|------|-------|---------|--------|---------|
| 1) Not Disclosing        | 1.00 | .202* | -.269** | .266** | -.269** |
| 2) Occupational Prestige |      | 1.00  | -.183   | -.145  | -.095   |
| 3) Express               |      |       | 1.00    | -.049  | .092    |
| 4) Influence             |      |       |         | 1.00   | .058    |
| 5) Negative Reaction     |      |       |         |        | 1.00    |
| Means                    | 4.94 | 52.01 | 7.54    | 3.24   | 1.54    |
| SD                       | 2.73 | 13.69 | 1.57    | 2.19   | .50     |

Two tailed significance levels \*p < .05 \*\*p < .025 \*\*\*p < .001

Persons with more prestigious occupations have a stake in conformity; disclosing a Pagan identity could cost them a source of financial support and esteem. An awareness of social pressures and stakes in conformity are shown as salient to some members of the movement by the positive correlation between beliefs that external forces influence one's decision and the choice not to disclose. This implies a situational identity in that the social costs of disclosing a Pagan identity are considered first in relation to the social situation. As the perceived personal costs of displaying a Pagan identity increase, one is less likely to be open about the Pagan identity.

Belief in the Pagan value of openly expressing a Pagan identity is negatively correlated with not disclosing. Those for whom this value is most salient are also least likely to conceal their identity and potentially have less to lose. Having previously received a negative reaction due to publicly displaying a Pagan identity is negatively correlated with not disclosing. Those who choose to be open about their identity may already be aware of the costs and being socially labeled as Pagan serves to reinforce or reaffirm a Pagan identity.

In regression Table 4.11 the number of valid cases drops to 100. This is due to the inability to accurately code prestige scores for non-traditional employments such as Tarot card reader. Therefore, a second regression model (not shown) was run without prestige as an indicator. This increased the valid number of cases to 131, reduced the explanatory power of the model (Adjusted R= .204) and produced small changes in Betas. With this in mind, the decision was made to keep the prestige indicator in the



model because the change in the number of cases did not change the findings for the other variables in the model.

Table 4.11 OLS Coefficients for Regression of Not Disclosing on Selected Independent Variables

| Independent Variables         | Coefficients | (SE)   | Beta  |
|-------------------------------|--------------|--------|-------|
| Occupational Prestige         | .044**       | .0182  | .220  |
| Express                       | -.320*       | .1536  | -.188 |
| Influence                     | .386***      | .1115  | .310  |
| Negative Reaction             | -1.434*      | .4818  | -.264 |
| (constant)                    | 6.013        | 1.9155 |       |
| Adjusted R <sup>2</sup> =.232 |              |        |       |
| Cases N=100                   |              |        |       |

\*p < .05 \*\*p < .025 \*\*\*p < .001

When the variables are combined into a regression equation, occupational prestige, the value of openly expressing Pagan identity, belief that one's decisions are influenced by outside forces, and previous negative reactions are all related to not disclosing a Pagan identity (see Table 5.6). As expected, the Pagan value of openly expressing one's identity is a negative predictor of not disclosing. This indicates that those for whom this value is more salient will also be open about their Pagan identity. Having had previously received a negative reaction due to publicly displaying one's Pagan identity is a negative predictor of not disclosing one's identity (B= -.264). This offers support for the idea that those who choose to be open about their identity already understand the costs of doing so and, further, these people may have less of a stake in conformity. This interpretation is substantiated by the positive direction of the prestige indicator. Pagans with a highly prestigious job are more likely to conceal their Pagan identity. The strongest predictor of concealing a Pagan identity is belief that external factors influence one's decisions. This implies a stake in conformity as decisions to

disclose a Pagan identity could elicit costly negative sanctions. In sum, those who have already made the choice to be open about their Pagan identity have already weighed the costs of doing so or have fewer stakes in conformity while those who are not open may have strong stakes in maintaining a more conventional self identity in society.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

#### 5.1 Theoretical Evaluation

Motivation to join the Pagan movement is associated with rejection of traditional Christian religious institutions. The source of this motivation includes the Pagan's perception of relationships among clergy, Deity, mankind, and nature or the environment. Responses to interviews conducted at Beltaine in 1995 revealed this pattern of beliefs.

(Interviewer): How did you get involved with Wicca?

My mother was very liberal and took me to any church that I expressed interest in. So since the Christian religion didn't appeal to me, as it went against everything in my basic nature to be ruled in everything by man's interpretation of a book, I choose a more natural and relaxed form of worship that I felt more comfortable with. The anti-feminine, anal retentive, cold and emotionless church just wasn't for me (Respondent A 1995).

I had a lot of anger about the sexism in Christianity and the fundamental injustice, cruelty, and insult to Deity in the concept of salvation/damnation. It also seemed basically crazy for war to be holy and making love a sin (Respondent B 1995).

(Question): Why did you get involved with Wicca?

Wicca/Paganism involves trust, tolerance, compassion and search for commonalities instead of establishing and crusading creed and dogma (Respondent C 1995).

A problematic situation consists of two distinct elements--a situation and a frame of reference which defines it as problematic. Most Pagans have experience with traditional religions and find these religions to be repressive, patriarchal, world-

rejecting, dogmatic, and neglectful of the human spirit by turning spirituality and religious experiences into a commodity (Adler 1996; Griffen 1995; Howell 1997; Ludeke 1989; Reineke 1995). This disaffection with traditional religion becomes problematic when interpreted through belief in the importance of spirituality. This can be viewed as a type of spiritual strain in that Pagans appear to place value on spirituality but find the traditional means of fulfilling that value inadequate.

(Question): How did you get involved with Wicca?

Through searching for my “spiritual identity,” to fill the spiritual void in my life (Respondent D 1995).

For many years my spirituality and “religion” had become so separate I would no longer tolerate orthodoxy. Wicca provides the outlet for expression I have been searching for (Respondent E 1995).

(Question): Why did you get involved in Wicca?

Because “established” religion did not answer major questions and did not fulfill my spiritual needs (Respondent F 1995).

When the respondents in the current sample (N=137) were asked, 90.4% agreed that spiritualism was very important while 8.9% indicated spiritualism to be somewhat important. The importance of spirituality as a frame of reference is evident when it is understood that disaffection with traditional religious institutions may result in two other outcomes: 1) the individual could change traditional institutions or, 2) the individual could discontinue affiliation altogether. In essence, Pagans perceive traditional religious institutions to be unsatisfactory and the cause of a spiritual alienation which the Pagan movement is perceived as filling. The members of Paganism

exalt their spiritual beliefs above other non-Pagan religious associations as indicated in the following response.

It's the world's most moral religion (Respondent G 1995).

As most Pagans have had a childhood experience with mainstream churches, attitudes towards these childhood experiences should be related to feelings of disaffection from traditional religious institutions. Rejection of traditional churches in favor of membership in a Pagan community can be viewed as a rejection of one set of religious values for another set which is seen as wholly different from the Judeo-Christian tradition. Disaffection with traditional churches, then, should also be related to a respondent's commitment to being a member of a Pagan community. The community offers a specialized status here called Spiritual Guide. Pagans who embrace the role of Spiritual Guide are role models and event organizers and tend to be less negative or disaffected from mainstream religious institutions. The reason for this is twofold. One, given their position and role demands, they should be more comfortable in their religious choice and, two, given the Pagan belief in respect for other religious paths, Spiritual Guides should serve as tolerant role models. As a person becomes more involved in the movement, rejection of the past religious tradition is less important to explaining membership.

A second problematic element, not discussed earlier, is that many Pagans have had experiences of paranormal phenomena while in their youth that resulted in feelings of being different or disconnected (Courtenay, Merriam, and Baumgartner 2003; Toch

1965). Although such experiences are rather frequent in the general population, these experiences are, at least, retrospectively problematic<sup>7</sup> for many Pagans (Gallup 1991).

(Question): How did you get involved in Wicca?

When I was 12 I felt there was something “wrong” about my room. In July I was seeing frost form on my windows and my breath was coming out in plumes at around 3:00 am every morning. I told some of my older friends (24-30) about it and one of them said they knew someone who could help. He turned out to be some Celtic Wiccan Priest. [He] visited my house and spoke in soft tones to something I couldn’t see. After he left I never had chills in the room (Respondent H 1995).

(Question): Why did you get involved in Wicca?

It made me feel safe and not so alien in my ideas of catching peoples thoughts without words. And also to have a Being that had duality of sex and not just male aggressions or urges of domination over people who weren’t the same as me (Respondent H 1995).

In traditional religious institutions, these paranormal or supernatural experiences remained largely undefined and, if expressed, they were met with negative sanctions in

---

<sup>7</sup> John Kitsuse (1962) explained the concept of retrospective interpretation of events as a process of attribution formation. New information can provide individuals with frameworks for interpreting past, present, and future events. Specifically, Kitsuse (1962) states:

Indeed, the information provided a new perspective for their retrospective as well as prospective observations and interpretation of the individuals’ behaviors (Kitsuse 1962:251).

While Kitsuse’s area of interest was the attribution of deviant labels to questionable sexual orientations, the concept of retrospective interpretation is highly appropriate to the process of re-casting childhood events using new spiritual information.

...the imputation of homosexuality is documented by retrospective interpretations of the deviant’s behavior, a process by which the subject re-interprets the individual’s past behavior in the light of the new information concerning his sexual deviance... This retrospective reading generally provided the subjects with just such evidence to support the conclusion that “this is what was going on all the time” (Kitsuse 1962: 253).

the form of skepticism if not ostracism. Overall, the problematic situation is doubt regarding personal identity and this doubt can undermine action and result in a type of anomie (Foote 1951). Encountering Paganism provides labels and explanations for paranormal experiences and the feelings of being disconnected and fills the spiritual void, thereby giving the individual a sense of vindication, closure and, more importantly, identity (Toch 1965). In turn, the Pagan interpretive framework serves as a belief system to organize, classify, and order their social and physical environment, thereby strengthening personal identity and commitment to the movement (Bromley and Shupe 1979; Howell 1997; Melucci 1985; Simmons 1964).

Paganism also forms a frame of reference and situational identity for members' spiritual questions (Foote 1951; Gecas 1982). Paganism provides the actor with a language which establishes group boundaries, offers a frame of reference for interpreting experience, and provides motives for action (Foote 1951; Mills 1940; Perinbanayagam 1985; Simmons 1964). This frame of reference was apparent in comments made during structured interviews at Beltaine 1995.

Wicca matched my experiences and provided a framework to continue learning (Respondent I 1995).

The spiritual path I was raised on did not match my personal experiences. [I] actively searched until I found a tradition that matched my beliefs and experience (Respondent J 1995).

It fit my beliefs better than anything else and I was able to use my mind to work on problems not just be a sheep (Respondent K 1995).

This is exemplified too in the Pagan designation of the "mundane world" as referring to the social world outside of Paganism. This phrase implies a reversal of the

perceived negative attributions from society toward Pagan spiritual and paranormal experiences by making the absence of such experiences less valued. The designation of outsiders serves to promote internal solidarity and individual identity (Becker 1973; Cohen 1964). Further, the framing processes are evident in that Pagans tend to legitimize their movement by claiming pre-Christian origins, making their movement a revitalization of an old religion (Ludeke 1989). By participating in these social networks individuals begin a process of communication through which they learn not only expectations regarding behavior but also common elements, thereby establishing trust which in turn provides a basis for continued communication (Berger 1995; Jacobs 1990; Toch 1965).

Wicca is the most common form of Paganism, a group of modern Earth religions which borrow and adapt from pre-Christian Pagan religions, sometimes with additions from contemporary religious thinkers (Covenant of the Goddess pamphlet).

(Interviewer): What do you think is lacking in the Catholic belief system that you find here?

To me, it's just extremely...the whole thing is false. That it was built to cover over the Pagan beliefs and to destroy the Pagan beliefs. And to control the people. And it's still that way, that you have to follow the One and you do exactly what the One says, otherwise you're not a good person, you're not a good Catholic (Respondent A 1996).

The Pagan community can be seen as a pull factor in two respects. First, members develop a network of friends who share the Pagan belief system and these individuals provide guidance and support (Newcomb 1958; Snow, Zurcher, and Ekland-Olson 1997). The degree to which a participant utilizes these social networks as social support should be related to identifying oneself as a member of a Pagan community.



Second, interaction with other Pagans occurs through events such as small celebrations near home to larger group activities sponsored by Pagan associations. These celebrations are perceived to be much like “family reunions.” In addition to social support, the more a member socially participates in Pagan holidays, the more strongly a participant is likely to feel he or she is a member of a “community” and vice versa. There are also many publications which promote Paganism and a feeling of community, such as Pagan Dawn, Green Egg, and Circle Network News. Further, Llewlynn Publications, publishes a bi-monthly catalog, New World, which caters to new agers in general with books, calendars, day timers, tarot cards, and the like. Another dimension of this communication and support network is the internet, as 53% of the current sample communicate with other Pagans by using e-mail.

As stated earlier, participating in Paganism generally and in these social networks specifically culminates in the acceptance of a Pagan identity and this identity is an anchor from which choices are made in regards to actions (Foote 1951; Neitz 1990; Stark and Bainbridge 1985). The most important choice to make in terms of actions concerns the Pagan identity and whether to hide it or be open about it. In exploring options regarding Pagan identities, it should be remembered that most Pagans have previously had a traditional religious affiliation. Therefore, it can be assumed they understand the positive sanctions for certain avenues of religious affiliation and spiritual expression and the negative sanctions for engaging in alternative courses. Implicit here is that accepting a Pagan identity is also accepting a deviant identity. Pagans are, indeed, aware of these negative attributions.

I feel more could be done to socially further Pagans but just like the rights of African Americans it will happen slowly because the personal risks are too menacing (Respondent B 1996).

These perceived risks or a participant's stake in conformity, such as family and job status, can have considerable influence (Toby 1957). Pagans still have a stake in conformity because they have conventional links to jobs, family, and other conventional parts of society. For example, in order to remain close to one's family of origin and maintain their support (emotional and/or financial), one may adapt or attune one's attitudes to be more similar, or at least less confrontational, to those of the family. Only 5.1% of the current sample grew up in Pagan households and most Pagans have had traditional religious affiliations in childhood. Therefore, their family of origin can be considered to be more positive towards traditional forms of religious expression. In order to maintain family ties or support, Pagans may adopt milder attitudes towards traditional churches. In other words, the closer a member currently is to his/her family of origin, the less disaffected with traditional churches and the less negative toward childhood affiliation he or she will be. As a second risk, a Pagan identity can become problematic for individuals employed in more prestigious jobs. The identity could cost Pagans their sole source of support and the esteem which comes with prestigious employment. For example, high school teachers would weigh heavily the consequences in terms of their employment before allowing their identity as a Pagan to become known. Therefore, the more prestigious the employment, the more likely a Pagan will conceal his or her identity.

Concern with the costs of a public identity is evident in the Pagan tradition of adopting an alternate, or “magickal,” name which is used in the community. The original purpose of this tradition was so that if a member was persecuted, he or she would be unable to implicate others. On the other hand, Pagans are sensitive to the rights afforded religious expression guaranteed by the First Amendment and value being able to openly express their spiritual convictions. That is to say, acceptance of a Pagan identity provides motivation for being open about one’s identity.

Remember, religious freedom is a right in this country, even if we still have to fight for it. The good news is that the courts and government agencies are starting to acknowledge that fact (Waldie 1996).

As indicated, the ability to openly express a Pagan identity is a value within the community. A participant’s belief in this value is related to decisions regarding being open about a Pagan identity. Those participants who believe more strongly in this value should be more likely to be open about their Pagan identity. Further, it is posited that those who have made the choice to be open about their identity as opposed to hiding it, have already weighed the costs of their decision, or have less of a stake in conformity, and will not be dissuaded in the face of negative sanctions.

## 5.2 Concluding Remarks

The Pagan movement began in America around the early 1960’s and has been a growing spiritual movement since that time (Kelly 1992; Orion 1995). Starting in the late 1980’s, a growing number of scholarly reports have been published regarding this new religious movement. In early scholarship, growth of the Pagan movement was attributed to the growing disenchantment of women with mainstream churches. More

recent research tends to indicate that Paganism is attractive to both men and women. It is possible that the motivations are different and more research is needed to determine the appeal of the movement for men and women. Further demographic results from this survey and other published research tend to indicate limited minority involvement in the movement. Reasons for this are unclear and have, as yet, not been explored. Finally, the movement seems to be comprised of mostly well educated middle class participants. This apparent homogeneity among participants is intriguing and in need of evaluation and explanation. Future research should attempt to address this evident lack of diversity.

Overall, however, the Pagan community is seen as a venue for autonomy and expression of spirituality. Joining the Pagan movement can be seen as a liberating experience in that it redefines one's relationship with clergy, Deity, and nature and offers a new identity. Paganism provides an alternative frame of reference for addressing problems, one that allows believers autonomy, acceptance, and closure. Paganism can be seen as a rejection of one set of religious values, those in traditional Christian churches, and acceptance of a new and possibly opposing set of values. Pagan values and celebrations affirm participant's identity as part of a spiritual community.

At the same time, Paganism remains a deviant form of religious practice, which can be analyzed in terms of social bonds, differential association, strains, and labeling. There are costs of openly displaying a deviant identity. Costs can be the loss of a job, esteem, or respect and support of the larger community. Although being able to be a Pagan in public is highly valued in the Pagan community, stakes in conventional conformity exclude this choice for some members. For other members, negative public

reactions reaffirm and solidify their sense of Pagan identity and commitment. Continuing research will help to further clarify the social processes underlying development and maintenance of alternative spiritual orientation.

APPENDIX A

THE SURVEY

**The following questionnaire is part of a study regarding people's participation in Pagan spiritualism. Your answers will help promote mutual respect, communication, and understanding of the different beliefs represented by these questions. We do NOT want your name- you will remain anonymous.**

**The study is being conducted by, La Dorna Goff, a student at the University of Texas at Arlington. Any questions, comments or discontents can be forwarded to her at 817-273-2661 or:**

**Box 19599  
Arlington, TX 76019-0599**

**Thank you very much for contributing to this study!**

**Please fill in the blank or check the appropriate box.**

- 1) How important is spiritualism in your life?
  - Very important
  - Somewhat important
  - Undecided
  - Somewhat **un**important
  - Very **un**important
  
- 2) Please indicate which **one** of the following **most accurately describes** your reasons for being here today (please choose only **one**):
  - I consider myself a spiritual guide to anyone who asks me for assistance. I offer my time and efforts in promoting events such as these and also organize smaller events closer to home between these major celebrations. Also, I am here for personal growth and spiritual enrichment.
  - I am here for personal growth, experience and spiritual guidance. I attend classes that are offered here to enrich my understanding of myself and the world in which I live. I support functions such as these by attending them and participating in the classes and festivities.
  - I am here with my significant other who asked me to come; I came at the request of, or to be with, some friends.

- 3) How often do you participate in group activities with others who share your spiritual convictions in a year?
- Never
  - Seldom (once a year)
  - Often (3 to 6 times a year)
  - About once every month (7 to 12 times a year)
  - More often that once every month (more than 12 times a year)
- 4) Do you subscribe, receive or buy any newsletters or other publications dedicated to the Pagan belief system (such as New World, The Circle or Green Egg)?
- Yes       No
- 5) Are you a member of any Pagan organizations (such as the Pagan Federation)?
- Yes       No
- 5a) If yes to being a member, please indicate the organizations you belong to.
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- 6) Do you engage in any public displays of your spiritual convictions such as bumper stickers, T-shirts, or jewelry (like pentagrams)?
- Yes       No
- 6a) If yes to the question about public displays, have you ever faced negative reactions because of them?
- Yes       No
- 6b) If yes to the question regarding negative reactions, how did the interaction effect your openness about your spiritual convictions?
- Strengthened my desire to openly display my spiritual convictions.
  - Caused me to question openly displaying my spiritual convictions but ultimately I did not stop doing so.
  - Caused me to stop openly displaying my spiritual convictions.
  - The interaction had no effect on me.



7) Generally speaking, do you consider yourself or your beliefs to be related to Wiccan traditions

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

8) Generally, how many Esbats do you celebrate a year? (please enter "0" if you do not celebrate them)? \_\_\_\_\_

8a) If you celebrate Esbats, generally, do you celebrate them:

- Privately
- With a small group of people (13 or less)
- With a large group of people (14 or more)

9) Please indicate whether you celebrate the following Sabbats within the past 2 years:

| Privately                | With a small group of people (13 or less) | With a large group of people (14 or more) | I didn't celebrate       |            |
|--------------------------|---|---|--------------------------|------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                  | <input type="checkbox"/>                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | Yule       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                  | <input type="checkbox"/>                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | Imbok      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                  | <input type="checkbox"/>                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | Ostara     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                  | <input type="checkbox"/>                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | Midsummer  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                  | <input type="checkbox"/>                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | Lughnasadh |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                  | <input type="checkbox"/>                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | Mabon      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                  | <input type="checkbox"/>                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | Samhain    |

10) What was your religious affiliation growing up?

- Roman Catholic
- Jewish
  - Orthodox, Conservative or Reform? \_\_\_\_\_
- Latter-Day Saints
- Eastern Religion
  - Please specify \_\_\_\_\_
- Protestant
  - What denomination? \_\_\_\_\_
- Unitarian Universalist
- Pagan (i.e., Wiccan, Shaman, Folk Magic)
  - Please specify \_\_\_\_\_
- Other
  - Please specify \_\_\_\_\_

10a) In terms of your answer to the previous question, how would you rate your experience with the indicated affiliation?

- Very positive
- Somewhat positive
- Neither positive or negative
- Somewhat negative
- Very negative

11) What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_

12) What is your sex:       Male       Female

13) In what city and state do you currently live? \_\_\_\_\_

14) What is your marital status:

- Single (never married)
- Single, living with significant other
- Married
- Divorced
- Widowed

15) How many children do you have living in your household?

- none
- 1
- 2
- three or more

16) Please indicate your most advanced educational level:

- Elementary School
- High School or GED
- Some college
- Two years of college (i.e., technical/trade school and/or A.A. degree
- Four years of college (i.e., Bachelors Degree)  
In what? \_\_\_\_\_
- Advanced degree  
In what? \_\_\_\_\_

- 16a) In terms of your answer to the previous question, how would you rate your experience with the last school you attended?
- Very positive
  - Somewhat positive
  - Neither positive or negative
  - Somewhat negative
  - Very negative
- 17) What was your mother's most advanced educational level:
- Elementary School
  - High School or GED
  - Some college
  - Two years of college (i.e., technical/trade school and/or A.A. degree)
  - Four years of college (i.e., Bachelors Degree)
  - Advanced degree
- 18) What was your father's most advanced educational level:
- Elementary School
  - High School or GED
  - Some college
  - Two years of college (i.e., technical/trade school and/or A.A. degree)
  - Four years of college (i.e., Bachelors Degree)
  - Advanced degree
- 19) Do you have access to a computer?
- Yes       No
- 19a) Are you a member of or have access to any online service (i.e., America On Line, Compuserve, or school account)?
- Yes       No
- 19b) Do you share **personal** e-mail correspondences with others who share your spiritual convictions?
- Yes       No

20) How important is politics in your life?

- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Undecided
- Somewhat **un**important
- Very **un**important

21) Do you participate in any voluntary associations (i.e., community groups, environmental groups, political organizations, etc.)?

- Yes
- No

21a) If yes, please list them and indicate the following information (please check all that apply).

| Organization: | Receive mailings         | Attend meetings          | Contribute time          | Donate money             |
|---------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| _____         | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| _____         | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| _____         | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| _____         | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

22) Please specify your occupation (if you are a student, please write student)?

\_\_\_\_\_

23) How long have you had your present position? \_\_\_\_\_

24) Please indicate your approximate yearly income:

- I do not wish to disclose this information
- under \$14,999 a year
- \$15,000-\$24,999
- \$25,000-\$34,999
- \$35,000-\$44,999
- \$45,000-\$54,999
- \$55,000-\$64,999
- over \$65,000

25) How would you rate economic conditions in this country today?

- Excellent
- Good
- Only fair
- Poor

26) Right now, do you think the economic conditions in the country as a whole are:

- Getting better
- Getting worse
- Staying about the same

**In the following section please select the phrase that most clearly describes your belief about the statement. The possible choices are:**

**SA**-strongly agree

**A**-agree somewhat

**U**-undecided; neither agree nor disagree; or does not apply

**D**-disagree somewhat

**SD**-strongly disagree

|  | Strongly<br>Agree | Agree<br>somewhat | Undecided | Disagree<br>somewhat | Strongly<br>disagree |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|-----------|----------------------|----------------------|
| 27) Openly expressing one's spiritual convictions is important                           | <b>SD</b>         | <b>A</b>          | <b>U</b>  | <b>D</b>             | <b>SD</b>            |
| 28) The opinions of my Pagan friends are important to me.                                | <b>SD</b>         | <b>A</b>          | <b>U</b>  | <b>D</b>             | <b>SD</b>            |
| 29) My decisions are largely influenced by forces beyond my control.                     | <b>SD</b>         | <b>A</b>          | <b>U</b>  | <b>D</b>             | <b>SD</b>            |
| 30) My closest friends are Pagan.  | <b>SD</b>         | <b>A</b>          | <b>U</b>  | <b>D</b>             | <b>SD</b>            |
| 31) I am very close to my relatives (i.e., parents, siblings, aunts, cousins, etc.)      | <b>SD</b>         | <b>A</b>          | <b>U</b>  | <b>D</b>             | <b>SD</b>            |
| 32) There is a Pagan community.  | <b>SD</b>         | <b>A</b>          | <b>U</b>  | <b>D</b>             | <b>SD</b>            |
| 33) Generally, I do not disclose my spiritual choice due to people's negative reactions. | <b>SD</b>         | <b>A</b>          | <b>U</b>  | <b>D</b>             | <b>SD</b>            |
| 34) I get most of my emotional support from my Pagan friends.                            | <b>SD</b>         | <b>A</b>          | <b>U</b>  | <b>D</b>             | <b>SD</b>            |
| 35) I have a difficult time believing in myself and my abilities.                        | <b>SD</b>         | <b>A</b>          | <b>U</b>  | <b>D</b>             | <b>SD</b>            |

|     |  | Strongly<br>Agree | Agree<br>somewhat | Undecided | Disagree<br>somewhat | Strongly<br>disagree |
|-----|--|-------------------|-------------------|-----------|----------------------|----------------------|
| 36) | I enjoy getting together with my relatives (i.e., parents, siblings, aunts, cousins, etc.).              | <b>SD</b>         | <b>A</b>          | <b>U</b>  | <b>D</b>             | <b>SD</b>            |
| 37) | Colleges and Universities promote intellectual development at the expense of mankind's spiritual nature. | <b>SD</b>         | <b>A</b>          | <b>U</b>  | <b>D</b>             | <b>SD</b>            |
| 38) | Traditional churches neglect the spiritual needs of individuals.   | <b>SD</b>         | <b>A</b>          | <b>U</b>  | <b>D</b>             | <b>SD</b>            |
| 39) | I am a member of a Pagan community.  | <b>SD</b>         | <b>A</b>          | <b>U</b>  | <b>D</b>             | <b>SD</b>            |
| 40) | I do not visit my relatives often (i.e., parents, siblings, aunts, cousins, etc).                        | <b>SD</b>         | <b>A</b>          | <b>U</b>  | <b>D</b>             | <b>SD</b>            |
| 41) | It is not important for others to know my spiritual convictions.   | <b>SD</b>         | <b>A</b>          | <b>U</b>  | <b>D</b>             | <b>SD</b>            |
| 42) | I admire those with spiritual convictions like mine who stand up for their beliefs.                      | <b>SD</b>         | <b>A</b>          | <b>U</b>  | <b>D</b>             | <b>SD</b>            |
| 43) | Traditional churches are too repressive and rigid.   | <b>SD</b>         | <b>A</b>          | <b>U</b>  | <b>D</b>             | <b>SD</b>            |
| 44) | Being politically active can bring about important social change.  | <b>SD</b>         | <b>A</b>          | <b>U</b>  | <b>D</b>             | <b>SD</b>            |
| 45) | College is more about teaching conformity than the development of independent thinking.                  | <b>SD</b>         | <b>A</b>          | <b>U</b>  | <b>D</b>             | <b>SD</b>            |
| 46) | Our government truly represents the needs of its people.   | <b>SD</b>         | <b>A</b>          | <b>U</b>  | <b>D</b>             | <b>SD</b>            |

|  | Strongly Agree | Agree somewhat | Undecided | Disagree somewhat | Strongly disagree |
|--|----------------|----------------|-----------|-------------------|-------------------|
| 47) Other people are more important to me than my Pagan friends.                                   | <b>SD</b>      | <b>A</b>       | <b>U</b>  | <b>D</b>          | <b>SD</b>         |
| 48) I am a fast learner.   | <b>SD</b>      | <b>A</b>       | <b>U</b>  | <b>D</b>          | <b>SD</b>         |
| 49) I can achieve most things I set my mind to.  | <b>SD</b>      | <b>A</b>       | <b>U</b>  | <b>D</b>          | <b>SD</b>         |
| 50) Anyone can succeed if they put their mind to it.   | <b>SD</b>      | <b>A</b>       | <b>U</b>  | <b>D</b>          | <b>SD</b>         |
| 51) I find that most political platforms, regardless of affiliation, represent few of my concerns. | <b>SD</b>      | <b>A</b>       | <b>U</b>  | <b>D</b>          | <b>SD</b>         |

**Thank you very much for your help with this study. Your opinions are important. Therefore, if you have any comments, please feel free to write them in the remaining space.**

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR BELTANE 1997



Interview No.-\_\_\_\_\_

Code sex-\_\_\_\_\_

Estimate age-\_\_\_\_\_

Marital status-\_\_\_\_\_

Childhave-\_\_\_\_\_

Why do people get involved in Paganism?

How do people find their way into the community?

Are there transitions people go through in joining the Pagan community?

Are there certain norms or expectations within in the community which almost everyone believes in and attempts to follow?

How and why did you get involved? (probe for 'who's'--develop networks, mentors, and relationships)

How long have you been involved in Paganism? (probe for age)

Are you affiliated with any tradition? (Is it related to Wicca?)

What is the meaning of adopting a different name within the community?

Do you have a different name? What is the meaning of your name?

Why do people attend gatherings such as this one?

Why do you attend gatherings?

What was your first gathering experience like?

What is the meaning of Beltane?

How do Pagans understand birth, experience of life, and death?

How does ritual and ceremony make you feel?

## REFERENCES

Adler, Margot (1996). "Why I am a UU Pagan. Vibrant, Juicy, Contemporary." World X(6) Nov/Dec:14-16.

Becker, Howard (1973). Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance. New York: Free Press.

Bellah, Robert (1964). "Religious Evolution." American Sociological Review 23(3): 358-374.

Bednarowski, Mary Farrell (1983). "Women in Occult America." Pp. 177-195 in The Occult in America: New Historical Perspectives, edited by Howard Kerr and Charles L. Crow. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

Bednarowski, Mary Farrell (1992). "The New Age Movement and Feminist Spirituality: Overlapping Conversations at the End of the Century." Pp. 167-178 in Perspectives of the New Age, edited by James R. Lewis and J. Gordon Melton. Albany, New York: State of University of New York Press.

Becker, Howard (1973). Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance. New York: Free Press.

Berger, Helen A. (1995). "The Routinization of Spontaneity." Sociology of Religion 56(1): 49-61.

Berger, Helen, Evan Leach and Leigh Shaffer (2003). Voices from the Pagan Census: A National Survey of Witches and Neo-Pagans in the United States. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press.

Bergman, Torbern. [1775] 1785. A Dissertation on Elective Attractions. Translated by Thomas Beddoes. London: J. Murray and Charles Elliot. In Eighteenth Century Collection Online (ECCO)(digitized computer file). (<http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/ECCO>)

Besecke, Kelly (2005). "Seeing Invisible Religion: Religion as a Societal Conversation about Transcendent Meaning." Sociological Theory 23(2):179-196.

Bloch, Jon (1997). "Countercultural Spiritualists' Perceptions of the Goddess." Sociology of Religion 58(2):181-190.

- Bloch, Jon (1998). "Individualism and Community in Alternative Spiritual Magic." Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion 37(2):289-302.
- Bromley, David G. and Anson D. Shupe, Jr. (1979). "Just a Few Years Seem Like a Lifetime: A Role Theory Approach to Participation in Religious Movements." Pp. 159-185, in Research in Social Movements, Conflicts and Change Vol. 2, edited by Louis Kriesberg. Greenwich, Connecticut: JAI Press Inc.
- Bromley, David G., Anson D. Shupe, Jr., and Bruce C. Busching (1981). "Repression of Religious Cults." Pp. 25-45 in Research in Social Movements, Conflict and Change Vol. 4, edited by Louis Kriesberg. Greenwich, Connecticut: JAI Press Inc.
- Buckland, Raymond (1969). A Pocket Guide to the Supernatural. New York: Ace.
- Buckland, Raymond (1995). Buckland's Complete Guide to Witchcraft. St. Paul: Llewellyn Publications.
- Buckland, Raymond (1995). Witchcraft from the inside: Origins of the Fastest Growing Religious Movement in America. St. Paul, Minnesota: Llewellyn.
- Campbell, Colin (1972). "The Cult, the Cultic Milieu and Secularization." Pp. 119-136 in A Sociological Yearbook of Religion in Britain Vol. 5, edited by Michael Hill. London: SCM Press.
- Carden, Maren Lockwood (1978). "The Proliferation of A Social Movement: Ideology and Individual Incentives in the Contemporary Feminist Movement." Pp 179-196 in Research in Social Movements, Conflicts and Change, Vol. 1, edited by Louis Kriesberg. Greenwich, Connecticut: JAI Press Inc.
- Catton, William (1968). "What Kind of People Does a Religious Cult Attract?" Pp. 235-242 in Sociology in Everyday Life, edited by Marcello Truzzi. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Cohen, Albert (1966). Deviance and Control. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Coser, Lewis (1956). The Functions of Social Conflict. New York: The Free Press.
- Courtenay, Bradley, Sharan Merriam and Lisa Baumgartner (2003). "Witches ways of Knowing: Integrative Learning in Joining a Marginalized Group." International Journal of Lifelong Education 22(2):111-131.
- Donahue, Michael (1993). "Prevalence and Correlates of New Age Beliefs In Six Protestant Denominations." Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion 32(2):177-184.

Feher, Shoshanah (1992). "Who Holds the Cards? Women and New Age Astrology." Pp. 179-188 in Perspectives on the New Age, edited by James R. Lewis and J. Gordon Melton. Albany, New York: State University of New York Press.

Foote, Nelson N. (1951). "Identification as the Basis for a Theory of Motivation." American Sociological Review 16(1):14-21.

Gallup, George H. and Frank Newport (1991). "Belief in Paranormal Phenomena Among Adult Americans." Skeptical Inquirer 15(Winter):137-146.

Gardner, Gerald (1949). High Magic's Aid. London: Michael Houghton.

Gardner, Gerald (1954). Witchcraft Today. London: Rider and Company.

Gardner, Gerald (1959). The Meaning of Witchcraft. London: Aquarian Press.

Gecas, Viktor (1982). "The Self-Concept." Annual Review of Sociology 8:1-33.

Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von (1963). Elective Affinities. Chicago: H. Regnery Company.

Goff, La Dorna (1996). "Questionnaire Compares Pagans to National Sample." Accord 16(2):26-27.

Griffen, Wendy (1995). "The Embodied Goddess: Feminist Witchcraft and Female Divinity." Sociology of Religion 56(1):35-48.

Harper, Chalres (1982). "Cults and Communities: The Community Interfaces of Three Marginal Religious Movements." Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion Vol. 21(1):26-38.

Hirschi, Travis (1969). Causes of Delinquency. Berkeley, California: University of California Press.

Heckathorn, Douglas (1997). "Respondent-Driven Sampling: A New Approach to the Study of Hidden Populations." Social Problems 44(2):174-199.

Howell, Julia Day (1997). "ASC Induction Techniques, Spiritual Experiences, and Commitment to New Religious Movements." Sociology of Religion 58(2):141-164.

Hunt, Scott J., Robert Benford and David Snow (1994). "Identity Fields: Framing Processes and the Social Construction of Movement Identities." Pp. 185-208 in New Social Movements from Ideology to Identity, edited by Laraña, Entrigue, Hank Johnston, and Joseph Gusfield. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

- Hutton, Ronald (1997). The Pagan Religions of the Ancient British Isles. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Hutton, Ronald (2000). "Paganism and Polemic: The Debate over the Origins of Modern Pagan Witchcraft." Folklore 111(1):103.
- Jacobs, Janet L. (1990). "Women-centered Healing Rites: A Study of Alienation and Reintegration." Pp. 373-383 in Gods We Trust: New Patterns of Religious Pluralism in America, edited by Thomas Robbins and Dick Anthony. New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers.
- Jencson, Linda (1989). "NeoPaganism and the Great Mother Goddess: Anthropology as Midwife to a New Religion." Anthropology Today Vol. 5(2):2-4.
- Jorgensen, Danny L. (1996). "NeoPaganism in America: How Witchcraft Matters Today." Pp. 60-81 in The Religion Factor: An Introduction to How Religion Matters, edited by William Scott Green and Jacob Neusner. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press.
- Jorgensen, Danny L., Scott E. Russell (1999). "American NeoPaganism: The Participants' Social Identities." Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion 38(3):325-338.
- Kalberg, Stephen (2002) Forward to The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, by Max Weber. Los Angeles, California: Roxbury Publishing Company.
- Kelly, Aidan A. (1992). "An update on neoPagan witchcraft in America." Pp 136-155 in Perspectives on the New Age, edited by James R. Lewis and J. Gordon Melton. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Kirkpatrick, R. George, Rich Rainey and Kathryn Rubi (1986). "An Empirical Study of Wiccan Religion in Postindustrial Society." Free Inquiry in Creative Sociology 14(1): 33-38.
- Kitsuse, John I. (1962). "Societal Reactions to Deviant Behavior: Problems of Theory and Method." Social Problems 9: 247-256.
- Kluckhohn, Florence (1961). Variations in Value Orientations. Evanston, IL: Row Peterson.
- Ludeke, Joan Carole (1989). Wicca as a Revitalization Movement Among Post-Industrial, Urban, American Woman. M.A. Thesis, Iliff School of Theology at the University of Denver.

Luckmann, Thomas (1967). The Invisible Religion: The Problem of Religion in Modern Society. New York: Macmillan Company.

Marty, Martin (1970). "The Occult Establishment." Social Research 37(2):212-230.

Melton, J. Gordon, Jerome Clark and Aidan A. Kelly (1991). New Age Almanac. New York: Visible Ink Press.

Melucci, Alberto (1985). "The Symbolic Challenge of Contemporary Movements." Social Research 52(4):789-816.

Merton, Robert K. (1938). "Social Structure and Anomie." American Sociological Review Vol. (3):672-282.

Merton, Robert K. (1968). Social Theory and Social Structure. New York: The Free Press.

Mills, C. Wright (1940). "Situated Actions and Vocabularies of Motive." American Sociological Review 5(December):904-913.

Moondragon, Ahriana (1996). "From the Director's Soapbox." Accord. 16(2):28.

Murray, Margaret (1921). The Witch Cult in Western Europe. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Murray, Margaret (1933). The God of the Witches. London: Sampson Low.

Nakao, Keiko, Robert W. Hodge, and Judith Treas (1990). "On Revising Prestige Scores for All Occupations." GSS Methodological Report No. 69. Chicago: NORC.

Nakao, Keiko and Judith Treas (1990). "Computing 1989 Occupational Prestige Scores." GSS Methodological Report No. 70. Chicago: NORC.

Nakao, Keiko and Judith Treas (1992). "The 1989 Socioeconomic Index of Occupations: Construction from the 1989 Occupational Prestige Scores." GSS Methodological Report No. 74. Chicago: NORC.

Neitz, Mary Jo (1990). "In Goddess We Trust." Pp. 353-373 in Gods We Trust: New Patterns of Religious Pluralism in America, edited by Thomas Robbins and Dick Anthony. New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers.

- Neitz, Mary Jo (1995). "Defining and Sanctioning Sexual Deviance in Contemporary Witchcraft." Pp. 223-235 in Religion and the Social Order, Vol. 5: Sex, Lies and Sanctity, edited by David Bromley. Greenwich, Connecticut: JAI Press.
- Nelson, Geoffrey K. (1969). "The Spiritualist Movement and the Need for a Redefinition of Cult." The Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion VIII(1):152-160.
- Newcomb, Theodore M. (1958). "Attitude Development as a Function of Reference Groups: The Bennington Study." Pp. 420-429 in Readings in Social Psychology, edited by Eleanor Macoby, Theodore Newcomb, Eugene Hartley. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Orion, Loretta (1995). Never Again the Burning Times: Paganism Revived. Prospect Heights, Illinois: Waveland Press, Inc.
- Park, Robert (1967). The City. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Perinbanayagam, R.S. (1985). "Identity, Social Acts and Motives." Pp. 193-216 in Studies in Symbolic Interaction: A Research Annual, Supplement 1, edited by Norman K. Denzin. Greenwich, Connecticut: JAI Press, Inc.
- Reid, Sian Lee MacDonald (2001). Disorganized Religion: An Exploration of the NeoPagan Craft in Canada. Ph.D. Dissertation, Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Carleton University.
- Reineke, Martha J. (1995). "Out of Order: A Critical Perspective on Women in Religion." Pages 430-447 in Women: A Feminist Perspective, 5<sup>th</sup> edition, edited by Jo Freeman. Mountain View, California: Mayfield Publishing Company.
- Roof, W.C. (1999). Spiritual Marketplace: Baby Boomers and the Remaking of American Religion. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Simmons, J.L. (1964). "On Maintaining Deviant Belief Systems: A Case Study." Social Problems 11(3):250-255.
- Snow, David A., Louis A. Zurcher, Jr., and Sheldon Eklund-Olson (1997). "Social Networks and Social Movements: A Microstructural Approach to Differential Recruitment." Pp. 122-132 in Social Movements: Readings on their Emergence, Mobilization, and Dynamics, edited by Doug McAdam and David A. Snow. Los Angeles: Roxbury Publishing Company.
- Stark, Rodney and William Sims Bainbridge (1985). The Future of Religion: Secularization, Revival and Cult Formation. Berkeley: University of California Press.

- Toby, Jackson (1957). "Social Disorganization and Stake in Conformity: Complementary Factors in the Predatory Behavior of Hoodlums." The Journal of Criminal Law, Criminology, and Police Science 48(1):12-17.
- Toch, Hans (1965). The Social Psychology of Social Movements. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill.
- Waldie, Jeannette K. (1996). "Legal Smarts for Pagan Parents." Accord 16(3):12-13.
- Watzke, J. (1969). "Paganization and Deschristianization, or the Crisis in Institutional Symbols: A Problem in Sociological Interpretation." Social Compass 16(1):91-99.
- Weber, Max (1966). Basic Concepts in Sociology. Translated and with an introduction by H.P. Secher. New York: Citadel Press.
- Weber, Max (2002). The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism. Translated by Stephen Kalberg. Los Angeles, California: Roxbury.
- Whitehead, Harriet (1974). "Reasonably Fantastic: Some Perspectives on Scientology, Science Fiction, and Occultism." Pp. 547-590 in Religious Movements in Contemporary America, edited by Irving Zaretsky and Mark Leone. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Wuthnow, Robert (1998). Loose Connections: Joining Together in America's Fragmented Communities. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.
- York, Michael (1995). The Emerging Network: A Sociology of the New Age and Pagan Movements. Lanham, MA: Rowman & Littlefield.
- York, Michael (2001). "New Age Commodification and Appropriation of Spirituality." Journal of Contemporary Religion 16(3):361-372.



## BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

La Dorna McGee completed her undergraduate and MA degree at the University of Texas at Arlington and hopes to continue her education in a PhD program. Afterwards, she hopes to teach at a university.