

#### **Chapter 4: Methods**

How do international organizations that devote attention to reproductive rights and issues vary in their discourse and advocacy about reproductive rights? What are the conditions that promote this variance? This dissertation seeks to answer the following questions:

- 1) Who gets access to sites to define human rights and reproductive issues?
- 2) Within organizations, what is the relationship between interpreting universal conceptions of reproductive rights and being inclusive of diverse women and reproductive practices?
- 3) How do organizations working on reproductive issues conceptualize and bring in the local and/or diverse issues?
  - a) How does this affect who is seen as having expertise to define the issues?
- 4) What is the process through which reproductive rights are constructed in organizations and who is included in this process?
  - a) What tensions do the organizations face in this process and how do they deal with the tensions?

To examine empirically the conditions that affect variation of representation and the outcomes of the different framing strategies, I used a multifaceted qualitative approach. First, I conducted observations of organizations at selected international meetings on gender and/or reproduction where diverse audiences were present. Through these observations, I assess organizations' discourses on reproductive rights and audience reaction to these. Second, I conducted interviews with representatives from organizations, examining issues such as funding, advocacy strategies, and reasons for choosing certain strategies. The interviews allowed representatives of the organization to subjectively characterize how the organization presents itself. Lastly, I conducted document analysis of organizations' websites to further examine each organization's polished presentation.

Through the course of my research, my research questions have been refined and reframed to the form presented above.

In this chapter, I first detail my sampling frame and limits on generalizability. I then discuss each type of method in more detail, including my coding schemas. Lastly, I overview how my methodologies tie into the rest of the chapters of the dissertation.

### *Selection of Cases*

As a qualitative study with a small N, I do not seek to generalize my results to all organizations or even to organizations that deal with reproductive issues. However, based upon my purposeful, thematic sampling frame, I do believe my work can say some things about organizations, particularly those working on international gender issues. I selected my cases using a modified version of Lofland et al's (2006) purposeful sampling frame. This is also known as targeted sampling. My general theoretical criteria for selecting organizations included: a) the organization must have an international focus (defined broadly to include organizations that only do international work to organizations that focus more on one country or region in addition to advocacy concerning international reproductive rights issues), and b) the organization must focus at least in part on reproductive rights. Another practical concern was that the organization had to communicate primarily in English.

I created a sampling frame by conducting an open-ended internet search and creating a database of organizations that satisfied the sampling criterion set out above. Organizations in this database were obtained through internet searches for terms such as "reproductive rights", "reproductive rights organizations" and "international reproductive rights organizations." This led me to web pages of various organizations and I created a list of organizations that work on reproductive issues. I researched these organizations by reading their web pages to see if they fit my theoretical criteria. If they did, the organization was put on the list as a potential contact. This list also included organizations that I observed at the first CSW meeting I attended at the United Nations (although many of these organizations were already included in the sampling frame established from the internet searches).

In terms of the organizations selected from this list, access was a consideration. Time became a factor in contacting organizations and I also rested on the mercy of organizations in terms of whether they would allow me to interview them. A number of organizations clearly stated on their websites that they would not do interviews (Feminist Majority Foundation for example) or they did not respond to my repeated attempts to interview them (for example, the International Planned Parenthood Federation). Thus, in picking organizations for interviews, I first contacted organizations from my list that I had observed at international or Minnesota meetings. This insured that I could use a multi-method approach to understand the organizations' approaches to reproductive rights; both observing and interviewing the organizations met this need.

In searching for reproductive rights/issue organization, most of the organizations I came across were politically or ideologically pro-choice. This is because access to abortion, and more specifically safe abortion, is generally accepted as part of a comprehensive reproductive rights framework (Dixon-Mueller 1993). Indeed, the organizations I studied generally accepted abortion as a part of reproductive rights (although the World Youth Alliance's position is unclear). Nevertheless, the organizations were very different in their framing of this issue and in targeting their messages concerning abortion. For example, abortion may be promoted in terms of women's choices, a common American meaning, or abortion might be promoted more along the lines of controlling certain populations or controlling population generally (see Davis 1983). This is important to my work in thinking about how reproductive rights may have different meanings and different interpretations, not just a pro-life or pro-choice stance.

### ***Participant Observation***

The CSW meetings at the UN were an ideal place to conduct my research regarding reproductive rights and questions of inclusion. Thus, much of my dissertation draws upon the observations of organizations who presented there and my subsequent interviews and analysis of their websites. Other UN meetings, such as the Department of Public Information (DPI) conferences, I also attended, are drawn upon in a more general fashion to discuss representation and inequality globally at the UN. They also provide

further examples of connected reproductive issues such HIV/AIDS as they relate to the examples provided by main organizations studied.

I also observed Minnesota sites. I did this for a few reasons. Although certainly sites in Minnesota are convenient, this was not the theoretical rationale for choosing them. Minnesota is historically known for its Scandinavian and Nordic heritage; a population of white, blond-haired, blue-eyed people. Scandinavian influences on the history, culture, and politics of Minnesota make the state generally more supportive of a welfare system than other states. However, the state and population is changing in relation to new immigrant groups. St. Paul is home to a large population of Hmong, while for many areas of the metro, the Latino population has greatly increased in the last fifteen years. Furthermore, the Twin Cities has one of the highest populations of East Africans in the nation. For many of these populations, there are strong connections to their homelands, making Minnesota a site with international and global relevance.

Although Minnesota is a domestic location, the state does have many ties to international reproductive and gender issues because of the large number of immigrants residing here. In addition, the International Women's Day Celebration, held annually at the University of Minnesota, is sponsored by the organization Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights. As I explain in Chapter 5, the organization began this celebration in Minnesota after attending the Beijing meetings in 1995 to both bring to light issues happening globally, but also to celebrate the international work being done in Minnesota. The organizations I observed in Minnesota are globally focused and yet, they also have a particular local orientation. As I explain in later chapters, this allows for an interesting comparison with the organizations I observed at United Nations meetings.

Two Minnesota locations were used as sites for ethnographic research. The main site, an annual International Women's Celebration held at the University of Minnesota is sponsored and organized by the organization Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights. I conducted observations at the celebrations in two different years. The events at this celebration take place on Saturday and last from early morning to late afternoon. There are various presentations by organizations, a keynote speaker, some form of artistic presentation and a resource area with organizational information and representatives

present. During the two years I went, I primarily attended presentations focused on reproductive issues. Since the event took place in Minnesota, most organizations presenting were located in the Twin Cities metro area. However, the aim of the organizations' messages fit my research interests and questions as the organizations either a) addressed international issues in relation to a general discussion of reproductive rights, or b) highlighted reproductive issues among diverse groups in Minnesota, including immigrants. An informal interview with a representative from Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights was conducted via email to assess the history and structure of the International Women's Day Celebration at the University of Minnesota. After the United Nation CSW meetings, I draw on the Minnesota International Women's Day Celebration frequently in my analysis.

The second Minnesota site was a talk held at the Midtown Minneapolis YWCA by a state representative, co-sponsored by Minnesota Pro-Choice Resources as part of their series on women of color and reproductive justice. I consider this event important because it relates to my concerns on inclusion and intersectionality concerning reproductive issues. Unfortunately, most of the session did not cover reproductive issues. It did highlight other issues, such as access to education for immigrant and minority women, which can be considered part of a broader frame of securing reproductive rights (Correa 1994; Balakrishnan 1994; Hubbard 1994). A representative of Pro-Choice Resources was interviewed to assess how the organization applies reproductive rights universally and incorporates diverse women.

Lastly, I attended a conference hosted at the University of Michigan, entitled "Reproductive Disruptions". This conference had an international focus and reach, in that attendees came from other countries and the next conference was hosted in Sweden. The conference itself was more of an academic conference and not many NGOs were there. Thus, I do not focus on the conference in detail as part of my analysis, but do use it as background to discuss some issues. The conference brought together a mix of academics, mainly social scientists including many anthropologists, with medical professionals, such as doctors, midwives, and nurses. Furthermore, attendees came mainly from the United States and Western Europe. However, as the organizer of the conference, Marcia Inhorn,

a professor of anthropology at the University of Michigan, focuses her current research on the Middle East, a few medical professionals from this area were featured speakers. This conference was not central to my analysis, but does provide perspective on my analysis in the focus on linking social science and the medical field, the discussion of “disruptions” (i.e. pregnancy loss, fertility, and related topics) and the interesting discussions comparing these reproductive issues in vastly different parts of the world.

Overall, I conducted 153 hours of participant observation for my dissertation. Some sites are drawn upon more than others in my analysis, but all sites provide context to various international discourses, including legal, rights, feminist, and medical discourses regarding reproductive rights. The following table summarizes the sites of my observations.

Table 4.1. Observation Sites

<i>United Nations, New York City</i> Commission on the Status of Women Meetings (CSW): 2005 & 2007 Department of Public Information Annual NGO Meeting: 2005 Meeting of the Landlocked and Least Developed Countries: 2006
<i>International Women’s Day Celebration, University of Minnesota</i> 2005 & 2006
<i>Reproductive Disruptions Conference, Ann Arbor, MI</i> 2005
<i>Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA)</i> Pro-Choice Resources Series on Minority & Reproductive Health: 2006

In my observations, I honed in on what was said by organizations in addition to how it was stated and presented. I also examined audience reaction to the materials presented during both the presentations and the reaction afterwards. This included what was stated in addition to tone and other observable cues to discern if the organizations’ messages were met with contestation. I also focused on the environment, including factors such as the use of technology, handouts and other materials made available, the type of quantity of food present and other related factors. These elements were important in looking at how the organizations brand themselves or wish to be perceived (i.e. an expert on the issues). I also focused on general demographics of the presenters and audience such as gender, race/ethnicity, age, and the so forth.

In my analysis of the ethnographic data, I do not apply the same kind of systematic coding as I do for the interviews and website data. Instead I focus on telling the stories of the events through an analytic framework in arguing how what transpired gives a glimpse into how the organizations present themselves, define reproductive rights, tailor their messages about reproductive rights in terms of inclusion, and react to diverse audiences. Thus, I applied more of an inductive approach to the analysis based on key ideas from the literature and also what things came out in the observations that relate to my theories and literature on inclusion and reproductive rights. Furthermore, my first observations at the United Nations were critical in shaping my research agenda for the entire dissertation in addition to creating and framing my interview schedule. Key differences among organizations emerged. These are noted in Table 4.2.

**Table 4.2 Summary of Organizational Types based on Observational Data**

	<b>Reproductive Rights Conceptualizations</b>	
<b>Theoretical Codes</b>	<i>Universal/Essentialist &amp; Target Developing Nations</i>	<i>Inclusive/Intersectional</i>
<i>Human Rights</i>	<u>Top-down philosophy</u> * Funding concerns * UN affiliated agencies key players * Western interpretation human rights Individualized framing of rights	<u>Both local &amp; global</u> * International law work with local context * Incorporates local views * Local NGOs key players
<i>Reproduction</i>	* Non-Western practices problematic * Scientific rationale/demography emphasized * Contraceptive supplies key issue * Organization itself or key international actors experts & define * Population Problems & environmental concerns (target developing nations)	* Barriers to access addressed * Local NGOs experts & define * Broad reproductive concerns (including sterilization) * Clear what local women's reproductive concerns are * Women's agency key issue
<i>Audience Interaction</i>	* Critique information * Negative interactions	* Endorse information * Positive interactions
<i>Theoretical Alignment</i>	<u>Neo-institutionalism</u>	<u>Feminist Theories of Globalization</u>

### **Interviews**

Table 4.3 details the in-depth interviews I completed with representatives from seven organizations. I attempted to contact more organizations for interviews. Only one organization responded to my request stating they would not be able to do the interview, but instead referred me to their webpage. Other organizations never responded to my

email or phone requests. One organization, (NARAL MN) stated they could probably do the interview, but never responded to my three follow up attempts. Lastly, a male at the organization emailed me to state he would do the interview, but was returning from maternity leave. He never responded back to my requests. One organization, Law Students for Choice, received approval to do the interview from their Executive Board, but after three follow up attempts via email to set up a time for the interview I never heard from them. In addition, I conducted an organizational interview via email with Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights. This organization sponsors the annual International Women’s Day Celebration held at the University of Minnesota and I asked them questions regarding participation and inclusion of organizations in this event.

**Table 4.3. Interviews Conducted**

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Interview Location</b>	<b>Respondent’s Title*</b>	<b>Interview Date</b>	<b>Where Organization Observed</b>
Family Care International (NYC)	Phone	Communications & Development Employee	June 2006	CSW 2005
Guttmacher Institute (NYC)	In-person GI office NYC	Communications Specialist	June 2006	CSW 2005
Center for Reproductive Rights (NYC)	In-person CRR office NYC	Head International Work	June 2006	CSW 2005
World Youth Alliance (NYC)	In-person WYA office NYC	Assistant Director	June 2006	CSW 2005
Minnesota International Health Volunteers (Mpls, MN)	In-person MIHV office Mpls, MN	Program Assistant	Spring 2006	International Women’s Day (UMN) 2006
Pro-Choice Resources (Mpls, MN)	In-person PCR office Mpls, MN	Executive Director	Winter 2006	International Women’s Day (UMN) 2005
Abortion Providers Expansion Project (Mpls, MN)	In-person Coffee Shop Mpls, MN	Sole organizer/director	Fall 2006	International Women’s Day (2005)
Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights (Mpls, MN)	Email	Administrative assistant	October 2007	Sponsor & Organize International Women’s Day

*\*Titles of respondent’s may not be exact.*

All interviews were recorded with the interviewee's permission. Most of the interviews took place in person, with the exception of two: a) my interview with Family Care International took place on the phone, and b) my informational interview with Minnesota International Health Volunteers was done via email. I took notes during the interview and later had the tapes transcribed by a professional. Interviews generally lasted around one hour. However, some were shorter because of the time I was allotted by the interviewee (such as Family Care International in which I only had a half hour over the phone), while others lasted longer. As I had my interview questions sectioned off by heading, in the case of a shorter interview, I would make decisions while doing the interview on which questions were the most important to ask. All interviewees read and signed my IRB consent forms. On this form, interviewees were asked how and if they would like themselves or organization named in my written work. All interviewees gave me permission to use their names and organization's names in my work.

My full interview schedule can be found in Appendix A. Questions centered on various themes, which relate to my initial coding scheme for the interviews. I had four parts to my interview schedule. The first part concerned the structure of the organization, including the number of staff, volunteers, general funding and location(s) of the organization. Next, I asked questions concerning the organization's goals and definitions of reproductive rights. In this section of the interview, I would refer back to the organization's mission in asking how this related to reproductive rights and then asked more questions centering on how the organization specifically defines reproductive rights. In my third interview section, titled "Information gathering and dissemination," I asked questions on how the organization gathers information, who they aim their advocacy and messages at, their relationships with other organizations and their funding in relation to its effect on the organization's work. In asking this set of questions, the organizational representatives were able to subjectively explain the organization's work. My last section, titled "Comparative aspects and getting at variation," asked questions regarding some of my observations at the CSW meetings in relation to the "unmet" need for contraception, the importance of including diverse women, and lastly, if time allowed,

prioritization of the organization’s goals. For some of my interviews, this section led to longer discussions. Some were very specific (for example the Center for Reproductive Rights). Other times, a more “conversational” discussion ensued about reproductive issues in relation the experiences of the interviewee, political views, and other related topics (for example Pro-Choice Resources).

An undergraduate research assistant helped code the interviews. My coding included a two-stage process. First, my RA coded for general themes that I identified. After, a “trial run” with a few transcripts, we developed a more in-depth coding scheme, which is displayed below in Table 4.4. In addition, at the conclusion of the coding, my RA and I worked on a coding summary explaining the rationale and “definitions” of the codes. The final codes are listed below and the full summary of the codes can be found in Appendix B.

Table 4.4. Final Interview Codes

<b>Code</b>	<b>Sub-Codes</b>
1. Funding	
2. Organization Explains Self	
3. Partners/Collaborations	
4. History & Founding	a) transitions in organization; b) history
5. Mission & Goals	
6. Definitions: Reproduction & Reproductive Rights	a) concise & comprehensive; b) references to UN documents treaties; c) health; d) rights/empowerment; e) choice/freedom
7. Other organizational interests	a) HIV; b) other
8. Specific Aim of Framing	a) served groups; b) potential actors
9. Structure	a) staff; b) locations; c) decision making; d) projects
10. Philosophical Outlook	
11. Contradictions	
12. Contraceptive Methods	
13. Universality	

Each interview was coded using these. I analyzed and compared codes in each interview (to check for inconsistencies) and across interviews. Furthermore, to assess each organization and compare across organizations, I had my RA write summary memos about each organization in addition to a memo detailing comparisons across them, which I use as a starting point in my analysis. Ultimately, I do not discuss in this dissertation

every issue that we coded. Nevertheless, even codes that are not presented directly inform my analysis of the organizations' framing and interpretation of reproductive rights.

### *Content Analysis of Websites*

I utilized websites in different ways and at different times during the research process. I first consulted websites to see if organizations fit within my theoretical criteria for inclusion in the study. The second time I consulted organizations' websites was prior to conducting interviews with organizations. At this time, I printed relevant webpages of the organizations, which included information on their mission and goals, funding, locations, current projects, staff and other relevant information. I punched and binded this information, separated by organization. After completing my initial generic interview schedule, I utilized the information about each organization from their websites to tailor the interview schedule and add specific questions about the organizations. Thus, for example, I would insert the organization's mission and or goals into the interview schedule either verbatim, if short enough, or summarized, if too long. In addition, I would include information if the organization had more than one location, asking what work happened at the other locations. If the organization had a specific or unique project or idea listed on their website, I would adopt a question in the interview schedule based on this.

A second undergraduate research assistant assisted in the final and detailed coding of organizations' websites. This happened after I conducted observations and interviews and is considered part of my data analysis, but also a check on the other two types of data. As such, I consider websites as part of the organizations' public, polished presentation of themselves. In addition to interview data, this provides a source for assessing to whom the organization is aiming their messages via the type of information on their website, how the information is presented and who is or is not mentioned in the information. Furthermore, since most of the organizations are non-profit, many have detailed funding information listed. Lastly, websites also provide a source to assess the organizations' partnerships with other institutions and organizations through specific mention in their reports, funding and links to other websites.

As such, I followed a similar conceptualization to coding as I did in framing my interview questions. The seven websites listed in Table 4.5 were assessed first.

Table 4.5. Websites Used in Analysis.

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Website URL (home page)</b>
Guttmacher Institute	<a href="http://www.guttmacher.org/">http://www.guttmacher.org/</a>
Center for Reproductive Rights	<a href="http://www.reproductiverights.org/">http://www.reproductiverights.org/</a>
Family Care International	<a href="http://www.familycareintl.org/en/home">http://www.familycareintl.org/en/home</a>
World Youth Alliance	<a href="http://www.worldyouthalliance.org/">http://www.worldyouthalliance.org/</a>
Minnesota International Health Volunteers	<a href="http://www.mihv.org/">http://www.mihv.org/</a>
Pro-Choice Resources	<a href="http://www.prochoiceresources.org/">http://www.prochoiceresources.org/</a>
Abortion Provider Expansion Project	<a href="http://www.prochoiceresources.org/apep.php">http://www.prochoiceresources.org/apep.php</a>

In addition, we also examined the websites listed in Table 4.6 for additional information:

Table 4.6. Comparative Websites of Study Nonparticipants.

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Website URL (home page)</b>
Global Health Council	<a href="http://www.globalhealth.org/">http://www.globalhealth.org/</a>
Population Action International	<a href="http://www.populationaction.org/">http://www.populationaction.org/</a>
Law Students for Reproductive Justice	<a href="http://lsrj.org/">http://lsrj.org/</a>

Table 4.7 provides the coding schema used to analyze websites. The information was then compared across websites to assess differences and similarities in addition to exploring how the websites compared to the information discerned from observations and interviews with the organizations.

Table 4.7. Website Codes.

Structure of Organization
History of Organization
Mission
Goals & Objectives
Website Content
Website Look
Reproductive issues mentioned & who
Groups Mentioned/Aimed

Like the interviews, to assess each organization and compare across them, I had my RA write summary memos about each organization's website in addition to a memo detailing comparisons across them. I use these as a starting point in my analysis. My RA for the interviews double checked the coding on the website data and wrote a summative memo comparing his findings with the interviews to that of the website content analysis.

### ***Putting It Together***

I integrate all of the various sources of data to answer my central research questions. Specifically, participant observation of organizations at events and analysis of organizations' websites is used to uncover organizations' sources of legitimacy and their handling of inclusive or diverse views. In relation to the ethnographic data, I hone in on what was said (and subsequently not said), the environment of the presentation and reaction by audience members to the organizations' messages. I bring back key concepts from my literature review and theoretical ideas to assess the organizations' messages and audience reaction to these to understand first, the framework of the message(s) about reproductive rights the organizations present in concurrence with audience reaction to examine the inclusivity of the message(s). I further use my interview data to discern how the organizations' approach their work and how this affects their framing and interpretation of reproductive issues. Furthermore, the interviews also provide a basis for understanding the organizations' general philosophical outlook in order to perceive how this affects their interpretation of diverse reproductive practices and diverse groups. Lastly, I also focus on contradictions present in regards to how the organizations talk about their work in the interviews and in comparison to how they presented their work in public, activist settings. I also use the interviews to analyze the organizations' views of universality and definitions of reproductive rights. This is gleaned both from specific questions asked about how the organization defines reproductive rights in addition to holistically examining the interview transcripts and comparing with the observational data.

My last concluding chapter brings together all the types of data, though each chapter builds upon each other in having the different types of data speak to each other

throughout the dissertation, to answer my three initial research questions. In this last chapter, I focus on answering these questions in relation to my data, the literature and theories I use by presenting a “typology” of organizations. This “typology” of organizations explains the factors that influenced organizations to be more inclusive of diverse views and practices. This is opposed to organizations that appear to have a less inclusive view of reproductive rights and more Western-centric constructions of reproduction. This allows me to answer my research questions on what affects the interpretation of local and diverse views and reproductive practices and if Western organizations can be inclusive of diverse practices.