**SYNOPSIS**

**A Qualitative Study of Men and Women in a Catholic Marian Movement**

1. I will be interviewing individuals who are involved with a local Catholic Marian movement in the Roman Catholic Church, a Schoenstatt community. I will be choosing approximately 15 individuals for these interviews, recruiting based on the degree of interest in doing the interviews. I have already made several informal contacts with individuals inside the movement to assure that I will have access to willing respondents. These participants may represent different ages, genders, socioeconomic statuses and racial/ethnic backgrounds. I will not be assessing the health of these individuals nor asking any questions based on their personal state of health. I will only include coherent adults who are local residents of the Schoenstatt community.
2. The Schoenstatt movement is an international Marian movement recognized by the Roman Catholic Church. The movement consists of tens of thousands of individuals and dozens of communities worldwide and hundreds involved in the southern United States, where I will conduct my study. Through my own personal involvement with the Schoenstatt movement, I have informal contacts with several individuals within the local Schoenstatt movement that I will use through e-mail or social networking means. Once I have contacted those individuals, I will describe to them the nature of my study and the methodology I will be using to collect information. Also prior to each interview, a written consent will be obtained (using the attached document). At the end of each interview, I will ask the participant to recommend any other individuals who would be interested in participating in the study. Because of the community aspect of this study, I will take utmost care in protecting respondernts’ identities by not listing the cities and states in which they reside.
3. The framework for this thesis is rooted in qualitative methodology, with semi-structured in-depth interviews providing the data. The interview guide is presented at the end of the synopsis. These interviews will mostly consist of open-ended questions and provide opportunities for alternative discussions in order to more fully address the idea of self-representation. The participants will be recruited purposively through snowball sampling, as described above (via referral from other respondents), rather than random sampling. Each interview will be conducted at a coffee shop, restaurant, or church, which provides a semi-private area for communication within a public environment. It is anticipated that each interview will take approximately forty-five minutes to one hour to complete. Prior to the interview process, each participant will sign and receive a copy of a consent form, which will be explained to the participant before he/she signs the form. Also, given the permission of the participants, each interview will be recorded and transcribed for later analysis.
4. This study focuses on the experiences of men and women in the Schoenstatt movement. One possible risk to the participants is psychological harm from describing past or present events that may have been or are currently stressful or overwhelming. Also, given the religious nature of this study, there is a possibility that some participants may feel uncomfortable discussing their religious beliefs. While I acknowledge that these risks are serious, I anticipate these risks to be extremely unlikely in this study. At all times, the participants will have the opportunity to not answer a question, not speak about something, and not to be included in the study (through withdrawing their interview). An alternative method that could be used is surveying; however I did not want to limit the respondents to a particular set of questions or answer choices. Thus, I will be using in-depth, semi-structured interviews.
5. I will minimize these potential risks by creating a comfortable environment, free of judgment, within which the individual may speak freely with the option of limiting his/her comments as he/she pleases. I expect that the combined effect of this environment, in addition to the consent form, will be effective in reducing any possible risk. As explained in the consent form, I will take multiple measures to ensure confidentiality of information given by the individual.
6. The potential benefits to the participants will be possibly gained through the act of sharing their experiences, achievements, frustrations and passions with an attentive listener. Also, by participating in this study, respondents can help bring awareness of these groups to the larger population in an accurate way. This study will bring light to this particular religious group, which will add to the collective knowledge on social and religious movements ultimately benefiting society.
7. No monetary or other compensation will be provided to the research participants.
8. The anticipated benefits, both to the individual participants and to society, are greater than the potential risks for the participants. If at any time during the interview process, the individual risk seems greater than the individual benefit, the options for no longer participating will be discussed.
9. This study involves individual experiences and not specific sites/agencies. I will not be working with or for any agency, thus removing the need for approval status from a specific agency.
10. As a graduate student in the Sociology Department, this research study is highly related to my program of work. Throughout the duration of my thesis, Dr. Patti Giuffre will serve as supervising faculty member/thesis committee chairperson.
11. Dr. Patti Giuffre, the supervising faculty member and thesis committee chairperson, has approved my thesis proposal and methodology for soliciting participants and conducting interviews. She has also approved my synopsis and consent form. Her contact information is 512-245-8983, or [pg07@txstate.edu](mailto:pg07@txstate.edu)
12. This project has not been previously reviewed by another IRB.
13. My thesis committee, including Dr. Giuffre, will have access to the unpublished results of this study, during and after its completion. In addition, if I have the opportunity to present this study at a conference, the conference attendees will have access to the unpublished results of this study, after its completion. If I choose to submit this information to an academic journal, any individuals that subscribe to the journal or have access to the journal through academic libraries will have an opportunity to view the published results of this study. Also, study participants will have access to a summary of the study, after its completion.