

Methodology

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The Project data was gathered via three different methods:

- I. Two lengthy and tightly constructed questionnaires were designed to elicit information relating to:
 - o family and educational history;
 - o current finances;
 - o career choices;
 - o local and world politics;
 - o current relationships, family and lifestyle choices;
 - o personal attitudes and attributes;
 - o health;
 - o the Rhodes Scholarship and its impact on recipients' life choices.

- II. Interviews were conducted in person or by telephone. These interviews were recorded, and transcripts prepared from the recordings.

- III. Outside of the standardized collection processes, Scholars volunteered additional information to more clearly illuminate specific aspects of their lives. Some felt either too personally inhibited or too restricted by our traditional data-collecting techniques. Others had no time or patience to complete the lengthy questionnaires, or felt that their input could be related with more authenticity in an essay or personal correspondence. Some supplemented previous interview or questionnaire responses by volunteering written submissions. Additionally, a number of women felt most comfortable voicing their thoughts in private conversation, with the understanding that their words would remain unattributed.

The Group Studied

We decided to limit the subjects of our study to those female Rhodes Scholars who received the award between 1977 and 1995. The group was thus defined to limit our study pool to women

who were in their mid-30s to early 50s. By the age of 35, we believed, most of the Scholars would have drawn the fundamental parameters of their adult life. Younger Scholars were more likely to show lives and attitudes still in transition; to include them would have risked skewing statistical trends observed amongst the more mature cohorts.

Using existing databases, we identified 446 women worldwide who had won the Scholarship between 1977 and 1995 and thus fell within our study group. Of this number we were able to contact 376 (84 percent) in 2004. Our sample group included women from most of the 13 countries or regions where the Rhodes Scholarship is currently awarded: Australia, Bermuda, Canada, the Commonwealth Caribbean and Jamaica, Germany, Hong Kong, India, Kenya, New Zealand, Pakistan, South Africa, the United States, Zambia and Zimbabwe. We were unable to compile data, however, from Scholars who came from Bermuda (five Scholars) or Hong Kong (three Scholars), either because they did not respond to our questionnaires or because we were unable to find their current contact details. Also amongst our sample group were Rhodes Scholars elected from Europe between 1992-96, a period in which the Scholarship was briefly opened up to candidates from countries within the European Union.

Data Collection

We carried out extensive background research in the fields of gender and elite studies, economics, law, education, parenthood, business, health and politics. Further reading related to the life and achievements of Cecil Rhodes and the histories of other distinguished Scholarship programs.

Questionnaire One

Questionnaire One was designed to collect background information on our participants and to identify common themes across their lives. Much thought was given as to how the format and content of the questions might best address the Scholars' life circumstances. Questions were designed to be as broad as possible, while still permitting classification and quantitative analysis of answers. Draft questions were sent to a panel of advisors from the Rhodes community for comments and revisions. The Questionnaire was then completed and distributed to a group of ten women to test the appropriateness of the questions and the integrity of the research instrument. Their feedback allowed us to finalize the Questionnaire.

Question formats included in Questionnaire One:

- Multiple choice questions, useful in narrowing the possible responses and allow categorization;
- Questions asking for a yes/no answer;
- Questions permitting more than one answer, e.g., requiring the participant to choose any number of adjectives;
- Scaled questions, in which respondents were asked to rate their response on a scale of 1-5, with 1 indicating the lowest or least agreeable end of the scale, and 5 the highest or most agreeable.

Questionnaire One was distributed in June 2004 to the 376 Scholars for whom we had contact information. To avoid offending or alienating participants, we advised the women to answer only the questions with which they were comfortable. We were pleased; not only with the high response rate (56 percent), but also with the fact that many respondents had supplemented their answers on the questionnaire with long and thoughtful marginal comments. The responses to the first questionnaire enabled us to compile 214 pages of data. Several also sent us more organized thoughts in substantial essays and referred us to articles that they had published or enclosed copies of material for which they were seeking publication. Other Scholars called or visited us in England to tell us personally about their lives, challenges, worldview and achievements. While this additional material could not be evaluated as quantitative data, it did disclose the significant level of interest participants felt towards the Project. The discovery that Scholars were open to sharing their experiences – certainly more than originally anticipated – prompted the design of a second questionnaire, one which could explore their lives and concerns in greater depth.

Questionnaire Two

Questionnaire Two, sent in April 2005 to the same 376 Scholars as Questionnaire One, was designed and refined in the same way as the first questionnaire. This questionnaire asked more detailed questions on topics of finances, health, career choices, politics and personal lifestyle. While the questions in Questionnaire One were wholly multiple-choice, Questionnaire Two presented a number of free-response questions to allow participants to express opinions or share

experiences in their own words. The responses to this second questionnaire enabled us to engage in lengthy analysis, resulting in the compilation of 469 pages of data.

Though we guaranteed individual confidentiality for all responses, Questionnaire One had asked Scholars to provide names, addresses and contact details. On Questionnaire Two we did not ask, nor leave space, for Scholars to write their names – allowing for an entirely anonymous response. We note, however, that many Rhodes Scholars chose to give us their names, or other identifying information, on Questionnaire Two. This was useful because it allowed us to cross-reference and combine their answers from both questionnaires, as described below. It is open to speculation whether their self-identification affected the candidness or honesty of their responses. The response rate for Questionnaire Two was 31 percent. A further 70-page volume of data was compiled which cross-referenced and compared responses given in both questionnaires.

Interviews

Further data was gathered, following the two questionnaires, via in-depth interviews with individual Scholars. These interviews commenced at the July 2005 meeting of the Association of American Rhodes Scholars in Philadelphia. Since that summer, researchers have held in-person interviews in Boston, London, New York, Oxford, San Francisco, Seattle, Tel Aviv and Toronto. Other interviews were conducted over the telephone with Scholars living or conducting business in Canada, India, Italy and the United States. Nearly 100 interviews have been conducted and transcribed for our database.

Informal information

Sensitive or confidential material was also reported to the Rhodes Project by Scholars. This was given in written submissions, telephone conversations and individual meetings. Fifty-seven women approached the Project privately to volunteer a variety of information that they wished to remain unattributed.

Data Analysis

The Questionnaires, interviews and informal tips have yielded a wealth of qualitative and anecdotal data. We have analyzed the qualitative data in the following ways:

- List of Preferences: For questions in which the respondent was asked to select a certain number of answers from a longer list, and then to rank those answers in order of importance, the data was analyzed in two ways. The respondents' top-ranked choices were tabulated and converted into percentages for comparison. In addition, we calculated each choice as a percentage of the total responses.
- Scaled Questions: We tabulated "scaled questions" (in which respondents were asked to rate their response on a scale of 1-5, with 1 indicating the lowest or least agreeable end of the scale, and 5 the highest or most agreeable) based on a percentage response to each of the levels. Averages and standard deviation were calculated where appropriate. For those scaled questions where ranges of values were presented – e.g., for questions about income – we tabulated our results in the same way, then calculated median values and quartiles.
- Numerical Data: Strictly numeric data, such as the number of hours participants spend on various pursuits or the number of children they have, were tallied, and summary statistics were calculated accordingly. Determinations such as the definition of a child or a sibling – i.e., whether to include step-children, adopted children, half-siblings, step-siblings, or foster siblings – were left to the respondent. If women considered their family to include non-biological siblings, we kept the data unaltered, acknowledging their personal definition of their own family structure.

We also ran cross-tabulations for questions where insights might be gained from matching responses of two or more questions against each other – e.g., running a cross-tabulation of respondents' incomes against the type of childcare used, would allow us to see whether there was a relationship between the two. Our intent throughout has been to allow the data to drive the research; we not only ran cross-tabulations on those questions that we thought would yield interesting results, we also worked methodically through many different cross-tabulations to see where the data took us. We ran cross-tabulations by age group, home country, and country of current residence. The resultant findings suggested that some of the respondents' differences were, for example, age-related or country-related. When running cross-tabulations by country,

we separated the countries into two categories: U.S. and non-U.S. Since 32 Scholars are selected from the U.S. each year, and the number of Scholarships handed out by non-U.S. countries each year range from eleven (Canada) to a mere one (Bermuda, Pakistan, Zambia), the U.S. has by far the largest number of Rhodes alumnae. We felt that distinguishing between U.S. and non-U.S. Scholars would offer the most appropriate basis for comparison. We are sensitive to other differentiators that have been raised by respondents, such as children, income, race and gender. These issues will be discussed in our presentation of the qualitative data.

Further, we linked Questionnaires One and Two, matching the women who freely identified themselves on Questionnaire Two with their responses on Questionnaire One. We used this data for aggregate cross-tabulations, so that we could link valuable answers from the two questionnaires. We engaged a statistical consultant to assist with this and other numerical analyses and to verify our findings.

In many cases, respondents made copious marginal notes to clarify their responses or to add additional thoughts. We captured these notes in text fields along with the questionnaire responses. In addition to having used these notes as a control, to ensure that we coded the question according to the intent of the respondent, the perspectives revealed therein continued to inform our understanding of these Rhodes Scholars and where possible will be reflected in the narrative sections of this report.

During the statistical analysis and tabulation, detailed notes were maintained to record our methodology. We have taken considerable care to be accurate and grounded in our analysis while capturing the spirit of our respondents' answers.

Summary

No project which seeks to present a dynamic portrait of its participants, including both objective/quantifiable and subjective/experiential elements of their lives, can be infallible in its methodology. We acknowledge, in particular, the potential for self-reporting bias in any study of this kind. Respondents were given the opportunity to review all attributed material used for publication, and we have also sought to include, where appropriate, data collected through less formal means. Yet, this potential for bias is tempered here, as the Project's attempt to sketch

these women's lives is as much or more about how they perceive themselves as it is about how anyone else perceives them. We have collected a great deal of purely quantifiable information, which has provided a solid background and framework upon which to rest our anecdotal data. For this reason the Rhodes Project hopes to probe more deeply and with more resonance into the lives of female Rhodes Scholars than would be possible using only a more standard academic or journalistic approach. The Project marks not only the culmination of extensive research but also hopes to act as a catalyst for further thought and analysis.