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Introduction

Ivan Szelenyi

This issue of Yale Journal of Sociology presents the best senior theses written in sociology during 2006 and 2005. Ann Martin was recipient of the 2005 Mildred Frank Memorial Prize. In 2006, Jennifer Lee received the Mildred Frank Memorial Prize, but the papers by Andrea Chinyere Ezie and Molissa Farber were so outstanding that for the first time in the history of Mildred Frank Memorial prize we identified “runner ups” and these two papers received the title of “honorable mention.”

The Yale Journal of Sociology first appeared in year 2000. As an incoming Chair of the Sociology Department at Yale one of my main priorities was to further improve our undergraduate major, to turn sociology into a prestigious, exciting major, which attracts the best of Yale undergraduates and will become competitive with those excellent liberal art colleges – I name here only Haverford and Reed – which are famous for being the breeding ground of future generation of sociologists. Our aim was and remains to turn Yale into a college from where the best sociology graduate departments want to recruit their graduate students. It was also my belief that sociology can create its niche in social sciences at Yale by focusing already at the undergraduate level on primary research. Our course program offers research tools to our students that they can sue to discover the social world for themselves and make original contributions to the science of sociology. One of my main ambitions by coming to Yale was to promote primary research by our undergraduate majors. When in 1999 I had the privilege to join the faculty at Yale we already had a good undergraduate program which encouraged undergraduate research but

we hoped that by launching an undergraduate journal, the Yale Journal of Sociology, we can further improve our undergraduate education.

The four senior theses that appear in the 2006 issue of Yale Journal of Sociology are a testimonial to the quality of work done by our graduating majors. It also shows the diversity of methods and substantive topics our students are engaged with.

The senior thesis research was supervised by one member of the faculty, Chinyere worked with Jennifer Bair, Molissa with Philip Smith, Jennifer with Hannah Brueckner, Ann with Rachel Sherman. This issue of Yale Journal of Sociology honors our excellent students and also their dedicated faculty supervisors.

I briefly introduce each the four theses.

(1) **Andrea Chinyere Ezie** (*Understanding Global Embeddedness: Discourses on Self, Work and Globalization among Kenyan Apparel Workers*) became interested in the consequences of economic globalization. Most of the scholarly literature deals with macro consequences of globalization, either arguing that globalization is a major vehicle of economic development in underdeveloped economies or seeing globalization as a mechanism to extract resources and labor from poorer countries. Chinyere's research focuses instead on the individual. She tried to understand the process by which workers in globally-integrated workspaces make sense of their roles within multinational corporations. During the summer of 2005 she carried out ethnographic field research in Kenya and examined how garment workers in the globally-integrated Kenyan apparel industry make sense of their lives and their work. She conducted 50 in-depth interviews with women and men working in an Export Processing Zone (EPZ) in Kenya. The paper reports substantial differences in men's and women's viewpoints on EPZ work. "Male EPZ workers are not vulnerable to the

same forms of harassment (i.e. sexual harassment) as women, and also receive better compensation. Conversely, women are not as wage dependent as men because they are the second source of income in their households.” Despite these fundamental gender differences, male and female workers all believe – much like garment workers working for other multinational firms in other countries – that their remuneration is not commensurate with the profit derived from their grueling labor.

(2) **Molissa Farber** (*Patrolling the Cuckoos Nest*) became interested on the consequences of liberalizing legal reform in the mental health system for the staff psychiatric hospital. Sociologists tend to sympathize with the “underdog,” in this case with the patients. Hence our intuition would suggest the legislation defending patient’s rights is socially progressive. Melissa, however, in her intriguing research presents the point of view of hospital staff. She conducted ethnographic research in one mental hospital in a major American city. She carried out observations of ward life and interviewed staff, nurses, psychiatrists, administrators, and attorneys. She found that hospital staff that is in charge of the enforcement of rules and the maintenance of order saw the liberalizing legal reform as a threat to the ability of the staff to perform their jobs effectively. “The mandates of the reform conflicted with what the staff perceived as the most effective way to deal with problems on the wards. This created a frustrating situation of workplace anomie that staff relieved by endowing with increased social importance the coercive measures of control still available to them.”

(3) **Jennifer Lee** (*Normative Dissonance and Anomie: A Prospective Microlevel Model of Adolescent Suicide Ideation*) uses sophisticated statistical methods and analyzes panel data from Waves 1 and 2 of the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health on suicide ideation. She asks whether suicide suggestion or Durkheim’s

theory of anomie offers a better explanation of suicide, the third leading causing of death among adolescents aged 10-19 years in the United States.

Jennifer found that “parental anomie, as experienced as normative dissonance between the adolescent and the parents, has a significant effect on adolescent suicide ideation, greater than that of suicide suggestion from friends and family members.” She concludes that Durkheim’s theory of anomie is a more useful paradigm than suicide suggestion, though the theory of suicide suggestion receives some support hence she believes that “it may be more helpful to view suicide suggestion as a complementary, rather than a competing paradigm to Durkheim’s theory.”

(4) **Ann Martin** (*Academic and Social Motivators for Public and Private School Choice: A Case Study of a Small Town*) selected a small town, Midcoast in New England to understand school choice. Midcoast is an interesting case for posing this question since most Midcoast families have the economic resources to afford private school. Why do some parents opt for private schools, while others chose public schools? Ann conducted interview in ten families. Four had children in private four in public school, 2 two had children in both. She found “that parents in higher SES brackets [did] not inherently prefer private schools, and public education can be as successful as private.” According to Ann’s interviews parents do not only evaluate the academic performance of the schools, many parents when deciding which school to send their children want to find the school which has the best relationship with the community. “Parents pick schools based on where their family feels like a part of a relationship and a community. Children need to be socially integrated, parents need to

feel that the school supports their values and is responsive to their involvement, and families need to be part of a larger community.”

As the outgoing Director of Undergraduate Studies at the Department of Sociology, Yale University I am proud to present you these four excellent senior essays as a testimonial to the talent of our students and dedication of our faculty to undergraduate education.

Ivan Szelenyi

William Graham Sumner Professor of Sociology and

Professor of Political Science

Director of Undergraduate Studies

Understanding Global Embeddedness: Discourses on Self, Work and Globalization among Kenyan Apparel Workers

Andrea Chinyere Ezie

INTRODUCTION

The topic of economic globalization has fascinated social scientists for several decades. In fields as diverse as anthropology and economics, theorists have debated whether trade liberalization, transnational capital flows and transnational production networks are good for development and civilization. Over the years, polemics have emerged on both sides of the platform. Neo-liberal economists assert that economic integration is a preeminent source of development and stabilization. Conversely, leftist intellectuals decry global integration as a process that halts development and lets wealthy nations and powerful corporations extract and appropriate resources and labor from poorer countries.

While debates on global integration frequently involve discussion of nations, cultures, factories and households, it is possible to reframe these questions so that they focus more on individuals. Global integration is not merely participation in the world economic system—the act of sewing or assembling goods—instead, it can be thought of as the state of being globalized, both in terms of work-force participation and cognitive sensemaking, the process by which workers in globally-integrated workspaces make sense of their roles within them. Furthermore, integration can be evaluated in terms of the quality of global economic information workers possess, the way they acquire it, and how this information is used. By considering globalization in such a light, we establish not just the mere “fact” of integration, but also the

“degree” of integration that exists in a locality and the variety of responses to it.

Thus, taking global integration to be rooted both in experience and cognition, this paper examines how garment workers in the globally-integrated Kenyan apparel industry make sense of their lives and their work. I have selected Kenya’s 38,000 garment workers as the focus of my study because of the complex transnational network they are enmeshed in via their work. Since the passage of the U.S African Growth and Opportunity Act in 2000 (AGOA), Kenya has metamorphosed from a fledgling producer of domestic apparels to the third largest garment exporter in Sub Saharan Africa. \$266 million dollars of Kenyan apparel were shipped to the United States in 2005, constituting 59% of Kenya’s exports for the year (EPZA 2005). By outperforming other export industries, apparel manufacture in Kenya has become a preeminent source of regional and global economic integration.

Integration into the global economy has also made the Kenyan apparel industry extremely volatile. Since the World Trade Organization’s apparel quota regime expired on January 1st, 2005, American buyers who source in Kenya have begun patronizing low cost producers in South and East Asia. Thus far, the consolidation of garment manufacture to Asia has led to the closing of seven garment factories in Kenya. However, the reconfiguration of the garment industry has the potential to cause even more damage over time. The expiration of MFA quota provisions is often compared to the tsunami of 2004, because it will potentially deprive more than half a million workers in the “global periphery” of their basic livelihoods (Barboza 2005).

Considering the complex transnational linkages that garment manufacture has created in Kenya, as well as the global economic processes that now appear to be threatening its existence, this project investigates what economic integration means from the vantage point of *workers*. Specifically, I seek to understand how Kenyan apparel workers understand and interpret their position in global production systems, what factors influence their processes of sensemaking, and how this knowledge gets accrued, transferred and assimilated by workers inside and outside the factory setting. Here, sensemaking refers to the process of “constructing, filtering, framing and creating facticity”—or, developing new understandings of self, environment and society based on experience and learning (Turner 1987, Weick 1995: 14).

DISCUSSION OF GLOBAL FACTORIES IN THE SOCIOLOGICAL LITERATURE

By exploring the experiences of Kenyan apparel workers, my inquiry contributes to an important body of research concerning global factory work. Since the rise of export processing zones in the late 1970's, many scholars have written on globalized factories as they relate to development, female wage work, workers rights and labor organizing. Through discussion of workplace harassment, the feminization of poverty and changing modes of household reproduction, research on global factories has enlivened debates on globalization and expanded notions of development to include both economic and social indices (Zohir and Paul-Majumder 1994, Dani 1997, Sharmin Absar 2001, Ward et al. 2004, Ross 1997, Rothstein and Blim 1992, Collins 2003). Despite its thorough treatment of women, labor and globalization, the literature on global factories does not

explore the processes of sensemaking which take place among overseas workers. Most scholarship on global factories discusses the macro-processes of manufacture without exploring the micro-processes inherent within: particularly, the ways that workers produce their self-concepts and make sense of their embeddedness in volatile, exploitative and globally-integrated production processes. This is true even of ethnographic work on the garment and apparel industry. Generally, the majority of anthropological studies on garment work limit their discussion of these subjects to the topics of social reproduction, household production and labor insurgency (Fernandez Kelly 1983, Igelsias Pierto 1985, Carvey 1998).

The best treatment of worker subjectivities and sensemaking in globalized workplaces can be found in the anthropological writings of Chung Yuan Kay (1994), Margaret Tally (2003) and Pun Ngai (2005), which focus on the topic of export manufacture in East Asia. Chung Yuan Kay's "Conflict and Compliance: The Workplace Politics of a Disk-Drive Factory in Singapore" expands the frame of traditional factory research by examining the discourses on work that exist among Singaporean factory workers. Here, the author's analysis centers on worker's "personal stores of knowledge" and their everyday acts of resistance. She concludes that women workers resist and contest managerial control through "verbal subterfuge," shop floor collusion, and other [subtle] acts of insubordination (Kay 1994: 217). The sum of these parts is factory consciousness, which Kay characterizes as redrawing of "the limits of control at the point of production," and denying management some "power to be" (Kay 1994: 223).

Pun Ngai's (2005) *Made In China* also theorizes about the female "worker-subject." Tracking female migrant workers on the shop floor, in factory dormitories, and in the center city as they shop for goods,

Ngai concludes that women's experiences are multi-sited and multilayered, consisting of both "domination and resistance, dream and desire and hope and anxiety" (Ngai 2005: 163). Her analysis points out that workers experience their employment in globally integrated companies in subjective and oftentimes contradictory terms. Within the lives of the workers that Ngai follows, we see an interwoven tapestry of frustration and fulfillment that is constantly battled with and negotiated.

Last within this group, Margaret Tally's "The Illness of Global Capitalism," explores the way in which frustration is embodied among female customer service workers. Premising her study on the fact that "workers bodies have not been actively theorized in studies of labor," Tally observes that female workers' bodies are commodities in production processes as well as vessels for instrumental and physical pain (Tally 2003: 4). Consequently, although Tally's work does not perform discourses analysis per se, it examines a subject that my research is deeply invested in: namely, the way that work influences women's senses of self, their "persons" and their daily lives.

Yet, while these authors make significant contributions to our understanding of worker subjectivities, they overlook a topic that is central to this study—namely, the topic of how workers acquire global economic information and how they incorporate it into their lives as workers. Within the field of research pertaining to globally-integrated industries, the only literature that shares my interest in this topic is research on transnational advocacy networks, or TANs (Featherstone 2002, Feldman 1997, Streeten 1997, Keck and Sikkink 1998, 2001). In "Transnational Advocacy Networks in International and Regional Politics," anthropologists Keck and Sikkink (1998) develop a political process model that describes the way that knowledge is created and transferred between actors in the Northern and Southern Hemispheres.

Here, the authors conclude that information is a resource that players in the South give activists in the North so that they can raise awareness about their struggles and further their advocacy initiatives (Keck and Sikkink 1998).

Though insightful, the limitation of this TAN analysis is that it revolves around a circumscribed set of participants—namely, globally integrated workers and foreign activists. Although there is a history of transnational activism in Kenyan EPZs, I cannot limit my analysis to this class of interactions alone, nor can I presume that information is important to workers solely because of its potential as an advocacy tool (Keck and Sikkink 1998). Given Keck and Sikkink’s limiting definitions, my research expands the conceptual frame of TAN research by examining the role of global economic information in workers’ own processes of sensemaking, and by looking at all of the points where social networks, knowledge, consciousness and experience intersect—not just the points which involve Northern activists.

Beyond social movement network theory, this paper also benefits from research in organizational and social psychology. In *Gender Symbolism and Organizational Cultures*, Gherardi (1995) argues that workers’ identities and discourses on employment are mediated by their position in gender binaries and social hierarchies. Similarly, Stanley Harris (1994) asserts that workers make sense of their jobs through “schemata,” or subjective knowledge systems based on past experience (Harris 1994: 308). Harris identifies three types of schemata that are relevant to workers’ self conceptions: self-in-organization schema,” “person-in-organization schema, and “organizational schema (Harris 1994: 318). These schemata are both reflexive and subjective: workers’ impressions are shaped by the way they deconstruct the organizational world around them.

Since my investigation centers on one case study, I will not make broad claims regarding how workers in the Southern Hemisphere perceive global production and economic globalization. Nevertheless, my project will make noteworthy contributions to sociological theory and research. I hope to illuminate topics that have not been fully explored in the literature. In addition, my research will enrich existing studies on the Sub Saharan apparel industry by introducing qualitative analysis and bringing research on Kenyan garment industry up to date with the post-MFA period (Gibbon 2003, 2004, 2005; Gibbs 2005, McCormick 2001, McCormick, Kinyanjui and Ongile 1997).

Finally, I anticipate that my project will enhance global factory research by broadening its focus to include, rather than exclude, analysis of men's experiences. Contrary to traditional suppositions, men are not absent from garment firms, nor are they managers or solely supervisors; instead, they range in scope from machine operators and pressmen to washers and packers, who work in departments alongside women. In making sense of workers' embeddedness in global production networks, it is important to examine workers of both genders and to consider their lives on the shop floor as well as outside the firm. Although this approach breaks from the precedent of the literature,¹ it allows me to analyze the ways that gender and social location affect workers' experience of global integration.

BACKGROUND ON THE KENYAN EXPORT APPAREL INDUSTRY

The rise of garment manufacture in Kenya can be traced to the passage of the U.S. Trade and Development Act of 2000, better known as the

¹ Although its findings do not engage my own research, Salzinger's (2004) *Genders in Production* is a refreshing exception to this trend.

African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA). Before the advent of AGOA, only two dozen EPZ firms were operational in Kenya and apparel was manufactured solely for domestic consumption. Today, however, Kenya has 74 EPZ firms – with more than half working in the area of apparels (EPZA 2005). Garment manufacturers represent the largest cluster of EPZ firms in Kenya, as well as the largest source of AGOAs exports. 77% of Kenya’s AGOA exports fall under the heading of garments and apparel (AGOA.info 2006).

Thanks to AGOA’s provisions concerning duty-free and quota-free apparel export privileges for beneficiary countries, apparel manufacture has become a critical industry in Kenya and one of the nation’s largest employers. EPZ garment firms employ upwards of 1,200 workers each and are some of the largest formal employers of women in the country. Of the 37,723 Kenyans that work in EPZs in Nairobi, Mombasa and Athi River, an estimated 80 percent are female garment workers (EPZA 2005). Export processing zones are also a preeminent source of foreign investment in Kenya, albeit portfolio investment. The primary buyers of Kenyan apparel are American retailers like Wal-Mart, Target, Sears and Match point, among which Wal-Mart is the largest customer. In addition, a wide range of brand marketers source their garments from Kenya. These include Jordache, U.S. Polo, Joe Boxer and Dickies (*Kenya Human Rights Commission 2003b*).

Within the literature on global production networks, Kenya’s apparel industry can be classified as a buyer-driven commodity chain (Gereffi 1994). This term denotes information regarding both industry structure and industry control. In regards to structure, the Kenyan garment industry is a buyer driven commodity chain because it is “highly competitive and globally decentralized factory system with low entry barriers” (Gereffi 1994, Gereffi 2001: 3). Meanwhile, in terms of

industry control, the Kenyan garment industry is buyer-driven because retailers, fashion designers and branded manufacturers are the lead agents of production.

For theorists like Gereffi (1994), economic development and industrial upgrading occur on buyer-driven commodity chains when suppliers wrest control from their buyers and assume larger and more diversified roles in production—which is to say, greater levels of horizontal integration. This paradigm aptly describes the range of conflict that actors in the Kenyan apparel industry have faced since the growth of the industry in 2000. For officials at the Kenyan Export Processing Zone Authority, conflict has revolved around the struggle to realize national development goals vis a vis an industry known for portfolio investment, labor-exploitation, and destabilizing competition.

Meanwhile, among workers, conflict has consisted of the struggle for sustenance vis a vis employment that lacks regularity and stability, both in terms of work hours and future prospects. Finally, among factory owners, the struggle has been to adapt to global economic pressures and buyer demands whilst maintaining a labor regime and a regulatory environment that is designed to ensure profit. Thus, the struggle for development (and alternately profit) vis a vis Kenya's labor-intensive garment industry has been a struggle for value chain governance amongst various actors²

Nonetheless, the struggle for export-led development in Kenya has also been a struggle for sustainability at the industry level. As an AGOA beneficiary, Kenya faces competition from African countries that also benefit from U.S. trade concessions: namely Lesotho, Swaziland, Madagascar, Botswana, Namibia, Malawi, South Africa,

² See Appendix A for a graphical depiction of a global apparel chain.

Uganda and Mauritius (AGOA info 2006).³ As a recent entrant into export apparel industry, however, Kenya also competes with better-established garment manufacturers in East Asia, South Asia and Latin America. Competition with these countries has been particularly stiff in wake of the WTO's recent deregulation of the apparel market. When compared to Kenya, buyers to the Chinese market benefit from the comparative value of Chinese labor, the convenience of locally-produced threads and textiles, and the availability of full package manufacturers, or garment firms that source their own raw materials and assist their buyers on issues related to fashion design (Bair and Gereffi 2003).

Unlike its competitors in China, full package garment manufacture and raw material production do not occur in Kenya. Instead, manufacturers in the Kenyan industry import their thread, yarn and textiles from East Asia and sew them locally. Not only does this arrangement prevent capital from accruing locally, it jeopardizes manufacturers because it relies on Kenya's continued recognition as a Less Developed Country under AGOA. Under the LDC Beneficiary Clause, Kenya is exempt from stipulations that require AGOA garments to be made from African or American textile. When the LDC Beneficiary Program expires in September 2007, Kenyan manufacturers will be forced to source costly local fabrics, a shift which analysts predict will be the death knell of the industry (Kathuri 2005).

The precariousness of investment in the Kenyan garment industry is a constant source of anxiety for policymakers, and as a result, policies on apparel work are constantly being reformulated by the

³ Mauritius's garment industry dates back to the 1970s.

government. In 2004 and 2005 the Value Added Tax was briefly levied in 2004 in order to generate government revenue, but after a flurry of threats, the VAT on textile imports was dropped (Akumu 2004). Then, in the aftermath of the failed tax levy, parliamentarians fielded proposals to expand the EPZ sector at large and extend the ten year tax holidays for EPZ investors by another five years -- a move that would absolve companies of their duty to pay corporate tax and VAT for the entire duration of AGOA (Anyanzwa 2004). Officials at the Kenyan Export Processing Zone Authority (EPZA), Kenyan Ministry of Planning and Development and Kenyan Association of Manufacturers have also begun planning an initiative that would create an indigenous cotton industry (Ndurya 2006). This project responds to global commodity chain theory concerning the importance of horizontal integration to development (Gereffi 1994).

Outside the sphere of macroeconomic policy, however, the Kenyan government takes a largely laissez-faire approach to managing the export sector. Kenya's export apparel industry is primarily foreign-owned and heavily privatized. Of the 41 Export Processing Zones that exist in Kenya, 14% are Kenyan owned, 28% are jointly owned, and 58% are owned exclusively by foreigners (U.S. Department of State 2006). Similarly, only one EPZ in Kenya—the Athi River EPZ in Athi River, Kenya—is publicly managed (U.S. Department of State 2006).

Private investment, however, is just one facet of Kenya's institutionalized laissez faire philosophy. The government agencies that oversee export manufacture in Kenya also take a laissez faire approach to labor regulation. The best evidence of this disposition can be found in the government's handling of a 2003 EPZ strike that saw garment country-wide workers walk off their jobs and protest conditions (Kenya Human Rights Commission 2003a.). Although stakeholders organized

forums between workers and employers within the first weeks of the strike, negotiations broke down following pressure from factory owners (Kenya Human Rights Commission 2003a). Rather than address worker's grievances, the Minister of Labor opted to declare their work stoppage illegal and give factory managers permission to dismiss them all (Kenya Human Rights Commission 2003b).⁴

The short term consequences of this authorization were disastrous. On February 3, 2003, more than 9,200 EPZ workers were dismissed from their jobs abruptly and without receipt of their terminal benefits (Kenya Human Rights Commission 2003b). Retrenched workers were forced to reapply for their jobs while labor organizers were blacklisted from EPZ work entirely. The government also implemented a detrimental salary plan that changed workers' status from casual to permanent but reduced real wages considerably (Wasonga 2006). Consequently, the only real achievement of the 2003 strike was winning union recognition, and even the reach of this victory was limited due to concerns among investors that unions would increase their costs prohibitively.⁵ In the end, the only EPZ that came to have Unions was the publicly managed export processing zone in Athi River.

The failure of the labor movement was not due to a lack of awareness on the part of the government, however. The problems of low wage, forced and unpaid overtime, sexual harassment, verbal harassment, unpaid maternity leave and occupational hazards that are endemic to the Kenyan garment industry are well known by Ministers and government officials. While conducting interviews at the EPZA

⁴ Please consult Kenya Human Rights Commission (2003b) for a full chronology of the strike.

⁵ Although the right to organize is protected under Cap. 234, the Trade Dispute Act, it has never been enforced. To this day, EPZ factories in Athi River are the only factories that have been unionized.

Headquarters in Athi River, an official told me: “If only wages could be higher... things are really tough for workers.” Thus, the government’s suppression of the EPZ workers movement demonstrates the extent to which “investors’ rights” are valued over workers’ rights.

Despite the government’s stony disposition towards workers, export processing zones have been a target of advocacy for several non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Kenya. Throughout the strike of 2003, a non-governmental organization called the Kenya Human Rights Commission lobbied alongside workers for improved working conditions. These efforts garnered the solidarity of international labor organizations like the Clean Clothes Campaign. The CCC issued an urgent appeal on its website urging its supporters to write letters to Wal-Mart, Target, and the Kenyan Ministry of Labour (Kenya Human Rights Commission 2003a). Representatives from the Clean Clothes Campaign also traveled to Kenya in April 2003 to assess EPZs conditions for themselves.

In the years following the unsuccessful strike in the EPZs, the Kenya Human Rights Commission has involved EPZ workers in rallies concerning workers rights in the sectors of garments, agriculture, and horticulture, invited workers to one-day seminars on workers rights, and published literature on EPZ conditions using grants from the Clean Clothes Campaign and Oxfam (Ouma 2005). In addition, the Tailors and Textiles Workers Union continues to try and register EPZ workers outside of Athi River, albeit unsuccessfully and rather half heartedly (Wasonga 2006).

RESEARCH METHODS AND DESCRIPTION OF DATA

The findings of this project are based on three months of qualitative fieldwork in Kenya. Between June and August 2005, I completed 50 formal, in-depth interviews with garment workers using the snowball sampling method.⁶ My respondent pool was diverse in terms of place of work, job title, current employment status, length of time on the job, prior work history, educational background and marital status. My respondent pool was also unique due to its sex makeup. While women are traditionally the subjects of research on apparels, my project consciously broke from this mold. I interviewed a roughly proportional group of female and male workers, under the premise that members of both sexes are intrinsic to the garment production process in Kenya, and that both hold valuable perspectives and subjectivities.

All of my interviews with workers were 60 minutes to 2 hours in duration. Interviews were conducted in discreet cafes at a distance from EPZ firms or in workers' actual homes. Since Kiswahili and English are both national languages in Kenya, most of my interviews took place comfortably in English. On several occasions, however, interviews were done in Kiswahili with help from a bilingual translator.

Interviews generally began with discussion of the tasks that workers perform on the job, the dynamics of employer - employee relations, and workers' perspectives on working conditions and pay. Here, I was particularly interested in resolving how low-level employees interact with managers, and whether this class of interactions is conducive to information-transfers. Workers were also asked to give their perspectives on the Kenyan labor movement and relay any direct experiences that they have had with human rights

⁶ See Appendix B for additional information concerning research methods.

activism or labor organizing. This helped me get a sense of some of the alternative information networks that workers are enmeshed in.

After establishing this baseline profile, workers were also asked about their knowledge of the African Growth and Opportunity Act, the end markets for their goods, the retail value of the goods they produce, export-oriented growth models, the geographical location of other EPZs and other garment industries, and their level of familiarity with terms such as “sweatshops,” “globalization” and “multinational corporations.” These questions were designed to glean the type of socioeconomic information workers possess about the global garment industry and the importance of this information to their own self-conceptions.

My final subset of interview questions dealt with the ways in which workers get economic information. Here, I asked my interviewees to describe their levels of contact with local labor activists, unions, local NGOs and international workers rights organizations, and the types of information they gain from them. I also asked workers about their level of viewer ship of local and international newspapers, television programs (emphasis on TV news), and radio. Finally, I asked workers to describe the primary places they obtain information about trade, human rights and the global apparel industry – giving names of places and people where possible.

In addition to interviewing workers, I spent eight hours a week conducting ethnographic participant/observer research in select field sites. A considerable amount of these observations occurred during meetings of the EPZ Workers Association, a grassroots organization led by five former garment workers. I also reported to actual Export Processing Zones each day, interviewing laid-off workers in the mornings and afternoons and interacting with presently employed

workers during their lunch hours. Finally, I spent a significant amount of time in the slum communities where workers lived, visiting members of the Export Processing Zone Association in their homes and occasionally conducting interviews. Consequently, although my fieldwork was less extensive than my interview research, it offered me insights on lives of workers outside the factory setting.

While my respondents had work experience in a variety of EPZ factories (including factories in Mombasa), the majority of workers I spoke to hailed from a cluster of garment firms in Nairobi and Athi River. Given their centrality to the commentary that follows, these workplaces are described below. Included is information concerning factory location, factory ownership, basic wage rates for permanent workers, factory policies towards Unions, and its reputation among workers in my sample.

FIGURE 1: DESCRIPTION OF RESPONDENTS' EPZ GARMENT FIRMS (CON'T)

Name of Firm	Sri Lankan Star	Right Choice Garments ^{&}	Pyramid Apparels	Quality Tex	Pride of Kenya Apparel	Bombay Fashion
<i>Ownership</i>	Sri Lankan	Sri Lankan	Bangladeshi	Sri Lankan	American	Indian
<i>Location</i>	Thika Road, Nairobi	Thika Road, Nairobi	Thika Road, Nairobi	Thika Road, Nairobi	Industrial Area, Nairobi	Industrial Area, Nairobi
<i>Basic Wage[#]</i>	Ksh. 5,600/-	Ksh. 4,200/-	Ksh 4,900/-	Ksh. 4,700/-	Ksh. 5,100/-	Ksh. 5,200/- ⁺
<i>Workforce</i>	2,200 people	1,800 people	2,000 people	2,000 people	2,500 people	2,000 people
<i>Unions</i>	Workers can register, but Union not recognized	Workers can register, but Union not recognized	Workers can register, but Union not recognized	Workers can register, but Union not recognized	Union recognized, shop steward present	Union recognized, shop steward present
<i>Reputation</i>	Known as the best EPZ factory on Thika Road	Known as the worst EPZ factory on Thika Road	Criticized for poor treatment of workers	Criticized for poor treatment of workers	Criticized for long working hours	Criticized for long working hours, late payment

[&]Since closed [#] Calculated for permanent workers, does not include house allowance

FINDINGS ON SENSEMAKING AMONG EPZ WORKERS

My research on Kenyan EPZs indicates that garment workers build their perceptions of EPZ work and global garment manufacture through their positions in production and shop floor hierarchies, their interactions with other EPZ workers within gendered social networks, and their viewership of newsmidia both in the workplace and in the home. As one might expect, these processes of sensemaking are not circumscribed into absolute binaries such as “at home” and “at work.” For instance, sensemaking on gendered social networks occurs both inside and outside the factory and involves a combination of current garments workers, former workers, and family members and friends.

My study also reveals that the information which flows down these channels is rich and varied. Workers learn the names of apparel buyers, the cost of finished garments, the geographic reach of apparel manufacture, the volatility of global production chains and trends in global competition. In addition, workers learn about working conditions in other Kenyan factories, forms of resistance that are available to workers, and prospects for the industry at large. Thus, workers perceptions of self and work are bifurcated into the categories “global” and “local.”

Sensemaking on the Shop Floor

As the source of workers’ integration into the global economy, EPZ factory floors play host to an intricate web of production relationships and interactions and are preeminent sites of knowledge acquisition among garment workers. While working laboring on the shop floor, workers learn about the end consumer markets for their goods, the geographical reach of EPZ garment manufacture, and the

working conditions facing workers in other countries. Given the patterns in my data, this learning on the part of workers is a function of their company's organizational structure, its corporate ideology, managerial style, and the ethnicities of its staff persons.

Managerial style has a large impact on learning among workers because supervisors frequently address workers and reprimand them over matters relating to target, production quality, and compulsory overtime. Here, the ethnicity of supervisors also plays a part in worker learning. Most of the upper level management working in Kenyan garment firms migrated to Kenya from Asian countries with burgeoning garment industries of their own. As a result, many expatriate supervisors juxtapose Kenyan workers with garment workers from East Asia when chastising Kenyans about the shortcomings in their production. These discourses convey a great deal of information to Kenyan workers regarding the geographic reach of EPZ garment manufacture, and workers often internalize the information they acquire through these interactions.

For instance, when I asked Alice from Right Choice where EPZs were located outside of Kenya, she immediately responded: "Sri Lanka. Supervisors always say that Sri Lankans, they're always here on the job, that when he comes to work, he is supposed to work even eight hours, he is sure of what he's doing, and in those hours he has already reached his target."

I observed another case of sensemaking-through-reprimand while talking to a Right Choice Pressman named George. When asked about garment manufacture outside of Kenya, George told me: "Supervisors always tell us that Kenya is being paid a lot of money compared to China, Bangladesh, and other African countries. In Africa, we are the highest paid." Thus, workers at Right Choice acquire much of their

knowledge about global garment manufacture while being reprimanded for their ‘poor’ work-ethic, given their ‘high’ compensation.⁷

Variants of this phenomenon take place at other factories as well. At Quality-Tex, a machinist named Jennifer told me that she learned about garment manufacture in Bangladesh because her factory was run by Bangladeshis who compared Kenyan workers to those from their home country.⁸ Similarly at Pride of Kenya, a male machinist told me he knew about garment manufacture in China, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh because of encounters with managers from those countries. At Pyramid, a female checker also told me she had heard about Bangladeshi EPZs through a line master who confided he had been a machinist in Bangladesh and that there were constantly problems with the power supply.

Even in cases where discourses on the global garment industry are not fixed to the ethnicity of a particular supervisor or manager, they are often fixed to a particular factory or department within a factory. Workers in Right Choice’s Finishing Department knew about Ugandan apparel manufacture because supervisors in their department discussed Ugandan EPZs several times. This demonstrates that workers’ knowledge of the global garment manufacture is sometimes connected to their location in the factory.⁹

⁷ These words are in quotations because of their blatant distortion of reality. The average work week for EPZ garment workers is 50-60 hours long, and monthly payments are far from but generous. Casual workers typically receive 4,800/- Kenya Shillings (\$67 USD) per month, and permanent workers receive this amount plus overtime payment.

⁸ Interestingly, Jennifer’s knowledge of Bangladesh was later bolstered because she was asked to re-label Bangladeshi garments that had been transshipped. Due to this experience, she was able to identify a number of Bangladeshi brand name buyers by name.

⁹ Male machinists operate “special machines,” which are found at the end of the assembly line next to pressing. Special machines perform actions such as rivet, batik and double stitch.

Although reprimand and managerial discourse are rich sources of global economic information for workers, they are better at conveying some types of information than others. Managerial reprimand always expands workers' sense of the geography of EPZ manufacture – i.e. garment manufacture in Madagascar, China, Morocco, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Uganda. However, more detailed description of foreign industries are often contested. As a worker at Sri Lanka Star informed me:

“I have heard stories that Sri Lanka Star has another EPZ in Sri Lanka, but I don't know more about that. What I know is that they really say their companies in Sri Lanka are doing really well. But me, using my common sense and just seeing the way that they are talking, you can imagine! Those people are coming here, and they are trying to sew here, when they can sew in their own country. That means just means they are benefiting [...]. So for me, that is just talk.”

Despite workers' skepticism towards narratives that boast of prosperous overseas garment production, these discourses do not distort the realities of global apparel manufacture as much as they disclose truths about garment manufacture under the WTO Multifiber Agreement. Much of the decentralization that exists in the apparel industry is a function of the quotas on apparel export that the WTO enforced prior to January 1, 2005. Under the quota system, garment industry has not been prefaced on perfect competition. Instead, it has been an industry organized around comparative advantage in terms of labor costs and market access.

The fact that these narratives are factual does not mean they are innocuous speech acts, however. To the contrary, narratives on global garment manufacture are often used to silence workers who have job-related grievances – be it concerns about late payment or forced overtime. Narratives on global garment manufacture also allow factory

managers to pass their anxieties and insecurities about global integration down to their workers. This mechanism is evident in managerial assertions that garment firms will leave Kenya due to VAT levies and increased competition with China. Given the testimonies of the workers I spoke to, comments like these pervade the shop floor throughout the year, but particularly when there are urgent shipments and lulls in production.

Sensemaking via Institutional Frameworks

Sensemaking through reprimand and casual interaction is not the only form of shop-floor sensemaking that occurs at Kenyan garment factories. Several garment firms in Kenya also have institutional frameworks for disseminating global economic information between management and workers. At Sri Lankan Star, the only Thika Road EPZ with such a system, this infrastructure assumes two forms. First, the management of Sri Lankan Star maintains a bulletin board with current news articles on garment manufacture in Kenya, China, Bangladesh and elsewhere. As a machinist named Catherine told me, information pertaining to garments in China is routinely posted in the company bulletin board.

Secondly, Sri Lankan Star has a workers' representative program which brings workers and managers together for bimonthly meetings concerning production, external competition, and general industry news. Management meetings are used by the management of Sri Lankan Star to explicitly relay economic information from the Office of the Director down to the supervisors, and then on to the workers' representatives, who are situated in individual departments and production lines. According to a machinist I interviewed named Martin,

all 2,000 of Sri Lankan Star's workers are briefed on an issue two hours after the management meeting has taken place.

While Sri Lankan Star's methods of information transfer are unique among Export Processing Zone firms, they are consistent with an overall corporate culture. Across the board, the management of Sri Lankan Star takes steps to ensure that its workers are personally invested in the fate of the company. These measures include paying workers a salary approximately ten percent greater than other EPZ firms, paying workers when the factory is closed because orders are scarce, and treating the workers more fairly.

Sri Lankan Star's organizational culture has palpable effects on its workers' processes of sensemaking. Martin, a Sri Lankan Star machinist who serves as a workers' representative, had a highly sophisticated understanding of EPZ workers position in global production chains. During our interview, Martin discussed the Multifiber Agreement, the implications of WTO quota expiry for Kenya garment workers, and the production capabilities of garment manufacturers in China, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. Although Martin's knowledge of the global garment industry very nearly exceeded my own, all of his knowledge on these subjects came from the meetings he attended as a workers' representative, and from his visits to the company bulletin board. For him, the television and news served as only secondary sources for information related to EPZs, although he accessed these newsmedia primarily while at the company.

This trend was true for the other Sri Lankan Star workers I interviewed, several of whom were women. All of the Sri Lankan Star workers I spoke to were at least vaguely familiar with garment manufacture in China, and most of them were also knowledgeable about China and Kenya's competition for orders. During our interview,

a Garment Checker named Mary described China's tax system and gave me detailed descriptions of China's investor-friendly labor regime. Meanwhile, a machinist named Catherine commented on the subject: "In China there are a lot of orders, but there is not a lot of order in our companies."

All of the Sri Lankan Star workers I spoke to were at least vaguely familiar with garment manufacture in China, and most of them were also knowledgeable about China and Kenya's competition for orders. During our interview, a Garment Checker named Mary described China's tax system and gave me detailed descriptions of China's investor-friendly labor regime. Meanwhile, a machinist named Catherine commented on the subject: "In China there are a lot of orders, but here there is not a lot of order in our companies"

While Sri Lankan Star's is a unique company, its information infrastructure is not singular within Kenyan EPZs. Pyramid Apparels (Thika Road), Pride of Kenya (Industrial Area), Bombay Apparels (Industrial Area) and Safari Wear (Athi River) all have workers' representatives, and Safari Wear has a bulletin board dedicated to EPZ news articles. Like Sri Lankan Star, Safari Wear also benefits from a generally positive reputation among workers. When asked to describe Safari Wear's working conditions, one worker offered the following information: "There is a big cafeteria for workers to eat, clean facilities, etc. Everything is under control. The human resource manger doesn't let Wahindi supervisors abuse workers. On-site childcare services are also provided for workers in need."

Safari Wear's favorable conditions can be partially attributed to the presence of the Tailors and Textile Workers Union. As one of the Kenya's few unionized garment factories, workers at Safari Wear are uniquely endowed with the ability to voice their grievances

management via their shop stewards. As one Safari Wear worker informed me, “the union at Safari Wear is very strong. Shop stewards are permitted to leave their posts any time during the day to assist workers.” Workers from African Apparel Experts also praised the role of shop stewards at their companies. Generally, when it comes to handling of grievances and the treatment of workers, the culture of unionized factories and non-unionized factories is very different.

Despite the importance of factory culture, some aspects of sensemaking are standard across Kenyan EPZ firms. One such thing is the centrality of “knowledge-rich” departments like the Finishing Department to shop floor learning. Factory Finishing Departments can be described as “knowledge-rich” because they are a storehouse for information related to apparel sales and apparel trade. Workers in Finishing Departments label all completed garments with company tags and price tags, wrap them in plastic and package them in shipping crates that clearly state the destination of the goods and the company which they belong to. As a result, the Finishing Department can be described as the nexus of sensemaking related to garment commodity chains and their end-consumer markets.

Every worker I interviewed cited the Finishing Department when discussing how they acquire their knowledge about garment prices, apparel markets and clothing buyers. Privileged economic information like the names of buyers, the destination of shipments, and the prices of goods travel from the Finishing Department to the rest of the factory via its workers who actively disseminate the information to others. For example, when I asked Jennifer from Quality Tex how she knew the prices of garments made there, she responded: “I have a friend. Also, there was a time that I worked there, in Finishing.”

Many workers attributed Finishing Workers' candidness on these subjects to the Department's particular labor regime. During an interview, a Pyramid Apparels worker named Grace said the following about workers in the Department:

"People in Finishing have the most stressful jobs at the company so you often hear them complaining. They say things like: 'The management is underpaying us and overworking us! We give them a lot of production and they just pay us peanuts. Yet one piece is costing this amount! That is a lot of pounds!' Now you see? Other people from other departments, we hear about it."

Grace's diagram of intra-firm information flows was corroborated by other workers. At Pyramid Apparels, a Pressman named Daniel had the following to say about the Finishing Department, had the following to say about his department:

"Workers in Finishing usually sit down and calculate the profits of the firm. Whenever we get new orders, we multiply the price of each garments by the number of garments we are packing and share this information with others. Therefore workers have their own details, even if they do not visit the Finishing Department themselves."

As another Pressman put it, "Normally, you have to share information that is affecting you. For example, if something happens in production, machine operators have to come and tell us *before* we ask them. So workers in Finishing also tell other workers before they ask.

Workers also obtain economic information from Finishing Departments by being temporarily relocated there during high-volume production. At Right Choice Garments and Quality Tex, almost all of the workers I spoke to reported being shuffled between different sections of their factory over the course of their careers. Workers are often shuffled from department to department when labor shortages emerge – in some cases transferred from Cutting to Pressing or

Production to Finishing.¹⁰ Although such experiences left workers feeling objectified, they also helped the workers to augment their knowledge of the global economy: Right Choice employees Alice and Rose got first hand knowledge about the price and buyers of their garments while being stationed temporarily in the Finishing Department. This trend suggests the extent to which Kenyans are simultaneously embedded in mass production processes and transformed into moveable inputs of production themselves.

A final point of continuity in my analysis of Kenyan factory floors is the tendency of information pertaining to EPZ work to accrue along mundane spaces like assembly lines. Within an assembly line, following a strategic “intervention or “insertion” of data, information travels from person to person in the same way that garments travel between machinists on the assembly line. The best evidence for this phenomenon can be found at Right Choice. Workers at Right Choice Garments routinely carry out wildcat strikes when their payments are delayed and these strikes are strategically coordinated via the assembly line. As a machinist named Alice reported:

“When strikes take place, announcements are placed in the toilet. When I go to the restroom and see it, I will come back and tell my workmates in Finishing. They will pass the message to the table next to them, and so on, until the message travels across the department and reaches the Packing people. Meanwhile, the same thing is happening on the Production Line. Once someone sees the message, they will pass it up to the next person and the next and the next person. Now, you see that the whole factory is aware, all the workers are aware of what is going on.”

¹⁰ Although this is less common, workers occasionally find themselves being leased out to different factories entirely. Alice from Right Choice notified me that her employers temporarily sent her to Millennium, a garment factory in the Athi River Export Processing Zone. Unlike factories on Thika Road, export apparel factories in Athi River are unionized.

A machinist named Rose corroborated this report, saying: “if you will be found outside, but not the toilet, you will be asked what are you discussing about. So you keep yourself in the toilets whereby nobody can see you. You discuss there, you come back, you don’t work.”

These comments reveal the weaknesses of EPZ management control. Since EPZ firms are hierarchical organizations, management and workers have different toilets—in spite of the fact that this conflicts with the image of the unified corporation that they wish to project. In addition, the production arrangements created by EPZ firms to maximize their efficiency also produce opportunities for discreet communication between workers. Although the movement of goods down assembly lines is uni-directional, the movement of workers is two- directional. All machinists on the assembly line have helpers who carry pieces from their table to the table in front of them, generating a constant stream of back and forth movement. As Alice indicates, garments are not the only things that travel between workers on these trips—information travels as well.

This account also demonstrates the importance of "hidden spaces" to EPZ factory workers: spaces such as factory bathrooms, outdoor grounds, etc. Right Choice Garments is not the only factory where toilets and bathrooms are used to strategically disseminate information to workers. At Blue Nile Garments in Industrial Area, workers use both the toilets and the factory grounds to disseminate information among one another. As one worker reported:

“Men hold parliament in the toilet. At parliament you can discuss or announce your intention to strike. At the same time, women at the toilet are discussing issues in their own parliament. Strikes are later coordinated during lunch, or when workers are going home. Here you will find twenty people standing together, discussing together. We

manage by physically moving away from the company and our supervisors.”

Like information exchanges that take place in toilets and assembly lines, these practices subvert managerial control and transform public space into private space. In addition, they are acts which exploit the hierarchical organization of EPZ companies. According to my respondents, supervisors are kept separate from workers to such an extent that they have their own eating spaces for lunch and their own toilets. In the end, this separation is precisely what allows workers to covertly organize themselves. This finding supports Chung Yuen Kay’s observation that factory workers create “private spheres” within the workplaces where they adopt patterns of behavior that are otherwise forbidden in their companies (Kay 1994: 212).

Thus, shop floors are spaces where garment workers acquire much of their understanding of the garment manufacturing industry. Among other things, shop floors help workers make sense of the business-side of EPZ garment manufacture,¹¹ the geographic reach of garment production, labor conditions in Kenya and the forms of resistance that are available to them. Here, knowledge acquisition is a function of position and location. Workers are positioned in factories where managerial style and corporate ideology affect their daily realities, management hierarchies where they are subject to information-laden reprimands, departments where economic information is constantly accessible, bathrooms where workers are consciously isolated from higher-ups, and assembly lines where information is transferred via the mundane and repetitive acts of production.

¹¹ Here, business side refers to garment prices, end-consumer markets, garment buyers, etc.

Nevertheless, my investigation has also demonstrates that variation exists between firms. While workers at Sri Lankan Star learn about garment production in China directly from their management, workers at other factories learn about it through antagonism and abuse. Similarly, while workers at Right Choice and Blue Nile use their assembly lines to organize wildcat strikes, workers at Sri Lankan Star and the unionized factories in Athi River such incidences are unheard. Thus, sensemaking among garment workers is ultimately shaped by the dynamics inside their factories.

EPZ firms also breed their own unique systems of knowledge, which can be defined as internally-regulated understandings of the local garment industry and the global reach of apparel manufacture. The existence of firm-specific knowledge systems does not suggest that workers from a given factory have identical understandings, as this assertion ignores the other networks of production and social relation that workers are enmeshed in. However, it implies that workers' economic perspectives are generally influenced by the particularities of their firms, which include the ethnicity of managers, managerial styles, and information infrastructure and factory environment.

Sensemaking via Social Networks

Information on global garment manufacture also accrues to workers along intra-firm and inter-firm social networks. This form of learning can be differentiated from shop-floor learning because it occurs primarily outside of the firm due to managerial restrictions. According to my respondents, sensemaking via social networks occurs at four distinct times: during their one hour lunch break just outside the gates of their factories, during their walk to work in the morning,

during their walk home in the evening, and on weekends – particularly on Sundays where EPZ factories are typically closed.

The first aspect of the social networks specified here is that these networks are usually homogenous in terms of sex composition. Male EPZ workers interact along exclusively male social networks and female EPZ workers have exclusively female networks as well. There was ample evidence of in my qualitative data. For instance, when I asked my male interviewees who they had befriended at their companies, their unequivocal response was “men.” The same was true when I asked male workers who they knew at other EPZ factories and who they worked alongside in their own companies.

Meanwhile, female workers made corresponding statements about the gender make up of their social networks.

Seemingly, the gendered character of social networks is partially due to the distinctly gendered divisions of labor that exist in EPZ garment firms. Female workers are primarily found in the Production Department where they work as machinists, helpers, checkers and Quality Control personnel on assembly lines. Men, on the other hand, are clustered in the Cutting, Washing and Finishing Departments, and to a lesser extent in Production as “special machinists” and “pressmen.” Even here, however, men and women are spatially segregated. Male machinists and pressman in the Production Department are clustered together in isolation from female checkers and clerks, and Female helpers who work in the male-dominated Cutting and Finishing Departments have different tasks than the men there.

Since men and women occupy different spaces in production, these divisions influence the composition of their social networks. As a worker from Right Choice reported: “Most of my friends are women because those are the people I am working with. We are far away from

men. In fact, we don't even know them, we just see them working. We can't know what they discuss.”

In addition to gender composition, a second striking feature of sensemaking in social networks is the type of information that workers obtain along them. Unlike sensemaking on the shop floor where workers interpret and process information relating to global garment manufacture, social networks offer workers information pertaining to local as well as global garment production. Here, the content which is exchanged is also specific to the gender character of the networks.

Women informed me that lunchtime, walks to and from work and Sunday visits with friends gave them an opportunity to talk about their jobs with others—particularly issues concerning target, wage, overtime, harassment and treatment of women and balancing of work and family. Using this data, female workers built profiles of their own garment factories and garment factories in other parts of Kenya and spread this information to others—oftentimes as advice for job seekers. Thus, female workers constantly compare EPZ factories with others. As one worker reported: “I have some friends who work at Sri Lankan Star, and on Sundays when we meet and we discuss our jobs. Sri Lankan Stars pays workers well. If you go for a leave, you are paid. When there is a shortage of the job, you are paid while you stay at home.”

Sensemaking on male social networks conveys both local and global economic information. Groups of male workers discuss issues like international competition, EPZ investment, and government policy in addition to production and factory conditions. As one worker reported, male discussions of EPZ work allow them to “weigh the local apparel industry against the foreign apparel industry.” Through sensemaking on social networks, men locate themselves on the global

production chain and analyze the strengths and weaknesses of their position.

Sensemaking via Newsmedia

Information concerning EPZ work also flows to workers through media sources. Workers learn about global apparel trade and some of the current events that are facing the factory through television, radio and print news. Among my interviewees, workers used newsmedia to learn about WTO Multifiber quota system, the African Growth and Opportunity Act, the rising incidence of capital flight from Kenya, the recent intensification of competition with China, and the potential for the wholesale collapse of the Kenyan garment industry. However, the men I spoke to acquired more of their knowledge about EPZs from newsmedia than women. This is seemingly the result of the division of labor that exists in Kenyan society and most EPZ households.

Whereas Kenyan men are responsible for wage work alone, female workforce participants are responsible for both wage work and household labor. This means that women leave their eight to twelve hour workdays to go home and complete the tasks of cooking, cleaning and childcare. Meanwhile, men are free to spend their time engaging in leisure activities such as watching TV. For example, when I asked a Pyramid Pressman how often he watched the news, he informed me that he watched the news daily despite the fact he did not own a TV – a routine he managed by leaving his wife to do chores while he visited the neighbors:

“Of course, men watch news more than women... You know, a woman cannot abandon cooking or preparing things for tomorrow. But men, sometimes we ignore and we go to our neighbors if we don't have a TV and we watch there. They [women] want to sleep early and wake up early so in the case of news, unless we tell them if they have interest,

assuming that the women have interest in what is happening, But those are educated. They want to know.”

Women’s access to newsmedia is also mediated by their male spouses and relatives. For example, when asked whether workers at Right Choice follow the news, a clerk named Lucy responded: “If your husband is well-off he can buy you a TV. If he is not well-off, then you won’t have one. As for newspapers, I get them from my husband as well. He finishes reading the paper, I go through the headlines.

Since access to newsmedia correlates strongly with the quality of information workers possess about the global garment industry; and since access to newsmedia correlates strongly to the gender of workers, workers’ knowledge of the global apparel industry fundamentally correlates to their gender. Male workers, the primary consumers of newsmedia sources in the EPZs, are generally much better acquainted with the uncertainties currently facing the garment industry. During our conversations, male workers often discussed garment production and global competition using sophisticated economic concepts such as quotas, raw materials sourcing, and full-package manufacturing. This information was pulled directly from the Business Section of the newspaper and passed down along male social networks. A Pressman from Pyramid described this process as follows:

“With the news, many people can be in a position to just watch the news, but if you don’t get from the news you can get it from a newspaper. This is normally what we do. You come with a newspaper and you hide it here, and when you are in the toilet you read it. If not in the toilet, then at lunch time you go through it and you share. You must be educated about the things that are affecting you.”

Women’s perceptions of global competition and global garment manufacture draw upon information they acquire on the shop floor and on social networks. Female workers do not discuss volatility in the

EPZs in terms of competition with China, international trade policy or vertical integration. Instead, they talk about volatility in terms of sexual harassment, cyclical employment, factory closures and tax. Therefore, although women's vocabularies on EPZs are limited by their lack of access to newsmedia, their perspectives are rich with insights on the local industry.

ACQUIRING KNOWLEDGE VIS A VIS INSTITUTIONS

Although a variety of worker-centered organizations exist in Kenyan, my research suggest that they play only a limited role in worker sensemaking. Of my fifty respondents, only five workers reported ever having contact with a workers rights organization or human rights body. In addition, only one worker had heard the word sweatshop used to describe EPZ work, and this was based on her participation in a Clean Clothes Campaign Labor Panel following the 2003 EPZ Strike. Given the history of the EPZ labor movement in Kenya, this is a surprising finding. The invisibility of civil society actors and the absence of internationalist discourses on labor three years after the EPZ country-wide strike hint at the failure of transnational advocacy networks to take root at the grassroots level. In addition, it suggests a complementary failure on the part of Kenyan civil society organizations to impart information concerning the global labour exploitation and to incorporate workers into the historically significant anti-sweatshop movement.

In the case of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the meager influence that human rights groups have had on EPZ workers' understandings of their work can be attributed to the limited resources the organizations possess. Take the Kenya Human Rights Commission

as an example. Although the Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC) has made a concerted attempt to raise awareness around export processing zone workers, the reach of its impact has been severely limited. The bulk of the KHRC's activities for EPZ workers have been Sunday seminars involving just one or two dozen persons. As far as numbers are concerned, the only exception to this model is the case of rallies; however, such events are not educational and links are rarely maintained.

Despite its rather limited reach, KHRC's seminars on EPZs have helped garment workers develop sophisticated understanding of global garment manufacture, corporate greed and worldwide labor exploitation.¹² Curiously, the Clothing and Textile Workers Union (COTU) suffers from the opposite problem. While reaches a lot of workers, it does little to help them understand their position in the global production processes. Union officials in the Ruaraka area specialize in labor rights education. Thus, with few exceptions, they do not spread information about international labor issues to Kenyan area workers. Among the fifty workers I interviewed in Athi River, Mombasa and Nairobi, discussions of garments and labor on an international scope simply did not occur within the Union. Union members were unfamiliar with words like sweatshop and globalization, and knew nothing about labor movement in other countries.

Finally, although several worker-initiated organizations exist, they play a more supportive role in the personal lives of workers, be it emotional support, financial support, or spiritual support. Interestingly, these institutions, a Fellowship and Prayer group, a bereavement fund,

¹² Four of my 50 respondents learned about these things by participating in NGO forums. However, I have not analyzed their interviews here because their tapes sustained damage and were unable to be transcribed in full.

and a Round-Robin Group, all originated from Right Choice Garments. Overall, I was impressed with the activeness of workers' organizations at Right Choice, especially given its harsh work environment. Nonetheless, these organizations do not appear to play a meaningful role in sensemaking among workers.

FACTORY CULTURES, COLLECTIVE ACTION AND JOB SATISFACTION AMONG WORKERS

Although social movement theory predicts that the dissemination of information inspires protest and collective action among workers, this relationship was not present in my data (Keck and Sikkink 1998). Female workers who possessed only small amounts of global economic information were oftentimes more critical of EPZ conditions than male workers who possessed a great deal of global economic information comparatively. As workers learn more about their roles in global production chains, many become paralyzed with anxiety.

Some EPZ companies disseminate economic information to workers for this expressed purpose. Managers at Sri Lankan provide workers with information on global competition, apparel quotas and prospective job losses in an attempt to make them work hard and stay dedicated. According to Martin from Sri Lankan Star: "managers tell workers that if they strive for excellence, then there may be some destiny for the company. It might just be that the company resists the temptation of the quota system."

This fits into a larger analysis of managerial control in Export Processing Zones. Consistent with Burawoy's analysis, two factory regimes seem to be in place in Kenyan EPZs; namely a despotic regime and a hegemonic regime (Burawoy 1985). Under hegemonic factory regimes, workers are subjected to less repression and harassment and

global economic information is actively disseminated to them. Conversely, under despotic factory regimes, workers are severely repressed and global economic information is monopolized by factory management and disclosed selectively. Thus, hegemonic and despotic factory regimes are really a composite of two variables—managerial style and information infrastructure.

Global economic information is constantly being manipulated by the management of EPZ firms. When managers selectively disclose information about the aptitude of foreign workers or the strengths of Asian EPZs, they induces workers' anxieties and "put them in their place" vis a vis the global garment supply chain. This strategy of control is actively pursued at the despotic EPZ companies. However, this is only a limited strategy. As a machinist from Right Choice reports:

"Whenever we had a strike due to salary, our director used to tell workers that he had factories in Sri Lanka which were doing well. He would say that he can just move the company to a place where his needs/demands are understood. But we had to strike for salary... perhaps you are not paid the salary until half month and your land lord cannot possibly understand you. There is just no money."

In this situation, the workers' strike took persisted because of the immediacy of workers' sustenance needs. The only issue that brings about intermittent strikes in the EPZs today is the issue of stalled payment. Since workers cannot pay rent, buy food or support their families without their paychecks, striking is justified in these cases even though it puts workers' jobs at risks. At companies where conditions are miserable but payment is prompt, collective action does not occur. This decision not to protest should not be mistaken for job satisfaction, however. Instead, it is an example of workers placing their immediate needs ahead of other considerations.

This negotiation between immediate and long-term need also explains why they endure conditions and hours that are patently unfavorable. Practically everyone I spoke to in the EPZs viewed their jobs in a cost-benefit or utilitarian framework. At times this was explicit, such as in the comments of Anne, for example, a machinist from Sri Lankan Star. When asked to describe her job, Anne responded: “Ok, now about my job, you can analyze it in two ways. You have the benefits and you have the costs. You liking for that job, and what you don’t like in that job. What would you like to hear first? The benefits or the costs?”

This discourse on cost and benefit appeared in subtler form in many of my other interviews. The workers I spoke to often talked about how their jobs were unpleasant but necessary for their survival, and used phrases such as “daily bread,” and “no alternative,” repeatedly to describe their EPZ employment. Particularly poignant narratives on EPZ work exist among retrenched EPZ workers. One man who had been laid off for two years offered the following comments on EPZ work:¹³

“You know, employment opportunities in Kenya are very low and in the EPZs, you find companies that can carry more than 1,200 workers. If you go to EPZs, you can get hired as a helper, etc.. and you can train yourself inside to be a machine operator and then go somewhere else, you can get a job. That is why so many people come to the EPZs. Many people who are machinists now first got jobs as helpers. As for why I’m still willing to work in the EPZs, why I’m still looking for a job there -- you know, currently I have no alternative. You know I cannot stay idle.. and because I have an experience as an operator, I have to come and look for ways that I can get inside and get some money for some months.”

¹³This respondent was an anomaly in my project, as the other retrenched in my study had been unemployed for less than two months at the point of our interview. Nonetheless, hearing the perspectives of someone who had been outside the EPZs for so long was a fascinating and rewarding experience.

Finally, the frequent incidence of strikes at Right Choice makes another point concerning hegemonic and despotic factory regimes. Factories with despotic regimes are less stable than their hegemonic counterparts. This firm-level variation shows the importance of managerial regimes and factory information infrastructure to workers' participation in collective action. At factories where workers obtain their information through clandestine channels like "Parliaments," indigenous structures facilitate collective action. Alternately, at companies where information is disseminated to workers on bulletin boards, managerial meetings and announcements, workers lack structures that help them collectively organize.

FIGURE 2: EPZ FIRMS REVISITED: FACTORY REGIMES, JOB SATISFACTION AND COLLECTIVE ACTION

NAME	Sri Lankan Star	Right Choice Garments ⁶	Pyramid Apparels	Quality Tex	Pride of Kenya Apparel
<i>Managerial Regime</i>	Hegemonic	Despotic	Hegemonic	Despotic	Hegemonic
<i>Shop floor Information Channels</i>	Worker/ Mmgt meetings Bulletin Boards	Workers' Parliament/ Managerial Reprimand	Worker/ Mmgt meetings	Managerial reprimand	Worker/ Mmgt Meetings
<i>Quantity of Global Economic Information</i>	Moderate-High	Low-Moderate	Moderate	Low-Moderate	Moderate
<i>Sources of Variance in Workers Knowledge</i>	Gender Position in production	Gender Position in Production	Gender	Gender	Gender
<i>Job Satisfaction</i>	Moderate-High	Low-Moderate	Moderate	Low-Moderate	Moderate
<i>Sources of Variance in Satisfaction</i>	Gender	None	Gender	Gender	Gender
<i>Incidences of Collective Organizing*</i>	None	Frequent wildcat strikes	Intermittent wildcat strikes	Intermittent wildcat strikes	None

<i>Justification for Organizing</i>	N/A	Late wage/ Lost pay	Late pay	Corrupt Mmgt, changes to production schedule	N/A
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*Since 2003 General Strike

FACTORY REGIMES, JOB SATISFACTION AND COLLECTIVE ACTION (CON'T)

NAME	Bombay Fashion ⁵⁶	African Apparel Experts	Safari Wear	Ayurvinda Apparels ⁸	Blue Nile ⁵⁶
<i>Managerial Style/ Factory Regime</i>	Hegemonic	Hegemonic	Hegemonic	Despotic	Despotic
<i>Shopfloor Information Channels</i>	Worker/Mmgt meetings	Shopstewards	Shopstewards/ Worker/Mmgt meetings	Managerial Reprimand	Workers' Parliament
<i>Quantity of Global Economic Information</i>	Moderate	Moderate- High	Moderate- High	Low- Moderate	Low- Moderate
<i>Sources of Variation in Workers Knowledge</i>	Gender	Gender	Gender	Gender	Gender
<i>Job Satisfaction</i>	Low- Moderate	Moderate	Moderate- High	Low- Moderate	Moderate-
<i>Sources of Variance in Satisfaction</i>	N/A	Gender Position in Production	Gender Position in Production	Gender	Position in Production
<i>Incidences of Collective Organizing*</i>	Occasional wildcat strikes	None	None	Intermittent wildcat strikes	Frequent wildcat strikes
<i>Justification for Organizing</i>	Late pay	N/A	N/A	Late pay	late wage, lost pay

*Since 2003 General Strike % Only one respondent

THE PRODUCTION OF KNOWLEDGE AMONG GARMENT WORKERS: DISCOURSES ON WORK AND THE SYNTHESIS OF SCHEMA

Having identified the sites where sensemaking occurs among workers, a second question emerges—how do workers interpret and make sense of their position in global production chains? The central finding of my research is two dominant interpretations of labor and work exist. The first interpretation, which seems to predominate among

female workers, is that export processing zone garment factories are highly exploitative and undesirable places of work. Meanwhile, the second interpretation, which alternately predominates among male workers, is that EPZ garment factories are volatile and challenging, yet desirable places of work. It is important to consider the differences between these two discourses.

In the first interpretation of garment work, Kenyan EPZ firms are characterized as exhausting, stressful, and dehumanizing work environments. Here, workers' discussions of the job centered on what they perceived as the "impossible things" that happen in export processing zones, such as the low payment, high targets, late remuneration, strict supervision sexual harassment, arbitrary dismissal, verbal abuse and physical abuse that is seemingly endemic. When asked how they would describe an EPZ to someone who was unfamiliar with them, workers here give a range of negative responses, including:

"You are working under depression because you not [enjoying] that job. Now I don't know if they can just help us, on the side of payment, and the side of harassment. I think that is what makes us to not enjoy the job. That is why we are saying we are just doing it because we have no alternative. But we are not really enjoying it" (Machinist at Right Choice Garments).

I would tell them that there are a lot of problems" (Catherine, machinist at Sri Lankan Star).

"I can advise them to not even come to the EPZ" (Joyce, Machinist at Sri Lankan Star).

"I'll tell him that there is a lot of work and very little we are being paid" (Mary, Machinist at Sri Lankan Star).

"EPZs are a place where there are no rights of work. They contribute to more sickness than benefit you can get in that very factory as a worker. I can rate it as a second Nyayo torture chamber, where workers are just there, but they work as slaves." (Grace, machinist at Pyramid [w/translator]).

Female workers in the EPZs also regard on-the-job mistreatment as a local problem pertaining mostly to Kenyans. Although this is not an accurate perception of global garment manufacture per se, it is a perception that is consistent with the ways that knowledge is produced among women workers. My interview data suggest that women acquire much of their information on garment manufacture from gendered social networks where issues like payment, production, working conditions and family are central topics of discussion. Just as these knowledge networks have an inward focus, women's discourses on work emphasize the effects of garment manufacture on women's lives. In addition, though shop floors play a secondary role in women's learning, it seems that the information that women learn here is subsumed by their feelings of harassment when facing managerial reprimand.

An entirely different interpretation of EPZ work exists among my male interviewees. Here, discussions of work emphasize the redeeming qualities of EPZ jobs. When asked to describe his job, Martin from Sri Lankan Star said, "It's fine, I like it." Other men claim that EPZ work is "sometimes good, sometimes bad," and most refuse to state outright that EPZ workers' rights were not respected. When I asked a Quality Control personnel named Peter how he felt about the workers' rights, he responded: "Yes (laughs)... Well... it will take time. It will take some time before rights are recognized."

Men's determination to speak positively about their EPZ makes their narratives on EPZ work highly contradictory. For instance, when I asked Daniel from Pyramid Apparels to describe his EPZ factory and EPZ work, he answered:

"My job is only a problem when it comes to target. So I tell others that EPZs are good places to work, it's only that we have to pump in change. So that these people may be concerned about the needs of

workers. Because these investors, they just want to be rich and they forget the workers. But it's a good place. My factory is good, but they don't know how to handle workers. They handle workers carelessly."

Faced with the same question, a pressman from Pyramid responded: "To that person who does not know what an EPZ is, I can tell them it is good sometimes and it is bad. Like when you enter inside, you are being harassed, there is low pay, sometimes delayed pay, you can tell all that to that person who doesn't know EPZ." Here, contradiction exists because the respondent begins by qualifying EPZ conditions as both good and bad, but proceeds to list only negative features.

Among my male interviewees, only a handful criticized EPZ work in explicit terms. One such worker was George, a Pressman from Right Choice. When asked to explain what export processing zones are, George answered: "EPZs are BAD. They are not places I can advise others to go. As Kenyans, we just succumb to such work because of the economy and because of the shortage of jobs in the country. But, if it is in a real sense, the EPZs are not a place where there is humanity, where there are good relationship of work, there is nothing to do with anything that can uplift the human standard." Given the uniqueness of his comments, it is important to note that much of George's open disdain was partially attributed to the fact that he lost his job at Right Choice one day prior to our interview, and that his wage as a casual there was only 3,999 Kenyan shillings per month, or approximately \$55 USD. This is an extremely meager wage, even for EPZs work.

Interestingly, the fact that women and men obtain their information on garment manufacturing from different sources does not completely explain the variation that exists between their two perspectives. Given their methods of sensemaking, men's perspectives on work are counterintuitive because their discussions of EPZ work exclude talk of

labor exploitation, despite the fact that their study of global garment manufacture lends itself to this very analysis. Conversely, while women's observations of their work heavily center on mass labor exploitation, most female workers lack the knowledge of global garment production that their male counterparts have. Based on the types of knowledge that men's and women's sensemaking provide them, one would assume their perspectives would be reversed.

The contradictions inherent in these interpretations of EPZ work are best explained in terms of schema analysis. According to business management theorists, sensemaking does not have to be accurate, but must be "plausible" based on one's own schemata - or mental codifications of experience (Dougherty and Symthe 2004). This is true for my respondents: self-in-organization schema, person-in-organization schema, and organizational schema all help justify male and female interpretations of their workspaces.

For instance, when talking about themselves in the context of their factories, female workers make statements concerning the harassment, fatigue and frustration they experience in the workplace. As workers, they see themselves as vulnerable and exploited. Female workers also make a similar set of classifications when discussing their managers and supervisors. These classifications, which Harris calls "person-in-organization schemata," consist of a variety of negative statements concerning supervisors' heavy-handed treatment of workers, and their propensity to harass them sexually. Thus, when it comes to making sense of the organization as a whole, women simply layer their self-in-organization schema and person-in-organization schema on top of one another to generate an organizational "world-view."

Men's interpretations are based on an opposite set of self-in-organization and person-in-organization schema. Rather than

complaining about conditions, men speak of their work as something that wins them daily bread for their families – making them hard workers, providers, and heroes in the context of their organizations. Similar person-in-organization schemata are used to describe management. Unlike female workers, male workers depict their supervisors as hardworking men who are under constant duress from management. Given that these schemata serve as the building blocks for men’s perceptions of EPZs as organizations, it is understandable why men often view EPZs as reasonable places to work.

PERFORMANCES OF GENDER AND GENDERED UNDERSTANDING OF WORK

Cognitive schemata do not fully explain workers’ discourses on Export Processing Zones. Workers’ discourses on export work are also linked to aspects of social performance. Men’s contradictory statements regarding EPZ work illustrate this phenomenon. Their discourses on work uphold socially accepted conceptions of masculinity characterized by bravado, euphemisms masking the true strain of the job, as well as paternalistic viewpoints on women’s economic roles. This last case appears primarily among the male spouses of EPZ workers, who often tell their wives that they should opt out of EPZ work and return home. Statements like these construct a fantasy of male breadwinning that ignore the push factors which send married women out of their homes and into global factories in the first place. As Fernandez-Kelly observes in her study of Mexican apparel workers, “women are hardly supplemental wage earners “the size and distribution of their households, as well as the weak employment status of the men in their families, are precipitant factors which explain the entrance of women into the industrial labor force” (Fernandez Kelly 1983: 57-58).

Cognitive schemata do not fully explain workers' discourses on export processing zones, however. Workers discourses on their jobs garment work are also linked to aspects of social performance. In my data, I detected gender performance in a number of places, particularly in men's contradictory statements regarding EPZ work. Men's discourses on work uphold socially accepted conceptions of masculinity are characterized by bravado, euphemisms masking the true strain of the job, and paternalistic viewpoints on women's economic roles.

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In addition to being counterfactual, men's narratives on EPZ work and are counterintuitive because women are usually presumed to be the passive and submissive participants of global production. As Pietro attests: "In the maquiladoras they hire women because men created more problems for them. We women are more easily managed. By contrast, a male worker wouldn't stand for it – he's more aggressive. Men organize themselves, and if they don't get what they want, they walk off the job, which really inconveniences concessions" (Pietro 1985: 31). In my study, this relationship is reversed at the most

rudimentary level of discourse. Whereas men tend to qualify their ill-treatment in the EPZs, women are aggressive and articulate when discussing their grievances.

Nonetheless, in terms of gender performance, passivity serves male workers well. Claiming to be indifferent to EPZ conditions allows men to perform their masculinity and reject portrayals of EPZ workers as exploited and helpless persons. Consequently, although men's performances do not address the powerlessness or working conditions that they experience daily, they deemphasize and abstract them in a manner that protect their public presentations of self. This finding on discourse and gender performance is supported by the social-psychology literature. As Ezzamel and Willmott state, "identity must be continually reconstituted. Human beings are engaged in a process of constructing, sustaining and restoring a sense of self identity as a continuous reality in the face of circumstances that either confirm or pose a challenge to its narrative" (Ezzamel and Willmott, 1998: 364).

When it comes to understanding global production systems and transferring their knowledge, Kenyan workers rely on schema that betray the reality of gender separation which exists in society. Gender relations, gendered social networks, and gendered divisions of labor affect every step of sensemaking that workers in Kenya undertake. Men's knowledge of global garment manufacture is derived from the gendered divisions of labor in Kenyan society ranging from garment factories, where men work in information-rich departments such as Finishing Department, to gendered division of labor in their homes, which leave men able to watch TV and pursue leisure activities in the evenings, and including gendered social networks, whereby men discuss news and current events with other men.

Societal gender relations also affect how workers use and process knowledge. While data concerning local and global garment manufacture are available to both men and women, each gender concerns themselves with different spectrums of information. Male workers seek out information on global garment manufacture because it helps them evaluate the future prospects of their jobs and the garment industry more broadly. Meanwhile, female workers seek out information pertaining to local garment manufacture, because it helps them build profiles that can inform their future employment options. This relates to schemata and discourses on work as well – men are presumably more tolerant of factory conditions because they see their fate, and to an extent, their self esteem as dependent on their employment in the factories. Conversely, women workers can be critical of factory conditions because gender roles in society allow them to be more non-committal labor market participants.

IMAGINING EMBEDDEDNESS: RESPONSES TO GLOBAL INTEGRATION AMONG EPZ WORKERS

Although women and men conceive of EPZ work differently in terms of the global and the local, both use processes of sensemaking to acquire knowledge that is functional and supportive of their perceptions. In addition, they use it to construct vastly different conceptions of embeddedness in production chains. In my data, women's conceptions of EPZ work are inevitably very local. Even in face of information concerning EPZs in other countries, most female workers cannot fathom that working conditions are equally unfavorable. When asked whether human rights abuses were characteristic of Kenya or characteristic to the industry as a whole,

female invariably respond that grave workers rights violations are unique to Kenya.

Women's complaints about the job are also local to the extent that they are deeply corporeal. When asked to describe their jobs, women talked about the ills of EPZ work as being exacted on their bodies: fatigue, weariness, shortage of time with children, etc. Narratives also centered heavily on the topic of women's bodies being violated, and relayed stories about their coworkers being sexual harassed and sometimes impregnated by their supervisors. Export manufacture is exquisitely local for women, as experienced on the body, in the womb and in the home life. Discourses on global integration only serve to heighten women's senses of localit -- a finding which is of ironic significance.

IDENTITY AT THE WORKPLACE: GENDER MATTERS

Thus, we see that men's and women's viewpoints on EPZ work are fundamentally questions of gender. Male EPZ workers are not vulnerable to the same forms of harassment (i.e. sexual harassment) as women, and also receive better compensation. Conversely, women are not as wage dependent as men because they are the second source of income in their households. This adds clarity to the observation of how and why male workers are consumed with discussion of competition and the global garment chain. Although women can understand the seriousness of their exploitation in EPZs without knowing details about quotas or garment manufacture in China, for example, on the other end of the spectrum, men are unable to understand their economic futures without just such analysis. Thus, for men, discussion of global production chains is of import and relates on a concrete level to their

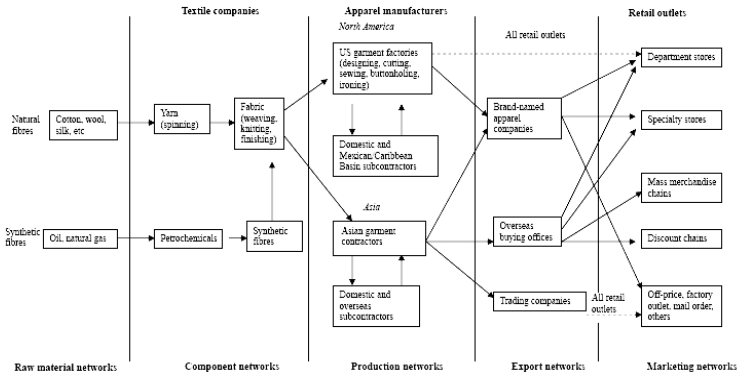
concerns regarding capital flight and job insecurity, not to issues related to global exploitation of workers.

However, EPZ experiences leave a physical imprint on male workers as well. While reluctant to demean EPZ work, many of the male garment workers I spoke to readily pointed out workplace injuries they sustained to their arms and hands. Coupled with their interest in garment manufacture in China and elsewhere, men's conceptions on EPZ work blend the corporeal experiences of factory production, the intangible realities of garment manufacture beyond Kenya, and the imagined virtues of EPZ work into a narrative on masculinity, breadwinning and sustenance production in an unstable and competitive work environment. This interaction between the global, the local, and the romantic is best captured in the comments of Bernard, my interviewee who spent two years outside of the EPZs. When asked how he classifies himself as a worker, Bernard commented:

As for my occupation, I would say that I am a machinist. Finishing machines are the machines I am used to. Even when I am asleep, if you give me a machine I will make some fabric. My occupation is an EPZ worker, a machinist. If I had a form to fill, that is what I would write.

This anecdote is just one of many that characterizes the perspectives of Kenyan men vis a vis the global garment industry. Across Kenyan EPZs, global integration has solidified men's identities as workers, providers, and economic players. Conversely, global integration has heightened women workers' feelings of fatigue, exploitation and marginalization. Yet, via their embeddedness in global production networks, both male and female workers share an unwitting and undesirable solidarity with global EPZ workers, as persons whose remuneration is not commensurate with the profit derived from their gruelling labor.

APPENDIX A: APPAREL COMMODITY CHAINS



APPENDIX B: METHODOLOGICAL APPENDIX

The fieldwork for this project took place in the months of June, July and August 2005. Gaining access to my respondent population was surprisingly easy because of connections I had from previous research in Kenya. With the help of these contacts, I was able to get in touch with a worker's organization called the Export Processing Zone Workers Association of Kenya. Subsequently, for the duration of my fieldwork, I was assisted by the five men who founded the organization, and to whom I am truly indebted. My colleagues at the Export Processing Zone Workers' Association were my constant companions in the field, assisting with translation, introducing me to garment workers, and sharing their insights on EPZs as veteran garment workers and renowned labor organizers. Although it likely that I will never be able to repay them fully, while in Kenya I expressed my thanks by helping them secure registration as a legal society.

My research enjoyed additional support, however. Namely, with the assistance of Peter Gibbon, a Danish scholar on global apparel trade, I established a relationship with the University of Nairobi Institute for Development Studies (IDS). At IDS, I was fortunate enough to benefit from the hospitality and guidance of several individuals, most notably Dorothy McCormick and Peter Ligulu. With the support of IDS as well as the EPZWA, my research tenure in Kenya went more smoothly than I ever would have expected and I had no difficulties accessing workers.

Over the course of my research, the bulk of my fieldwork took place at a cluster of export processing zone firms on Thika Road in Nairobi. At the Thika Road site there were three separate export processing zones –Amani EPZ, Emerald EPZ, and Sri Lankan Star EPZ – and four EPZ companies within them. Pyramid Apparels and Quality Tex are located in Emerald EPZ, and before it closed, Right Choice Garments was found in Amani EPZ. Finally, Sri Lankan Star is both the owner and sole tenant of the Sri Lankan Star EPZ. When taken together, these companies were the current or former employers of the majority of my respondents.

On average, I interviewed one or two people every day that I visited the Thika Road factories, and interviews were conducted at a small, discreet café adjoining the Amani Export Processing Zone. Research took place in accordance with the ethical standards of human subject research. All respondents were briefed on their confidentiality rights prior to their interviews, and all were asked to sign a consent form that permitted my use of a tape recorder. In addition, when participants offered me biographical data concerning their employment history, family structure and educational background, this information was recorded on anonymous numbered face sheets. Sensitive

information such as the names of my participants were not recorded anywhere besides my respondents' consent forms.

Workers were generally sensitive to the confidentiality issues related to my project, and most were attentive as we read through written consent forms. On top of that, at least half a dozen workers asked me follow-up questions ranging from whether I was working for their management to whether I would be sharing my data with the Export Processing Zone Authority (EPZA). To such responses, I answered honestly and indicated that I had no connection nor allegiance to their factory owners, their managers, or to government agencies like the EPZA.

Although, all of my respondents had more than a year of experience in the EPZ, nearly half were unemployed at the point when I spoke to them. 19 of my respondents were garment workers who were currently employed, compared to 33 respondents who were recently retrenched. These statistics suggests volumes about Kenyan export processing zones and about garment supply chains in general— namely, that they are unstable, cyclical, volatile, and demanding of time.

Moreover, the fact that I was able to find so many retrenched EPZ workers milling around their old factories suggests how contingent peoples' lives are on EPZ work. Given their sustenance demands, retrenched garment workers report to the EPZs as dutifully as employment garment workers, hoping that they will be taken in as casual or day laborers.

Irrespective of their current employment status, however, all of the workers I interviewed seemed genuinely grateful for the 200 shilling honorarium they received at the conclusion of our interview. This amount, which is approximately one day's pay in the EPZs, given the value was deemed appropriate by myself and my advisor given the

length of my interviews and their use of a resource that is scarce to EPZ workers -- namely, time. In addition, the fact that 200 shillings approximates one day's pay in the EPZs is misleading when it comes to its relative value. In Nairobi, newspapers cost Kshs. 35/-, bus ride without transfers is Kshs. 30/-, and a budget lunch is upwards of Kshs. 50/-. With a basket of American goods, 200/- might be equivalent to \$8 USD. In terms of real value, however, it is only \$2.50 USD.

Finally, in addition to the Thika Road EPZ, I also frequented several other production sites. These included Export Processing Zones located in Nairobi Industrial Area, Athi River, and the Mombasa Road Area. Furthermore, I did fieldwork and interviews in Babadogo, Korogocho, Riverside, Kitengela, Mathare North and Pipeline, slum neighborhoods which are home to many garment workers from Nairobi and Athi River. Finally, towards the end of my trip I visited Mombasa, the coastal city where more than a dozen export apparel firms are situated.

APPENDIX C: BIOGRAPHICAL FACE SHEETS OF SELECTED WORKERS

Name:	Martin	Grace	Patience	Jennifer	Daniel	Catherine
<i>Interview</i>						
<i>Number:</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6
<i>Sex:</i>	Male	Female	Female	Female	Male	Female
<i>Year of Birth:</i>	1976	1978	1963	1976	1975	1975
<i>Marital Status:</i>	Married	Married	Married	Single	Single	Married
<i>#of children:</i>	2	1	5	0	0	2
<i>Length of EPZ experience:</i>	3 years	4 years	3 years	2 years	2 years approx	4 years
<i>Employment Status</i>	Employed	Unemployed	Unemployed	Unemployed	Unemployed	Employed
	Sri					Sri
<i>Name of EPZ company:</i>	Lankan Star	Pyramid Apparels	Quality-Tex	Quality-Tex	Pyramid Apparels	Lankan Star
<i>Date laid off:</i>	N/A	23-May-05	2-Feb-05	April 2005	2-Apr-05	N/A
			Lack of orders	Lack of orders		
<i>Reason laid off:</i>	N/A	No orders			No orders	N/A
<i>Time with company:</i>	6 months	3 months	1 year	1 year	6 months	2 years
	Special machinis				Finishing Dept,	
<i>Job title:</i>	t	Machinist	Trimming	Machinist	Pressman	Machinist
<i>Employment Status:</i>	Permane nt	Casual	Casual	Seasonal	Casual	Permanent
<i>Monthly wage:</i>	7,000/-	5,900/-	4,300/-	4,700/-	4,900/-	5,600/-
<i>Income meets expenditures (Y/N):</i>	No	No	No	No	No	No
<i>Additional income needed:</i>	5,000/-	6000/-	8,000/-	10,000/-	8,000/-	10,000/-
	Don't					
<i>Education Level:</i>	know.	Don't know.	Class 5.	Form 2	Form 4	form 2

Name:	Joyce	Mary	Lucy	Peter	George	John
<i>Interview</i>						
<i>Number:</i>	7	8	9	10	11	12
<i>Sex:</i>	Female	Female	Female	Male	Male	Male
<i>Year of Birth:</i>	1973	1980	1978	1971	1978	1983
<i>Marital Status:</i>	Single	Single	Married	Widowed	Married	Married
<i>children:</i>	1	0	1	3	1	1
<i>Length of EPZ experience:</i>	6 years	2 years	7 years	3 years	4 years	3 years

<i>Currently employed in an EPZ:</i>	Employed	Employed	Unemployed	Unemployed	Unemployed	Unemployed	Unemployed
<i>Name of EPZ company:</i>	Sri Lankan Star	Sri Lankan Star	Right Choice Garments	Right Choice Garments	Right Choice Garments	Right Choice Garments	Right Choice Garments
<i>Date laid off:</i>	N/A	N/A	June 2005	July 2005	May-05	7-Jul-05	7-Jul-05
<i>Reason laid off:</i>	N/A	N/A	Factory closed	Factory closed	Harassed by cutting master, voluntarily left	Factory closed	Factory closed
<i>Time with company:</i>	2 years	2 years	3 years	3 years	3 years	4 years	2 years
<i>Job title:</i>	Machine operator	Checker, Finishing	Cutting Clerk	Quality Control	Pressman	Pressman	Machine Operator
<i>Employment Status:</i>	Permanent	Permanent	Permanent	Permanent	Casual	Casual	Permanent
<i>Monthly wage:</i>	6,700/-	6,400/-	5,750/-	6,000/-	3,999/-	3,999/-	5,000/-
<i>Income meets expenditures (Y/N):</i>	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
<i>Additional income needed:</i>	10,000/-	10,000/-	3,000-4000/-	10,000-11,000/-	10,000-11,000/-	12,000-13,000/0	10,000/-
<i>Education Level:</i>	Class 8	Form 4	Form 4	Form 4	Form 4	form 2	Form 2
Name:	Steve	Akoth	Rose	Juma	Kevin	Kevin	Alice
<i>Interview Number:</i>	13	14	15	16	17	17	18
<i>Sex:</i>	Male	female	Female	Male	Male	Male	Female
<i>Year of Birth:</i>	1969	1969	1983	1980	1971	1971	1981
<i>Marital Status:</i>	Married	Widowed	Single	Single	married	married	Married
<i>#of children:</i>	1	3 kids	0	0	2	2	1
<i>Length of EPZ experience:</i>	10 years +	8 years	2 years	3 years	9 years	9 years	4 years
<i>Currently employed in an EPZ:</i>	Employed	Employed	Unemployed	Employed	Employed	Employed	Unemployed
<i>Name of EPZ company:</i>	Pride of Kenya Apparel, Athi River	Quality- Tex	Duo Fu Ltd, Mombasa	Pride of Kenya Apparel	Pride of Kenya Apparel	Pride of Kenya Apparel	Right Choice Garments

<i>Date laid off:</i>	N/A	N/A	#####	N/A	N/A	Jul-05
<i>Reason laid off:</i>	N/A	N/A	factory closed	N/A	N/A	factory closed
<i>Time with company:</i>	8 years	8 months	2 years	3 years	1 year	2 years
<i>Job title:</i>	Special Machinist	Machinist	Machinist Supervisor	Pressman, Finishing Dept	Special Machinist	Quality Control
<i>Employment Status:</i>	Permanent	Permanent	Permanent	Casual	Casual	Permanent
<i>Monthly wage:</i>	5,600/-	4900-5200/-	4,300/- basic	4,268/- basic	5,100/- basic	4,675/-, basic,
<i>Income meets expenditures (Y/N):</i>	No	No	No	No	No	no
<i>Additional income needed:</i>	10,000/- form 4 &	20,000/-	1,200/-	5000/-	15,000/-	10,000-15,000/-
<i>Education Level:</i>	voc. school	class 6	class 8	Class 8	Form 4	form 3
Name:	Anne	Mkala	Rose	Nancy	Virginia	Josephine
<i>Interview Number:</i>	19	20	21	22	23	24
<i>Sex:</i>	Female	Male	Female	Female	Female	Female
<i>Year of Birth:</i>	1982	1972	1978	1976	1982	1975
<i>Marital Status:</i>	Single	Married	Married	Married	Single	Married
<i>#of children:</i>	0	2	2	1	0	3
<i>Length of EPZ experience:</i>	3 years	5 years	2 years	3 years	3 years	5 years
<i>Currently employed in an EPZ:</i>	Employed	Employed	Unemployed	Employed	Unemployed	Unemployed
<i>Name of EPZ company:</i>	Sri Lanka Star	Industrial Area	Right Choice Garments	Activewear	Ayravinda Apparels	Right Choice Garments
<i>Date laid off:</i>	N/A	N/A	Jul-05	N/A	22-Jul-05	1-Jul-05
<i>Reason laid off:</i>		N/A	Fired after unpaid maternity leave	N/A	No payment	factory closed
<i>Time with company:</i>	3 years	3 weeks	2 years	3 weeks	7 months	3 years
<i>Job title:</i>	Machine Operator,	Pressmen, Finishing Dept	Machinist, Production Line	Checker, line	Checker, Production	Checker, Finishing Dept

<i>Name of affiliated workers orgs:</i>	Upan Sacco	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<i>Employment Status:</i>	Permanent	Casual	Permanent	Casual	Casual	Casual
<i>Monthly wage:</i>	6,973/-	5,200/-	4,000	3,200/-	4,960	3,900/-
<i>Income meets expenditures (Y/N):</i>	No	No	No	No	No	No
<i>Additional income needed:</i>	10,000/- +	5,000/-	8,000/-	7,000/-	1,500/-	3,000/-
<i>Education Level:</i>	form 4	class 8	class 8	form 2	form 4	form 4
<hr/>						
<i>Interview Number:</i>	25	26	27	28	29	30
<i>Sex:</i>	Female	Male	Female	Male	Male	Male
<i>Year of Birth:</i>	1976	1980	1968	1965	1973	1972
<i>Marital Status:</i>	Single	Married	Married	Married	Married	Married
<i>#of children:</i>	0	1	4	3	3	2
<i>Length of EPZ experience:</i>	2 years	5 years	9 months	7 years	10 years	4 years
<i>Currently employed in an EPZ:</i>	Unemployed	Employed	Unemployed	Employed	Unemployed	employed
<i>Name of EPZ company:</i>	Safari Wear	Sri Lankan Star	Pyramid Apparels	Blue Nile Garments	Pride of Kenya Apparel	Right Choice Garments
<i>Date laid off:</i>	Mar-05	N/A	July 05		Jun-05	July 2 2005
<i>Reason laid off:</i>	No orders	N/A	lack of order	factory abruptly closed	accused of inciting workers	factory closed
<i>Time with company:</i>	2 years	1 year	9 months	7 months	1 1/2 years	3 1/2 years
<i>Job title:</i>	Packer, Finishing Dept	Laundry, Finishing	Checker, Finishing Dept	Special Machinist	Sandblast Operator, Laundry Dept	Cutting Dept
<i>Employment Status:</i>	Permanent	Permanent	Casual	Casual	Permanent	Permanent
<i>Monthly wage:</i>	4,300	7,640/-	3,500/-	7,650/-	5,600/-	4,900/-basic
<i>Income meets expenditures (Y/N):</i>	No	No	No	No	No	No
<i>Additional income needed:</i>	3,000/-	2,000/-	6,000/-	2,500/-	15,000/-	5,000/-

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Patrolling the Cuckoos Nest

Molissa Farber

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“Never before did I realize that mental illness could have the aspect of power.”

–Ken Kesey, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest*

“The conjecture that saw the birth of reform is not...that of a new sensibility, but that of another policy with regard to illegalities.”

–Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*

ABSTRACT

This research uncovers the practical consequences of liberalizing legal reform in the mental health system for the staff of a large public psychiatric hospital. The examined reform grants psychiatric inpatients more rights to determine their own compliance with mental health treatment. Two dominant schemas that are currently used to understand the hospital’s working culture are examined in light of the role of ward staff. A new paradigm, the “ward control outlook,” is developed to reflect the unique responsibilities of the staff and the daily challenges they face on the wards. This model predicts that staff in a mental hospital will behave less like rights advocates or psychiatrists and more like patrolling police officers whose primary job is to enforce rules. Ethnographic research took place in one mental hospital in the United States. .¹⁴ Field data includes observations of ward life and interviews with staff, nurses, psychiatrists, administrators, and attorneys. This

¹⁴ Name of hospital undisclosed to preserve the anonymity of the research site.

study finds that the behavior of hospital staff on the wards conforms to the expectations of the new ward control model. Hospital staff valued the enforcement of rules and the maintenance of order as part of their daily work on the wards, and liberalizing legal reform was seen as a threat to the ability of the staff to perform their jobs effectively. The mandates of the reform conflicted with what the staff perceived as the most effective way to deal with problems on the wards. This created a frustrating situation of workplace anomie that staff relieved by endowing with increased social importance the coercive measures of control still available to them.

I. INTRODUCTION

Ken Kesey's celebrated novel *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* was published in 1962 at the beginning of an extended period of legal reform aimed at providing mental patients with more rights in and influence over their own psychiatric treatment. Kesey's novel is set on the ward of an American psychiatric hospital in the 1950's and follows the involuntary commitment of an energetic Irishman named R.P. McMurphey. While it becomes clear that McMurphey is not actually mentally ill, he is eventually forced into invasive psychiatric procedures including Electroconvulsive Therapy (ECT) and a lobotomy. These "treatments" ultimately cripple and dehumanize Kesey's hero. The novel not only dramatized the nature of the psychiatric treatment of the previous era, but also indicated the start of a shift toward increasing the power of mental patients to make decisions concerning their own care in a mental health setting.

The patients' rights movement of this new period represented a change from one conception of mental health treatment to another. The

formerly dominant notion of psychiatric care, characterized as a “medicalist orientation,” gave doctors and psychiatrists a large amount of discretionary power to commit patients and treat them as needed, with or without their consent (Fennell 104). This approach has given way to a kind of “new legalism” that not only intends to protect against unjustified commitment or medication, but carries with it an “ideology of entitlement” that bestows patients with positive rights to determine their own care and treatment (Fennell 105).

Much of this legal reform is intended to give patients rights to equalize the power that psychiatrists hold over them. However, simply bestowing rights on committed patients may not be sufficient to correct the imbalance of power in the mental health system. In attempting to equalize the sometimes-coercive interaction between a patient and his or her doctor, the new lawmaking ignores another influential and yet unexamined relationship on the wards of a mental hospital: the relationship between a patient and the ward staff. Ward staff spend a significant amount more time dealing with patients under the constraints of the new legal reforms than do the doctors at the hospital, and they arguably have the most influence over the day-to-day running of the wards. In the face of reform that overlooks the status and activities of ward staff, it is possible that the practices of ward staff might blunt or directly contradict the impact of patients’ rights reform.

This research utilizes an ethnographic research design to explore whether rights-oriented reform has unintended consequences on the ground for the staff who work with patients on the wards of mental hospitals every day. To investigate this question, research was conducted at a large public psychiatric hospital. The field data gathered included observations of the wards and interviews with a number of professionals in the mental health system. This research uses

sociological inquiry to predict and identify the mechanisms by which ward staff carry out (or fail to carry out) liberalizing reform in an institution such as an inpatient psychiatric hospital.

II. THE HISTORY OF PATIENTS' RIGHTS LEGISLATION

The ward life depicted in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* dramatized the limited amount of decision-making power afforded to patients in the mental health system in the 1950's. As the 1960's approached, the problems of *Cuckoo's* era psychiatric care became a matter of public, legal, and academic concern that were eventually addressed through legal reform. A 1967 article from the *Columbia Law Review*, for example, reports that prior legislation in New York was structured such that psychiatric inpatient admissions often happened hastily, with poor information, and without consulting the patient for additional insight (Columbia 674). In another example, a 1976 report from the *Michigan Law Review* focused on the use and regulation of ECT (Electroconvulsive Therapy), a form of treatment for some mental disorders that resulted in uncomfortable and sometimes harmful side-effects for patients. The Michigan report on ECT emphasized the need to adopt a review panel that would regulate the administration of electroconvulsive treatments, observing that it is unjust to endow psychiatrists with complete power over a patient's treatment, as their judgments are often subjective and can risk forcing "intrusive treatments" on unwilling but possibly competent patients (Michigan 390).

By 1979, the *Yale Law Journal* could note that the judicial system had begun to question the amount of unilateral power doctors would be able to hold when it came to the treatment plans of mental patients, and

was exploring the amount of protection available to such patients (Yale 850). Such legal reform attempted to provide patients with more rights in their own treatment and focused mainly on the role of *doctors* and *psychiatrists* in the treatment of patients on the wards of a hospital. Such reform was aimed at equalizing the doctor-patient relationship, which was seen as coercive and disadvantageous to the patient (Michigan 385). The areas of mental health treatment that were addressed by patients' rights-oriented reform included requiring informed consent before administering mental health treatment and medication, increasing outpatient care services, and eliminating indefinite periods of hospital commitment. While the rights of patients who had voluntarily sought treatment at a hospital received a significant amount of attention, there has also been a great deal of legal wrangling over the procedure of involuntary commitment, as well as the rights of patients who undergo such a commitment.

Right now, every state in the U.S. as well as the District of Columbia has some form of an involuntary civil commitment law (Stavis). "Involuntary civil commitment" is defined as "a legal procedure used to compel an individual to receive inpatient treatment for a mental health disorder against his or her will" ("Involuntary Hospitalization"). While the exact policies and timetables vary by state, the power of the government to involuntarily detain a person in a mental hospital is most often justified on the grounds that civil commitment procedures prevent the committed person from harming him or herself or others, whether intentionally or unintentionally (Dworkin 294).

Just as previous legal reform increased the rights of voluntary mental patients, a general trend of increasing the rights of involuntary patients has been observed. Unlike laws dealing with voluntarily

committed patients, however, the area of involuntary civil commitment has been a particularly sensitive one for patients' rights advocates. Whereas voluntary patients *want* to receive some kind of help for their illness, involuntary patients have shown no such initiative and assumedly do not want any kind of medication.

Many of the more recent changes to this legislation have focused on modernizing involuntary civil commitment procedures. One such act is the District of Columbia Mental Health Civil Commitment Modernization Act of 2004, which modified the existing law governing civil commitment of involuntary patients in D.C. This revision is now commonly known as the Ervin Act (Title 21, D.C. Code §501-592). Among the changes made by this reform were an elimination of indeterminate periods of commitment by limiting commitments to one year, and greater emphasis on treating patients in the least restrictive setting possible (Library of Congress). Prior to Ervin Act reform, D.C. also saw mental health legislation that drastically limited the use of involuntary physical and chemical restraints on patients who were involuntarily committed to the hospital.

In a public statement in support of the new legislation, D.C. Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton argued that these reforms were important in order to “reinvigorate the rights of people with mental illness” and “modernize the way mental health services in the District of Columbia are delivered” (Library of Congress). A house report on the act asserted that the lawmaking was needed in order to “increase the involvement of [patients] in their treatment and recovery process” (THOMAS). Other laws providing increased protection of patients' rights in D.C. were supported alongside the Department of Mental Health's promise that these new reforms would “provide patients with the right to complain and be heard” (“DMH Initiates...”). Similar

legislation in California, the Lanterman-Petris-Short Act, set goals of “protecting mentally disordered persons...from criminal acts” and “safeguarding individual rights” (California Welfare and Institutions Code §5000).

Rights-oriented reform such as this has had a number of positive outcomes for both the patient and for the community. Looking at D.C. in particular, a March 2005 speech by a representative of the Department of Mental Health (DMH)—an entity created by the reform—spoke of a number of the department’s accomplishments in the face of this reform:

[DMH succeeded in] creating Care Coordination and the Access HelpLine, a whole new accountability system, and opportunities for agencies to provide community mental health services. [We also expanded] housing opportunities and services to persons who are homeless, add[ed] new [patients’] rights requirements, moderniz[ed] commitment statutes, creat[ed] a new grievance system and contract[ed] with an external advocacy organization to advocate on behalf of [patients] (“Testimony”).

Additionally, patients’ advocates would tell you that these legal changes have reduced the number of observable rights violations on the wards (Erin, Zoe, Kate, Claire).

Although this sounds positive, the fact remains that the role played by hospital staff on the wards in the successful execution of patients’ rights legislation remains relatively unexamined. Thus far, while reports explore aspects of the conservative social control power held by psychiatrists or the community-based ideals of the reformers (Steadman 263), sociological and legal literature lack a critical look into the role that staff play in the implementation of legal reform within the public mental hospital.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

There exist two ideal types that can serve as yardsticks in predicting the outcomes of patients' rights legislation in the above areas of working life at the hospital: the new legalistic outlook of reformers and the medicalistic outlook of doctors. These outlooks are named after Fennell's two orientations toward mental health legislation (104-5). It should be noted that these outlooks function simultaneously on the two distinct levels of the practical and the theoretical. The practical level of the outlook attempts to capture the phenomenological aspect of the legislation, focusing on the way in which reforms are experienced by staff. On a theoretical level, the outlooks function as paradigms in social science, helping to increase the understanding of a larger system or trend.

The New Legalistic Outlook

According to this outlook, the hospital environment is seen through a more community-oriented lens. This stance is reflected in the written forms of the new legal reforms, which allows inpatient hospitalization only if it is the "least restrictive form of treatment available" for a person who is found to be at risk of harming himself or others.¹⁵ In cases where a doctor wants to involuntarily commit a patient, the law requires a series of legal hearings in which the hospital must prove that the patient needs to remain in the hospital. Under this view, the hospital should only keep a patient in the hospital until they are stable enough to receive services as an outpatient in the community.

According to the mandates of new legalism, the hospital staff are responsible for administering a basic level of care without violating the

¹⁵ Legal citation omitted for confidentiality purposes.

informed consent of the patient. While hospital staff retain discretion in emergency situations, the majority of control over treatment shifts to the patient. The role of reform in this setting is patient-oriented, and ensures that patients have the right to be involved with and consent to their own treatment. The new legalistic view does not seem to consider how such reform might impact on the job of the hospital staff.

The Medicalistic Outlook

In this view, a large degree of power is granted to psychiatrists and medical science to determine the best course of treatment for a given patient, which in this schema is often chemical (Yale 854). The role of the doctors in this outlook is synonymous with almost complete control over most aspects of a patient's care, including the ability to change or eliminate medical records (Yale 855). Often, the ability of the doctor to determine treatment remains intact, even when the doctor is unable to perform an unbiased evaluation (Michigan 390).

Hospital staff serve as instruments of the doctors' power. In fact, the control that staff are able to exercise on the wards is limited by preference of the doctors, who are viewed as having the ability to control and manipulate staff (Yale 855). Reform in such a setting would focus on bringing the power dynamic between the *doctor* and the *patient* to a more equal level (Michigan 385).

A New Model: The Ward Control Outlook

Note that neither the new legalistic nor the medicalistic viewpoint directly applies to the unique relationship between patients and hospital staff. The new legalistic view celebrates the community- and patient-focused goals of legal reform rather than the reality on the wards, and could be criticized for its idealism. Meanwhile, the medicalistic outlook

describes the power of psychiatrists and doctors—both of whom are more highly trained, better paid, and more distant from the daily realities on the wards than are the staff. Furthermore, medicalism assumes that the hospital staff comply with the instructions of the doctor. Neither view truly captures the day-to-day, face-to-face reality of social control on the hospital wards.

To remedy the shortcomings of these outlooks, I propose a third schema that more accurately represents the dynamic of working life in the mental hospital: the ward control outlook. This outlook is based not on legal expectations of human rights nor on notions of medical power, therapy, nor anything relatively clinical as might be expected. Rather, it is founded on theories of police patrolling behavior. It might seem strange to suggest that employees in a therapeutic setting such as a psychiatric hospital behave in ways similar to police officers on patrol. However, there is sociological literature and ethnographic evidence to suggest that this might be an effective comparison. My approach in testing this model focuses on the practical level of the ward control outlook—the way in which reform is experienced and interpreted by staff—in the hopes of using practical-level findings to develop a theoretical paradigm that can contribute to a larger body of sociological analysis.

The ward control outlook considers power and interaction in the hospital from the perspective of the staff members, whose job requires the enforcement of rules and the maintenance of control. In order to meet the demands of their jobs, staff seek to retain a wide scope of discretionary power when it comes to the treatment of patients on the wards of the hospital. The role of the ward staff under my ward control outlook is similar to what Howard Becker called a “rule enforcer” (156). As rule enforcers, it is the responsibility of the staff to see that

protocol is followed and order is maintained on the wards, and they would be provided a large amount of discretion to discharge this duty (Becker 159). The inability to use such discretion in enforcing these rules is directly threatening to the enforcer's sense of purpose (Becker 161). Leonard Pearlman conducted a study along these lines called "Sources of Resistance to Change in a Mental Hospital," in which he found that ward hospital staff are very resistant to changes in policies and procedures on the wards, particularly in cases when such change makes it more difficult to do their jobs (November 1962: 325). As a result, hospital staff become entrenched in their preexisting procedures and norms (Dowdall 91).

Given that the ward control outlook views staff discretion as centrally important in the discharge of daily duties, it follows that staff would need this discretion in order to preserve control over the wards and maintain their decision-making autonomy (Turner 138). This perception of staff power on the wards is very similar to the function of discretionary power in policing literature. In his study on police discretionary behavior, James Q. Wilson compared mental hospital staff to patrolling police officers, for whom occupational discretion also plays a large role (1968: 410-11). Egon Bittner's study of police behavior on skid-row is particularly relevant to staff behavior in mental hospitals. Bittner's description of skid row is strikingly similar to an acute ward in a psychiatric hospital, as both are full of people who seem unable to live a normal life and are presumed to be incompetent by enforcers (October 1967: 705). Bittner predicts that the result of such an environment would lead staff to be consistently aware of the threat of violence (Bittner October 1967: 706).

Liberalizing legal reform under this schema could be seen as a threat to the staff's ability to maintain and use discretion in their day-

to-day interactions with patients on the wards. A loss of discretion would correspond to a loss of control over an already chaotic environment. Reform in an institution is an example of an occupational uncertainty (Burawoy 79) that would create what Bryan Turner calls a “dual system of authority” (156). Under this dual system, there would be a conflict between the governing laws and the methods employed by ward workers, resulting in a “fractured” environment (Turner 156). The splitting nature of this environment can lead to feelings of frustration and powerlessness (Townsend 178), or increased work for staff. The response to this situation, according to Bittner, could be an increased exercise of coercive control for the purpose of regaining order (October 1967: 713).

In 1957, Robert K. Merton wrote about the kind of institutional instability that patients’ rights reform could create by using the language of Durkheim’s “anomie.” Anomie represents a feeling of normlessness created when “the technically most effective procedure, whether culturally legitimate or not, becomes typically preferred to institutionally prescribed conduct” (Merton 135). Workers attempt to minimize the strain of anomie by resorting to “innovation” in situations where the institutionally proscribed means of achieving a goal—for example, the specific restrictions detailed in the legal reform—are less effective than a non-proscribed means, which could be any number of approaches including physical or chemical coercion (Merton 141). Merton calls these “control mechanisms” (180-1).

According to Anselm Strauss, any employee is capable of breaking the rules and turning to these control mechanisms to cope with a situation of workplace anomie (395). The necessary stimulus for breaking the legally proscribed rules in this case could be the series of legal reforms that took away some degree of discretion or convenience

for the staff, thus creating a challenge for maintaining order and fulfilling duties on the wards. The question that must be answered by this research is whether or not the reform created such an anomic situation, and if so, whether such a situation engendered rule-breaking or rule-bending innovation on the part of the staff. If it did, an examination of the consequences of this reform can improve the way in which similar lawmaking is implemented in the future.

IV. HYPOTHESIS AND PREDICTIONS

Can such a model attempting to predict the behavior of employees in a psychiatric hospital be accurate when it is based largely on theories describing the attitudes and responses of police officers who deal with trouble-makers and criminals? And if my ward control model of staff working culture proves to be valid, how this schema predict the staff's reaction to recent patients' rights-based reforms?

Hypothesis

Using legal reform to change the institutionally proscribed means of achieving the goal of modernized mental health treatment does not change the ward control culture of power on the hospital wards. Rather, it changes the technical process required to reach an ends. The conflict between a new legalistic proscribed means and the ward control staff orientation creates a situation of workplace anomie in which the institutionally proscribed conduct is not interpreted by staff as the most effective way of dealing with problems on the wards. Staff alleviates this conflict by resorting to innovation—whether rule-breaking or rule-bending—to accomplish the ends of the reform.

Predictions

If the hypothesis is correct and the culture of ward control exists—and prevails—in spite of the new legalistic changes to institutional procedure, we can expect to observe the following:

Prediction One: Ward staff perceive their job as that of a rule-enforcer in a skid-row environment. As a result, staff feel they are entitled to a significant degree of discretionary control on the wards.

Prediction Two: The power of patients to be involved in their own treatment will be seen as at odds with the role of staff to exercise discretionary control over patients. The loss of this discretionary control would be believed to compromise the ability of the staff to maintain their role on the wards and enforce rules on patients.

Prediction Three: The loss of discretion and the reduced ability to enforce rules on the part of the staff will be seen as a threat to the ability of the staff to do their job.

Prediction Four: The patients-rights reform creates workplace anomie once “the technically most effective procedure, whether culturally legitimate or not, becomes typically preferred to institutionally prescribed conduct” (Merton 135). The institutionally prescribed conduct—the new legislation—will not be seen as the most effective procedure and staff will seek to alleviate this strain through some form of innovation.

V. DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH SITE

This research focuses on the opinions, observations, and experiences of staff at a large public psychiatric hospital in a major metropolitan city on the East Coast. The hospital was formerly a federal institution, but ownership and control shifted to the city in the

late 1980's (Wikipedia.org). The hospital has a total of 315 beds, 123 registered nurses and 31 residents (Hospital Map). 175 acres of the grounds are in use. Of the buildings in use, there are several long-term care buildings, a short-term care building, and a forensic pavilion for criminal offenders. There are also several administrative buildings, one of which is used for selected legal procedures involving the involuntary commitment of patients.¹⁶

The long-term care buildings have anywhere from one to six occupied wards. The short-term care building has eight wards, at least one of which is reserved for geriatric patients. The acute and sub-acute wards are in this building. The acute ward receives patients when they are first sent to the hospital, whether voluntarily or involuntarily. Once their behavior becomes less extreme or they are placed on a steady regimen of medications, they are considered stabilized and are sent to the sub-acute care ward. The layout of these two wards is the same.

In order to better visualize these wards, let us follow a visitor walking through the acute ward. We will call this visitor Emile.

Standing in front of the door to a ward—or unit—Emile may initially have some trouble gaining access to the inside. All of the doors in the hospital, except for the ground-floor entrance to the stairwell and the stairwell exits, can only be opened with a key. None of doors in the wards lock automatically. Rather, everyone with a key must be careful to manually lock the doors behind him when they are opened. The front door is no exception. The doors to the unit are old and heavy, coated with dark green paint that is coming off in places. There are signs on the front of the doors—“Attention visitors!”—advising guests to leave behind matches, lighters, and sharp objects. As long as he does not look

¹⁶ All numbers altered by +/- 10% to preserve the anonymity of the research site.

suspicious, Emile will not be searched; there is an honor system. If Emile does not have a key to the door, he can ring a doorbell on the outside of the ward and wait for staff to let him in. If he does not want to bother the staff with the doorbell, there is a narrow window in the ward door he can poke his head through to get the attention to any official-looking person with a clipboard.

Once Emile gets past the main door, he will find himself in a long, brightly-lit hallway. Doctors and their teams of residents use the rooms nearest to the ward door for conference rooms and break rooms. As Emile walks further down the hallway, he will see one or two patient bedrooms at the end, each housing no more than four patients. Continuing to walk away from the ward door, the hallway will dead-end at a dark green door to the porch, which is also locked. As a visitor, Emile may be allowed access to the porch, where he might see a public defender meeting with a patient who has legal questions in relative privacy. Other patients, however, can only gain access to the porch when staff periodically open it to allow cigarette breaks. If Emile steps onto the porch, he will find himself in a square room with two adjacent walls that are open to outside air, but are completely enclosed in a thick black screen. There are a few chairs on the porch of varying comfort and softness available for Emile to sit on.

When Emile leaves the porch, the main hallway will steer him into the center of the ward. Emile will be standing in a large, open common area filled with fat, blue, foam-rubber chairs. Some of these chairs are pushed together to make sofa-like objects. On occasion, Emile will overhear daytime talk shows or movies that are brought in by the staff and shown on a small television. If Emile stays on the ward for the day, he will see that patients spend most of their time in the common room. During the day in the common room, patients can be found staring at

the television, sleeping on the chairs, or walking around engaged in conversation—sometimes with another person. If Emile needs to use the restroom while he is on the ward, he might want to avoid the patient restrooms and showers that adjoin common room and ask to use the staff bathroom, instead. It is most likely cleaner. Emile will find the majority of the patients' bedrooms lining the outer border of the common room. An extension of the common room is set off to the side of the main part, although it is still open and visible. Since the walls near this area are lined with windows, it is sometimes referred to as the sunroom; although Emile will probably feel that it lacks much of the typical warmth and quaintness associated with the term. Emile will not notice the solitary confinement room in the very back corner of the ward, diagonal from the main door.

Whatever Emile needs while he is on the ward as a visitor, he will have to ask the staff. Emile will find the staff on the ward behind a long, raised desk that resembles the wall to a fortress. The desk faces the common room and the bulk of the patients, some of whom pass the time by persistently talking to staff, requesting to use the phone or smoke cigarettes when it is not the designated phone or cigarette time, or asking staff to please release them. There is usually at least one patient at the desk doing at least one of these things, and staff might invite Emile behind the desk if he is being bothered by the patients in front of it. Behind this desk, he will find a number of staff areas, including a phone room, a supplies/records room, a refrigerator, sink, and a converted break room—formerly a second solitary confinement space. On weekdays, the desk is usually manned by between two and four semi-skilled staff members or psychiatric nursing assistants (PNAs) and one registered nurse who is in charge of the staff. Additionally, each ward has a records clerk who is in charge of

maintaining patients' records and photocopying these records upon request from attorneys.

Staff are responsible for providing some degree of activity for the patients, and this often occurs in the form of staff-led activity "groups." Groups range from dancing to board games to discussion groups. All patients are supposed to attend group, but Emile might not know this from the number of people who actually sit in group. It is a regular occurrence that some patients cannot be roused from their sleep on the thick blue foam chairs to move into group, and Emile will see many others sitting in group but not participating in the activity.

When Emile is ready to leave the ward, he can either use his key to unlock the main door or ask a staff member to walk him out. If he lets himself out, he will walk through a handful of patients who usually wait by the ward door or who have followed him to it. They may ask to be let out, or they may wait quietly, eyeing the door. Emile will have to be vigilant not to let anybody else out with him, and he should be certain to lock the door behind him.

VI. METHODOLOGY

The data collected consists of three parts: independent research in journals and databases; personal observation while on the ward; personal interviews with staff, administrators, and legal professionals; and primary materials provided by the institution and various departments within it.

Online Journals and Databases

The independent research component of this study used a number of online databases and other sources of literature. Articles from

Jstor.org provided information about short-term experiments and studies conducted in mental hospital settings, and helped expose staff-patient relationships and perspectives. Lexus-Nexus was utilized to provide information on written mental health laws in the city under examination. These laws were used as a subjective backdrop against which the analysis of staff behavior on the wards took place. Online databases of congressional hearings were used to acquire transcripts and reports from discussions pertaining to the mental health reform. Statements made by lawmakers represent the intended goals of the new legislation, and these are contrasted with empirical evidence from the wards. Finally, online archives from local newspapers were helpful in revealing the local perception and understanding of conditions at the hospital, as well as any news-worthy incidents that took place at the hospital in the periods before and after the reform. Much of this information from these sources was disguised as it discloses identifying information of the research site, which must remain confidential.

Personal Observation

Personal observation of life on the wards took place on numerous occasions during several different time periods. The first period of observation took place over the summer of 2005 and lasted approximately three months, when I worked as an investigative intern with the Public Defender Service for this city in the Mental Health division. In this capacity, I often spoke with patients and staff on the wards, and I had an opportunity to see many different wards in various buildings throughout the hospital. For reasons related to ethical clearance, no information gathered from patients or staff during my work with public defender is used in this paper, although much of the description of the research site came from experience garnered during

this time. Additionally, all interview subjects were informed prior to the start of the interview that I no longer worked for public defender, nor did I have any affiliation with them. The second and third observational trips took place over the course of a few weeks in January and February of 2006.

Interviews

Before conducting interviews, this project underwent a review process at Yale University, where my research proposal was approved and I successfully completed an online course in ethical research procedure. The approval process at the hospital in question was relatively more strenuous—the research proposal underwent several revisions and was discussed in a committee meeting of the Institutional Review Board, where it was provisionally approved and then forwarded to the city’s relevant governmental departments and the unions of the hospital staff, nurses, and doctors to receive their approval.

Data collection at the hospital was conducted in two different interview sessions over three different trips. On one of these trips, no interviews were conducted due to logistical difficulties with the Institutional Review Board of the hospital. The majority of the opinions gathered in interviews are those of the daytime ward staff who work from morning until 3:30pm on the acute and sub-acute intake wards, as these employees have the most daily contact with patients who are awake. Additionally, patients on these wards have just arrived at the hospital and their behavior is not yet stabilized. As a result, more patients on the acute and sub-acute wards refuse medication, causing the staff to confront on a daily basis the new reforms that regulate the administration of involuntary and emergency medication.

The first series of interviews took place over the summer after my internship with the Public Defender ended and consisted of nineteen interviews. Those interviewed were: two attorneys for the Attorney General's office; two Public Defender attorneys; one Public Defender investigator; two staff doctors; two judges on the mental health circuit; and twelve members of the hospital ward staff, including nurses, PNAs, and record clerks. PNAs make up the bulk of the ward staff, and thus they also make up the bulk of the interviews conducted.

During a second trip in February, one additional staff member was interviewed at length, along with a hospital administrator who is responsible for training residents and doctors. Additionally, two more public defender attorneys were interviewed. One of these attorneys was a key figure in the reform of the civil commitment and mental health laws for this city, and has detailed knowledge of the pattern of legal change over the last five years. Lastly, a follow-up interview was conducted with one of the doctors on the acute intake ward.

Interviews followed the technique set out by Smith and Smith, which is itself a variation on Norman Denzin's interpretation of interviewing:

In conducting interviews...we probed for "stories" rather than "epiphanies." The idea here was to collect episodes that were in some ways typical of lifeworldly experience but nevertheless sufficiently vivid and illustrative to have stuck in the informant's mind (Smith and Smith 10).

The interview was not concerned with garnering the details of staff's factual understanding of the law, but rather their perceptions of their job in the face of concrete procedural changes at the hospital. A sample interview is reproduced in Appendix A.

Most interviews were tape recorded. Several subjects refused to be tape recorded, so for these interviews hand-written notes were taken. All subjects were presented with an informed consent form that

explained their participation in this research and promised confidentiality. A copy of this form can be found in Appendix B. A total of twenty-four personal interviews were conducted, lasting approximately twelve hours and spanning over 120 pages of transcripts. The majority of participants were African American and female. They averaged more than sixteen years of working in the hospital. In this research, all interview subjects are identified by a codename and their job position in order to protect their identities. Their real names were not recorded at any point in this research. A table of the codenames, jobs, and subject demographics can be found in Appendix C.

Primary Texts

The Mental Health Division of the Public Defender Service, which works with the patients at this hospital and whose offices are on the grounds of the hospital, provided a number of documents relating to legal reform in the hospital and in the city, as well as the training manual provided to their employees and interns. A security guard at the hospital provided me with a small pamphlet that celebrated a milestone in the age of the hospital and contained historical information.

VII. RESULTS

Presentation of the results will proceed by addressing each sociological prediction in order. In attempting to judge whether the prediction was observed on the wards, interview data will be presented and interpreted in light of the theoretical argument.

Prediction One: Ward staff perceive their job as that of a rule-enforcer in a skid-row environment. As a result, staff feel they are entitled to a significant degree of discretionary control on the wards.

In order to address this prediction, we must first answer the embedded questions about the role of staff as rule-enforcers and the skid-row nature of the ward.

The Role of Staff as Rule-Enforcers

The hospital staff overwhelming presented their job in terms of maintaining order, or keeping patients “under control” rather than offering therapy. In interviews, staff displayed a strong sense of responsibility when it came to enforcing rules and maintaining order on the ward. Jack, a psychiatric nursing assistant (PNA), was asked how he perceived his responsibilities to the client, and he answered, “to make sure that they are safe, to make sure that they don’t get hurt, [and] to make sure they don’t hurt anybody else.” The idea of a regulator or enforcer was also evident in the response of Maya, a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) who said “one of my biggest responsibilities is to ensure their safety. The safety of my clients, their peers, and all the staff I work with.” Here, Maya extends her responsibility beyond one solely to the client, or patient, but to everyone on the ward.

Townsend suggests that this broader conception of staff responsibility causes staff to experience positive emotions as they create a “more powerful self” that is capable of handling challenges effectively (9). Naomi, who is also a PNA, contextualized this “more powerful self” when she recounted a time when her role as a rule-enforcer and order-maintainer was tested:

I remember one nurse used to fuss at all the nurses because they’d associate with the PNAs [Psychiatric Nursing Assistants]. And this one nurse—oh, she was real high on her horse, honey—“you’re not supposed to have anything to do with PNAs.” Until one day a patient jumped on her and the PNAs was there, and nobody helped her. [laughs] She got creamed! [laughs] When she came back, she was

singing a whole different tune. “Hi! How you doing!” You know? She had to learn. She had to learn (Naomi, PNA).

What this nurse “had to learn” was that it is the job of the staff to enforce the rules of behavior and maintain order on the wards. When the PNAs refused to help her, there was nobody left to protect her from a violent patient. This role perception, as Becker predicted, is central to the fulfillment—or non-fulfillment—of PNA duties.

Staff emphasized not only their feeling of responsibility when it came to enforcing rules, but also the perceived importance of their need to do so. Without enforcement of behavioral and social rules on the wards, staff repeatedly mentioned the possibility of ward-spread chaos. “One client” who is rowdy or misbehaving, according to a licensed practical nurse (LPN) named Becky, “can cause others to escalate.” Turner points out that this situation would be unacceptable, as a large aspect of staff’s role involves maintaining control over the situation on the wards (138).

The Intake Ward as Skid Row

Several pages back, the work of Egon Bittner was discussed for its analysis of police behavior in a “skid row” environment. According to Bittner, the police view skid row as “the natural habitat of people who lack the capacities and commitments to live ‘normal’ lives on a sustained basis” (October 1967: 705). He also identifies the important elements of police perceptions on skid-row as being “the presumption of incompetence” and the constant feeling of impending violence (Bittner October 1967: 705-6). Both of these attitudes can be found among the ward staff.

Presumption of Incompetence

The tendency to presume incompetence is challenged by the new reforms. Relevant citations in the laws indicate that “The [patient] may revoke his or her consent to the participation or authorization for notification...at any time,” and “The [patient]’s treatment preferences shall be followed...and shall never be overridden for the convenience of the department or other provider.”¹⁷ Specifically, the section of the law entitled “Retention of civil rights” delineates that “[patients] shall be presumed legally competent and retain all civil rights, unless otherwise limited by order of the court.”¹⁸ According to one of the attorneys interviewed, the court rarely limits the civil rights of a patient. New legalists embrace the presumption of competence. Attorneys for patients stress that, in accordance with the new laws, it is not their job to make plans or decisions in a patient’s best medical interest, but rather to navigate them through the legal system to help them meet their own personal goals (Kate).

In reality, however, *staff* attitudes did not conform to the legalistic schemas presented in the new lawmaking, but fell more clearly in line with the policing attitudes of the ward control paradigm. Hospital staff on the intake wards indicated that they still held a strong presumption of the patients’ incompetence. In interviews, staff repeatedly noted that the patients on the ward were incapable of living normal lives in society, and were not able to make sound decisions for themselves. Many staff members agreed verbatim with PNA Brooke when she said that “When a person—a patient comes into the hospital, if he could make a sound decision for himself, I don’t think he would be here.” An

¹⁷ Citation omitted to preserve anonymity.

¹⁸ Citation omitted to preserve anonymity.

interesting kind of fatalism pervaded the staff responses, as person after person repeated ideas such as “everybody’s here for a reason” (Marla). Often, the presumption of incompetence impeded the acceptance of the new legal reforms, as Marla said, “I think the law that the person don’t take their medication, they have the right to—no. You are here for treatment. If they are able to make their own decisions, they wouldn’t be here.” Staff’s presumption of incompetence was often expressed in returns of recidivism and the patient’s perceived inability to understand the need to continue taking medication after being released from the hospital:

And see, when they feel better, they think they don’t need medication. Then you have to do some help teaching and say, “well, look, the reason you felt better is because you were taking your medication. When you stop taking it, then you start getting ill again.” And you know, you tell them that, but they still see it as being okay once they feel better and they don’t think they need it, but they do (Brooke, PNA).

As Marla, a PNA, observed, the patients “get in their opium meds, they feel good, they get back out, they feel like they don’t need their meds, then it starts all over again.”

Threat of Violence

An element of Bittner’s work on skid row that is particularly salient in the ward environment is the sense that staff is “constantly attuned to the possibility of violence” (Bittner October 1967: 706). The threat of violence is a dark cloud that hangs over the acute unit and was evident in almost every interview. Brandy framed the issue precisely when she said of the patients, “They really don’t know how to control their temper as you and I know how to control ours. And if they feel like striking, they’ll just strike and they don’t care about the

consequences.” Most staff members had a story about violence they had either experienced or observed at the hands of patients:

People getting assaulted, doctors getting abused. I seen a doctor get stabbed. That was really terrifying. And I got assaulted, twice. I’m still here, though. You hear about things. General stuff, a bunch of stuff. General stuff. But that’s just part of the job, you know? (Brandy, Record Clerk.)

Naomi shared a recent incident in which a patient told her that he would “break [her] neck one day.” This incident highlighted the constant sense of possible violence on the wards which was only exacerbated when “they still did not give him any medication because they said he wasn’t taking any.”

The Entitlement to Discretionary Control

The combination of these factors—the rule-enforcing role of staff and the skid-row nature of the intake ward—lead to the main part of the prediction: whether these two factors result in a feeling among the staff that they are entitled to discretionary control over the available resources of coercion—namely involuntary and emergency medication, like PRNs. In examining the interview data, this feeling was indeed prevalent.

PRN is an abbreviation for a Latin phrase *Pro Re Nata*, that means “as needed.” A PRN is a dose of medication, often anti-psychotic or sedative medication—that is administered to a patient when his behavior becomes dangerous to himself or to others, and other methods of calming a patient down have failed. Sometimes, a patient will request a PRN from the hospital staff when they feel they need one. Erin, an attorney for the public defender service and an individual intimately involved in the construction of the new legal reforms, noted

that the PRN is intended to “supplement” a patient’s normal round of medications. She compared a PRN to cough medicine, in that one only takes cough medicine when a cough becomes troublesome. Likewise, a PRN is prescribed “for a flare-up in a psychiatric condition” (Erin). When a PRN is administered against a patient’s will, as it often is, it is considered involuntary and provided in the form of an injection (Erin). This injection is not effective as an anti-psychotic, since it is in a large, immediately-released dose; rather, its immediate effect is that of a sedative (Leonard). The staff often tried to downplay this aspect of the PRN. For example as Naomi told me of PRNs, “It’s not so much that we’re trying to keep you ‘snowed under,’ or anything like that, but we’re trying to keep you calm enough that you sleep.” It should not be necessary to point out the argument of patients’ rights advocates in this case: that the line between keeping a patient calm enough that they stay asleep and using the medication as a tranquilizer is a thin one, at best.

Staff often expressed the need for coercive measures like PRNs and restraints using the vocabulary of control, tying the measures back to a need to prevent violence or minimize the constant, unmitigated threat of violence that the staff deals with on a daily basis. When Marla spoke of the importance of using a PRN on an out-of control patient, she said that, “A lot of times all it will do is put them to sleep for a minute or two. But that minute or two could be enough to calm them down to have them listen to you when they wake up.” Here, as in the observation from Brandy, the need for coercive measures is closely tied back to the importance of the staff’s job in rule-enforcement. Ward staff often described patients in terms of an in control/out of control binary. Staff almost always indicate that a patient who is on medication is in control, while a patient who refuses medication has a high likelihood of becoming out of control. Becoming out of control is

synonymous with physical violence. As a result, refusing medication seems to become synonymous with the tangible threat of physical violence, which only enhances the staff's need for control and the threat of allowing patients to refuse medication.

Incidentally, many patients' rights advocates and mental health attorneys agreed that in instances where a patient is out of control and dangerous, the staff must be able to somehow control the patient. Many new legalists indicated approval of the use of PRNs, but only after all other means of control or diffusion of the problem had been completely exhausted.

Prediction Two: The power of patients to be involved in their own treatment will be seen as at odds with the role of staff to exercise discretionary control over patients. The loss of this discretionary control would be believed to compromise the ability of the staff to maintain their role on the wards and enforce rules on patients.

Prediction one—that hospital staff feel the need for discretionary control in their jobs—seems to be observable on the wards. Moreover, it seems that staff exhibit feelings of powerlessness in the face of the threat of removing aspects of their control. What happens, however, when the new legalistic approach grants patients the right to refuse treatment? Can the rights granted in the new reform coexist with the existing culture of control on the wards? My prediction is that they cannot.

When staff were asked the effects of patients' rights legislation on their ability to perform their jobs on the ward, they often shared the opinion that this reform removes a notable amount of their power over patient care and their ability to enforce rules. This created a feeling of powerlessness among the staff in the response to their compromised ability to perform the functions of their job.

Nature of Patients Rights-Based Reform

There were several elements to the series of patients' rights-oriented legal reforms in the examined city. One aspect of the reform made it much more difficult for hospital staff to restrain or involuntarily medicate a patient. Whereas the definition was once more loose, the law now demands that doctors run through a lengthy gauntlet of paperwork and legal proceedings before the staff are allowed to administer involuntary medication on a regular basis. Additionally, while doctors can authorize staff to use involuntary medication in the case of an emergency, the law became clearer on the definition of such an exigency, establishing:

Emergency: situation in which [patient] is experiencing a mental health crisis and in which the immediate provision of mental health treatment is, in the written opinion of the attending physician, necessary to prevent serious injury to the [patient] or others.

This law also eliminated the ability of the staff to place patients in both physical and chemical restraints. The law specifically forbid a physical restraint technique known as “four-point restraint,” in which the four limbs of a patient are tied to the four corners of a bed. “Chemical restraint” refers to the deliberate administration of medication to sedate a patient, effectively restraining him or her (Erin). The reform meant that involuntarily committed patients could refuse medication regardless of a doctor's prescription, with the exception of valid orders for emergency medication and PRNs.¹⁹

¹⁹ Recall that a patient's admission status—voluntary or involuntary—refers to whether or not a patient *requested* hospitalization to keep himself safe, or whether hospitalization occurred against the patient's will because the patient was observed acting in a way that put himself or others in danger.

While PRNs are still allowed, the freedom of PNAs to administer them has been limited. The public defenders felt a strong sense of pride in the new restrictions on medications and restraints that the new laws enacted. Claire, a public defender, commented that, “It used to be that you would see clients overly medicated quite often because of their behavior. The law has changed some to kind of limit the use of PRNs.” Patients’ rights advocates saw these changes as a positive step. Zoe, the public defender and patients’ rights supporter, acknowledged that the reform can be perceived as less than positive for the staff, but that such interest is outweighed by that of the patient:

A psychiatrist or even someone else on a treatment team might have ideas about what they think a person needs, and those ideas might be right on—no one would disagree—but until a person is able to accept those things themselves, I don’t think that the treatment can be effective (Zoe, Public Defender).

These changes are central to the new legalistic spirit of the reform: to encourage mentally ill people to seek voluntary treatment rather than be forced into treatment at a hospital (Kate).

Despite such community-oriented attitudes of new legalism, the ward control culture of the staff persisted. The very passage of these new laws was perceived as discouraging for them, as reform took away some amount of their discretion and power. Jack, a PRN, commented matter-of-factly on legal reform, saying that when “there’s something that is passed, we’ll get it at a level where we are told, you know, ‘don’t do this any more.’” Chuck, a PNA in the sub-acute ward, said, “Whatever the legal system does, it’s out of our hands.” Marla captured this feeling of powerlessness and indignity emerging inherently from patients’ rights-based reforms, when she answered,

“Do you feel like you have any rights? No, we’ve got none. We were told that we signed up to be punching bags. That’s what we do.”

Loss of Discretion Attributed to New Laws

Patients’ ability to refuse medications is an aspect of the reform that most dramatically reduces the coercive discretion once held by the staff. Erin proudly noted, “If a patient now wants to refuse medication, it can’t be administered to them over their objections.” The results of this change were certainly perceived by the staff. PNA Naomi spoke of a patient who availed himself of his right to refuse medications:

Yeah, we got a nurse that been out for two years because a patient refused medications and the doctor wouldn’t let the nurse force any medications on him. The patient went out in the dayroom, decided, “I’m not taking no m-f medication,” and he broke the collarbone of a nurse (Naomi).

The sociologist Elizabeth Townsend noted that “Participation engages people as activists in shaping their own lives. In contrast to the one-way dependence that underlies caregiving, participation is enabled in two-way, interdependent processes that generate empowerment for us all” (Townsend 3). In the post-reform hospital, removing staff discretion limited “two-way, interdependent processes” and created a disempowering experience for the staff. Leonard, a hospital administrator, commented that patients’ rights reform “creates more work for mental health staff, because the whole thrust of the patients’ rights movement is to stop seeing people as patients who receive treatment from on high and to make the relationship more equal” (Leonard). In Leonard’s view, then, a patient self-monitoring his own illness simply made “more work” for others. Because the staff tie their discretion to use coercive measures so closely to the ability to fulfill the

central rule-enforcing aspect of their job, feelings of defeatism and discouragement resulted when their discretion over these measures was threatened by reform that equalized their relationship with the very people they must keep under control.

New legalists are not always sympathetic to the negative aspects of the reform for the staff. One public defender expressed her shock that increasing patient's rights, particularly the right to refuse medication, could be seen as a negative change by staff on the wards when she sighed, "I cannot believe that a professional would feel like someone's choice to take medication or not is interfering with that person's treatment" (Zoe). Rights advocates point out that the decision regarding treatment must rest with the patient. New legalists often justified this by comparing mental illness to any other non-psychiatric illness such as a cough or pneumonia, in which a patient can choose whether or not to be compliant with his or her medication (Erin, Claire). The right to decide whether or not to take one's medication, according to these reformers, should not be taken away simply for reason of mental illness (Claire).

However, without the coercive option, staff said, "there's nothing you can do, just be available" (Marla). When PNA Jack was asked for his opinion on a patient's right to refuse medication, he answered, "Well, it hampers their treatment plan when they refuse to cooperate with the plan and we don't really have a whole bunch of alternatives when they don't. Usually, until they decide to be something more, you just wait it out." The result is a feeling among the staff of fatalistic disempowerment.

Ultimately, the increase in patients' decision-making power did affect the way in which staff were able to enforce rules and fulfill their jobs on the ward. When she explained her hope to retire early, Naomi

said, “If they would give us back the freedom, and really let me do what I was trained to do—because I think I’m pretty good at it—then maybe I would stay longer. But long as you restrict me, I feel useless. I feel like a babysitter. Because you not letting me help anybody.”

Prediction Three: Loss of discretion and the reduced ability to enforce rules on the part of the staff will be seen as a threat to the ability of the staff to do their job.

Naomi’s comment regarding her role as a “babysitter” frames a reaction to patients’ rights-based legal reform that reduced or eliminated staff discretion in the everyday order-maintenance and rule-enforcement aspect of the staff’s jobs. As Naomi illustrates, these reforms and the resulting powerlessness to enforce rules and fulfill job responsibilities pose a direct threat to the hospital staff. When staff were probed on their feelings in the wake of the patients’ rights reform, they echoed a sentiment consistent with the ward control schema—that this reform and the resulting losses of discretion and power were threatening to them. Staff perceived these threats as both *physical* and *psychological* challenges that seemed to occur on a daily basis, threatening their personal safety as well as their perceived role and status as a staff member in the hospital.

Physical Threats Posed by Reform

The physical threats perceived by the staff as a result of the legal reform were not difficult to identify. The greatest threat the staff faced was the possibility of being violently assaulted on the wards. This should be distinguished from the possibility of violence discussed earlier, as it is not just a general possibility of violence, but a threat *that is perceived to emerge directly from* the recent legal reforms.

The most controversial of the reforms in the eyes of the staff was the right of patients to refuse the medication recommended to them by their doctors. Those staff members who disagreed with this right made up at least one half of the interview population. For most of them, their negative feelings toward the patient's right to refuse medication were rooted in an idea Brandy expressed, that "a lot of staff and someone in [the interviewer's] position could get hurt from them not taking their medication." Brooke, a PNA, lowered her voice when said gravely:

Many things happen in here. Patients—well, you may not hear a lot about patients hurting staff, but they do because they're sick, and when you try to restrain them people get hurt because the patient is very sick and can be out of control. Until you get some medication in them and they get able to control their behavior. And that can happen (Brooke, PNA).

Without the ability to administer involuntary medication, the staff's fears of violent outbreaks were sometimes confirmed. Naomi told the story of a patient who continually refused medication while on her ward, and was eventually moved to the sub-acute ward. Naomi and the other staff on the ward with her suspected that the patient would "flick off," or have an outbreak, but he continued to remain within his rights to refuse his medication. Eventually, the patient did erupt into violence on the sub-acute ward:

By the time they called help—a code thirteen—that's where all staff get together and try to restrain the patient—it had already been like three staff members all together got hurt. One had to go out in an ambulance. But all that could have been prevented. All of it could have been, if they would have just said, okay, regardless of what he say, give him some medication (Naomi, PNA).

Even though serious incidents do not happen daily on the wards, a bitterness is created in the wake of the *threat*, as Naomi insists, "When

I signed that contract to work here, I did not sign up to be somebody's punching bag.”

Even the members of the hospital staff who acknowledged that the reform was a good thing for patients and was the right step to take often followed this concession with an equally strong sense that staff somehow suffered as patients were given more rights. Laurie, an LPN (Licensed Practical Nurse) called this a “Catch-22,” in which “what is good for the patients can also be a danger to society.” Jack also agreed that the reforms were a good thing for patients. When asked how he felt the reforms affected him in his job, he responded, “somebody has to suffer for somebody else to straighten up.”

Jack's idea that somebody has to suffer for somebody else to straighten up seems to apply to the staff on both counts. According to Turner, line staff are in a difficult position, as they will be subject to regulation of both a bureaucratic and a professional nature. The staff are the ones expected to change their behavior to conform with liberalized ideas of patients' rights—to straighten up, as Jack said—but it is also the staff who suffer many of the consequences of this liberalization. In the face of this threat, Naomi spoke of the overly-critical hospital administration and commented, “They wonder why half the staff stay behind the desk. It's because it's safe back there! (laughs) You have more rooms to run to back here! It can be really hairy up here sometimes.”

Psychological Threats Posed by Reform

In interviews, a threat less tangible than physical assault emerged. The psychological consequences of patients' rights-based reform did not sit well with the staff. The psychological threats posed by the reform seemed to fall into two main categories: the frustration of

occupational uselessness; and the threat to staff members' identity and sense of self-competence resulting from an increase in patients' decision-making rights.

Occupational Uselessness

The occupational uselessness aspect of psychological threat stemmed from a feeling that the staff's job no longer accomplished any kind of goal. Laurie said that, despite the fact that her job was "very stressful," she felt that if "the little you do can help them recover fully or to some extent, you feel satisfied that you contributed to their betterment." Becky echoed the psychological rewards that Laurie discussed when she explained that, "This job is about changing people, helping them to be better by taking meds." However, they perceive their inability to make patients take their medications to be the reason patients do not get better. The high rate of recidivism on the wards led many staff members to comment in frustration that the ward door almost seemed to revolve. Emily observed, "Patients come in, we hope that they get better, but a lot of them leave and come back—it's like a revolving door." In fact, when I made my second visit to the hospital in February 2006, I was surprised to see a familiar name on a label outside of one of the patient bedrooms—I recognized the patient as one who had been committed to the hospital several times over the summer, and he had returned again.

This revolving door effect has a greater psychological consequence for the staff. As Townsend notes, a positive job outlook comes from the perception that work is being accomplished, and that life is being managed effectively (9). In contrast, the environment created on the wards is one that Brooke the PNA characterized as "a downer." The negative staff outlook can often be traced back to the feeling that "I

love to see them make progress and be able to help them. But sometimes...you don't see any progress" (Brooke). PNA Naomi agreed: "And it's sad to see them come right back in the door, come right back in the door. And that's sad." Allison, a PNA, addressed the psychological toll of recidivism as well:

And the turnover is so frustrating. You know, you see them get better and leave, get better and leave, you feel like you've done something. But now, it feels as though you not doing anything, because they're coming back...Like cats, how many times have you been back through here? (Allison, PNA).

In this, the feeling of uselessness and frustration are explicit, and the toll they take on the staff is exhausting and demoralizing.

Threat to Identity/Status

Leonard Pearlman wrote that new legalistic policies such as those under examination "are indicators of conditions of patient freedom, autonomy, and decision-making actually extant on wards" (November 1962: 331). The flip side of this coin is that when an increase in patient rights such as these occur in an area of ward life when the patients oppose the staff—such as the choice to take medication—then more "freedom, autonomy, and decision-making" for the patients necessarily means less of all three for staff.

As a result, the legal protection of a patient's right to refuse medication is often seen as a direct threat to the competence and identity of the staff. Erin said:

The doctor thinks, "I'm the doctor, I'm the one with training. I think you have bronchitis, I think you have schizophrenia, I think you have something. I'm recommending this treatment, and you're not going to do that?"...they have that same tension of doctors thinking, "I know what's right, I know what's best, and you're ignoring me" (Erin, Public Defender and Legal Reformer).

The preference of reformers to prioritize the opinions of mentally ill patients over the doctors and the staff is a direct challenge to the status identity and self-image of hospital staff.

Beyond frustration, multiple staff members recounted the frustration of seeing a patient who clearly needs medication in their opinion, but is refusing that medication and getting worse. Brooke spoke exhaustively about patients who “clearly...need medication and they’re able to refuse to take it and you see them getting worse, their behavior is getting more out of control...and they’re still not getting any medication.” Maya also addressed the frustration stemming from these reforms:

Because I guess things are changing...I know why restraints were taken out and why it’s a necessary issue with that, but it’s like, certain patients can come in for treatment. They get the right to refuse medication, and then you see them escalating and you see all this behavior and you can’t medicate them. They have the right to refuse (Maya, LPN).

The element of identity threat emerging from the reforms—the feeling of deep upset that staff sometimes expressed when it came to a patient’s right to refuse medication—might seem conservative or heartless to new legalists at first glance, but within the context of their job at the hospital, one can understand how staff would be so affected by this aspect of the reforms. The staff are the ones who spend the most time with the majority of patients. They have the most opportunity to observe the patients, talk casually with the patients, and form bonds with them. It is the hospital staff who offer medications to patients daily; it is to the hospital staff that the patients who refuse their medications address their refusals; and it is this same staff that no longer has the ability to administer these medications against the will of the patient.

The right to refuse medication seems to pose such a psychological threat because, to the staff, the need for patients to be medicated is visible to them every day. According to Naomi, it is “obvious:”

After three days, you should give the involuntary medication. Because it’s obvious this person—if you observe the person and the person is rattling all the time talking to voices and so forth, but don’t want medication, it’s obvious. They need some kind of help (Naomi, PNA).

Giving the patients the right to refuse their doctor-prescribed medication is interpreted as a choice between the perceptions of the patient and the perceptions of the staff. When the perceptions of the patient win out, the staff feel their competency is undermined. New legalists respond that while staff might be frustrated by a patient’s refusal to take medication, they must accept this as an indispensable part of the job (Zoe). However, this attitude does not necessarily take into account the depth of the negative reaction to such institutional changes. Becky expressed this sentiment beautifully when she said, “A nurse was beaten here, but nobody needs to be maimed. ...It feels like the patients say, ‘I know my rights, I know this, I know that.’ Well, who am I?”

Prediction Four: The patients-rights reform creates workplace anomie once “the technically most effective procedure, whether culturally legitimate or not, becomes typically preferred to institutionally prescribed conduct” (Merton 135). The institutionally prescribed conduct—the new legislation—will not be seen as the most effective procedure and staff will seek to alleviate this strain through some form of innovation.

In reporting on this prediction, we must establish the presence of workplace anomie by illustrating both the perceived ineffectiveness of the “institutionally prescribed conduct”—the legal reform—and the

perceived “most effective procedure,” which could be anything else but will be shown to be the old system of greater staff discretion.

Perceived Ineffectiveness of New Legislation

In interviews, staff often expressed the opinion that the new legislation was not effective in dealing with problems on the ward, or was not realistic “on the ground.” Tobias, a ward psychiatrist, stated this directly when he said, “The new law flies in the face of accumulating knowledge that we’re not treating pneumonia that can be treated in 10 days or two weeks or three weeks.” For the most part, ward staff agreed that the reform hindered their occupational role of maintaining order on the wards.

It should not come as a surprise that patient’s rights reformers did not think the law was as ineffective as the staff did—many of the rights advocates noted the positive accomplishments of the law:

There were close to 500 people who were committed under the indeterminate commitment and remained committed. My impression is that the department has only sought recommitment in maybe 100 of those cases, and maybe is going to file for recommitment in 50 to 100 more. So, less than half the people who had been committed for indefinite periods of time, when someone was really forced to look at it and say “Can you justify continuing this?” they couldn’t (Erin, Public Defender, Legal Reformer).

However, several staff members spoke of ineffectiveness emerging from an administration or from lawmakers like Erin who have no idea how their legal policies work “on the ground.” One attorney for the hospital could not answer any of my questions regarding life on the wards, suggesting I talk to staff who know more about “the everyday” (Stella). This distance resulted in a feeling like Naomi’s, that “patients got *all* these rights, but [lawmakers] never come on the unit and really

see what the patient needs.” The feeling of increased hospital bureaucracy was also a hindrance to the acceptance of the legal reform on the wards:

We have to do a lot of bureaucracy. I have a problem with bureaucracy and I have a problem when it's time to Xerox and you all come to me after I've done all this work and say the patient has been made voluntary. I think they should know, they should give us more time. I don't think you should come to me if you have two weeks and you come to me today and you want the charts of a patient that they've had for two weeks down the road, and I have to do all this stuff, why don't you just bring it down closer? I think it's crazy (Lily, Record Clerk).

Staff both observed reform that was ineffective in solving problems on the wards, and worked under a bureaucracy they felt was ineffective and distanced. This created a preference for the old systems of regulation and control.

Workplace Anomie

The perceived ineffectiveness of the new legislation created an anomic feeling of frustration. This anomie resulted from a conflict between the legally prescribed procedure and what the staff felt was the most effective way of dealing with a problem on the wards. Maya spoke of her inner conflict between what she thinks must be done and what her job requires she do when she sees a patient on the wards who needs to receive medication, but is refusing to take it:

We're sitting here and they're responding to voices, getting agitated and they get to refuse their medication for as long as they're up here. I believe that they need to have emergency meds that they used to be able to do that they can't do anymore (Maya, LPN).

The staff's anomic conflict between institutionally prescribed conduct and the most effective procedure was particularly acute when it came to the sometime-consequences of patients' refusal of medication:

violence against staff. Becky talked about a nurse who was hit in the jaw by a patient. Instead of being able to respond with emergency medication, “the nurse had to call a code, fill out papers. Then it is frustrating to be told you should have done it differently when you’re the one with the broken jaw and the client is still out walking around. You think it’s kind of stupid.” In this case, the prescribed procedure was seen to be bureaucratic and ineffective compared to other alternatives.

Resulting Reliance on Coercive Means of Control

One surprising observation relating to workplace anomie was the way in which staff acted to alleviate the pressures of anomie. Relieving this feeling of disempowerment, according to Townsend, comes down to taking action during the course of a normal day that “actually [*does*] something” to regain control. As Anselm Strauss warned, “...all categories of personnel are adept at breaking the rules when it suits convenience or when warrantable exigencies arrive” (395). When Laurie the LPN explained of a patient’s right to refuse medication, she insisted, “They have this right just like any other patient, but we should have other avenues to make sure that the patient is medicated if they are dangerous to themselves or others. Medication is needed to control behavior.” The use of these “other avenues” is observable in staff interviews, and includes the use of verbal threats and warnings as well as the administration of emergency and PRN medications.

Verbal Coercion

Verbal efforts at regaining lost discretionary control can come in the form of coercive remarks or meanness. Many members of the staff indicated that when a patient refuses medication, they often respond by

telling them that they will not be able to leave the hospital until they begin taking their medication. While there is an element of truth to this—often, a doctor will hold a patient who is refusing medication longer than one who isn't—many patients interpret this to mean that they must take medication to be released, which is incorrect. Marla tells those patients who refuse medication that they “need to think about it, because a lot of times you won't leave until you get it.”

In speaking with Tobias, the ward psychiatrist, about his responsibilities to the ward staff, Tobias revealed an interesting aspect of the coercive control used by staff when he explained why he does not interfere when he thinks staff are “speaking harshly, loudly, scoldingly, belittlingly, contemptuously to patients.”

I do not feel that it's my job, this is for political reasons, to tell staff when I think they are being unkind and sadistic as happens even on the wards...I don't feel it's my role for political reasons—by political I mean interpersonal, respecting quote “staff territories”—to tell staff when I feel they are not being benign. I mean, I would like to be able to...but I do not, as I would with my own supervisees, say, “you know, I think you might be better to say x and y in a somewhat different tone” (Tobias, Psychiatrist).

It is telling that a staff member could engage a patient in a “harsh” or “contemptuous” manner, and this behavior would fall squarely within the grounds of “staff territories.” That verbal interaction, of whatever nature, still falls within the discretion of staff members. As Tobias predicted, removing that discretion would create a fallout so negative that it is better to allow the staff to continue to be verbally coercive.

Chemical Coercion

The law in this city specifies that “[patients] have the right to be free from seclusion and restraint of any form that is not medically

necessary or that is used as a means of coercion, discipline, convenience, or retaliation by staff.”²⁰ However, the use of available chemical means of control to relieve the anomic stress created by the new legislation seemed to be evident on the wards. While it is more difficult to give emergency and involuntary medication, staff still maintain the ability to administer a PRN once a doctor has written a PRN order for a patient. Recall that medication like a PRN is only meant to be given in cases when the patient is posing an immediate danger to himself or to others. When asked about staff administration of PRNs, Tobias noted that after an order is written, patients who are “very loud and annoying” probably get PRNs when “talking to a patient in a gentle and empathic way would probably be quicker and equally effective.” The public defender shared this view, as Kate observed:

I think they get used too much. I think that PRNs should be for when somebody’s out of control. Okay? And I think sometimes they’re used for when people are just a pain in the ass. They’re coming up asking too many questions, they’re using the phone too much, and they’re used just as a way of controlling them, and that’s not what they should be used for (Kate, Public Defender).

When staff were asked when a patient might get a PRN, responses ranged from the more legitimate destruction of property and threat to self or others, to additional justifications including “coming behind the desk” (Marla), and “doing something, [getting] into something” (Becky). As Kate suspected, there is an undertone of discipline when it comes to the use of a PRN—staff want to teach a patient who is “always doing something, into something” that he can’t keep behaving in that way.

²⁰ Citation omitted to preserve anonymity

Quoting from Michael Mann's article on social cohesion, Burawoy predicts this tendency on the part of the staff:

[A worker] clings to the possibility of a last remnant of joy in his work... Even when the details of performance have been prescribed with the utmost minuteness...there will be left for the worker certain loopholes, certain chances of escape from the routine, so that when actually at work he will find it possible now and again to enjoy the luxury of self determination (78).

In this case, the "last remnant of joy" and the last possibility for self determination among the staff is some means of coercive control. It is this control which perhaps allows ward staff to "escape from the routine" dictated in the new legislation and once again feel in control and relieved of anomic pressure.

Erin, who has worked on the grounds of the hospital as a public defender for many years before helping to create the reform, noted:

It used to be you would walk on a ward and there was almost always someone in a locked seclusion room. There was almost always somebody walking around with wrist restraints, leather restraints, or someone tied to a bed in what they call four-point restraints. You rarely see that at this point (Erin, Public Defender and Legal Reformer).

Given that staff no longer have the discretion to utilize these more visible forms of restraint, administering PRN medication seems to be a vital alternative. Moreover, such an act would help ease the anomic discomfort caused by the patients' rights-based reforms. Erin confirms this suspicion when, after describing the staff's reduction of physical restraint at the hospital, she continued by asking, "Are they chemically restraining [patients] as an alternative? Maybe."

Interestingly, several interviewees presented examples of an alternate scenario in which staff maintained a greater amount of discretion in the operation of the wards and the care of patients. In these instances, staff spoke more positively about their jobs and

portrayed the environment as calmer, downplaying the need for mechanisms of coercive control like the PRN. Naomi, who usually works weekdays but was interviewed while working a Saturday shift on the ward, talked about Saturdays as a time when hospital administrators do not report to work and she has more discretionary control over the happenings of the ward. The Saturday ward environment that I observed was markedly different on this day than it was during the week. As Naomi described:

I just put on a DVD and let them relax. Doors are open all day, make sure they get their cigarettes, and that's it. It be nice and calm on the weekends, I love it. But during the weekday, come Monday morning, oh boy. Totally different (Naomi, PNA).

No evidence was found to show that the incidence of PRN administration rises on the weekends. The work environment on Saturdays and Sundays, while it may indicate a more relaxed “weekend effect,” also illustrates what the ward might look like if the stress factors inspired by the legal reform and resulting losses of discretion were removed, or if the staff could better adapt to them.

Another unexpected effect observed on the wards was the increased social importance that the staff placed on the forms of control still contained within their discretion, namely PRNs. According to Maya:

PRNs are needed. They're needed. Because especially like I said for some that don't take medications and then they escalate and stuff like that, PRNs are the only thing we have to help us. We can't restrain them, we can't do anything else. I believe the PRNs are very much needed (Maya, LPN).

Maya was not the only person to hold the view that “PRNs are the only thing” that can help the staff fulfill their job. When asked about PRNs, Brooke the PNA agreed, “Well, it's needed. Because if a person is out of control, you need to give them PRNs...You can't control them

without it.” Stressing the vital role that the PRN played in the arsenal of the ward staff felt like an effort to preserve staff’s right to exercise this discretion. Staff often thought of PRNs and emergency medications as the last—and sometimes only—line of defense and treatment in the wards, and clung to it as such. One of the most poignant comments on the renewed importance of the PRN in the face of the legal reform came from Becky the nurse:

One minute, a client could be sitting there...and the next minute you turn around and they’re hitting someone else, and [the administrators/lawmakers] not here to see that. I mean, I haven’t been in this ward that long, and I heard about overmedication, but I think they need to get everybody’s opinion. I believe a lawyer who’s not here working or a doctor that’s not here for 8 hours or 16 hours when we have to stay over and you’re seeing all this behavior and you really don’t have anything but your PRN (Becky, LPN).

VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

Although patients may not be worse off on the wards now than they were before the patients’ rights legislation, the negative side-effects of such reform do not need to occur. Leonard Pearlin wrote in his examination of the alienation of nursing personnel at a large mental hospital that a mental hospital must not only attempt to meet the needs of the patient and the community, but must also satisfy “the diverse aspirations and opportunities sought by its members” (June 1962: 320). By recognizing the ward control culture of the staff, cities that expect to make significant changes to mental health reform in the future could minimize the negative ramifications of patients’ rights-oriented changes.

It should be noted that the scope of this project did not include a thorough analysis of alternatives to the existing legal reform, nor was

the purpose of this research to explore the feasibility of such alternatives. This study was not an evaluative study, and that does not place me in the strongest position to suggest extremely detailed policy changes. That being said, these general recommendations can be offered:

1. Provide greater emotional and psychological validation for staff during periods of change. Staff members are likely to feel confused, challenged, or threatened by reform that takes away their discretionary power on the wards. Establishing a program that is effective in addressing staff concerns would minimize the feeling held by many of the staff that they were completely powerless in the administration of the hospital and the reform of procedures. This, in turn, would help decrease the feeling of workplace anomie.

2. Along these lines, invite members of the hospital staff to sit on the committee that designs the reforms. Such an act would lessen the distance that staff feel lies between them and the administrative policies to which they are subjected. By featuring hospital staff on lawmaking committees, cities seeking to increase patients' rights can show deference to the role and identity of the hospital staff while still accomplishing reformist goals.

3. Increase funding for mental hospitals. In interviews, a significant complaint of the staff was the decrease in funding to the hospital over the years. This decrease in funding meant that staff had fewer resources to work with and disintegrating grounds on which to work, and low pay for which to do it. The positive effect of having a financial influx, even in the face of discretion-reducing reforms, could create more loyalty to the administrators and lawmakers and thus less pressure between the mandates of the lawmakers and the way in which they perceive a problem should be dealt with on the wards.

IX. CONCLUSIONS

The evidence gathered demonstrates that the two existing paradigms for conceptualizing the mental hospital—the new legalistic and the medicalistic models—do not accurately capture the worldview of ward staff. The dynamics of this occupational culture cannot be predicted by turning to community-oriented schemas or familiar outlooks from social theory involving medical power. Rather a new view of working life at the hospital is required—this was named the ward control model. The conception of the hospital staff as “rule enforcers” who more closely resemble police officers than doctors or rights reformers informed this outlook and sheds light on the way rights-based legal reform is implemented on the wards of the hospital.

The data presented in this research strongly suggests the recent changes in mental health law have had unintended consequences for both patients and hospital staff. The reform that gave patients an increasing number of rights to regulate their own treatment took away power from the staff without providing them with an effective and legitimate system through which to enforce rules and maintain order on the wards. This posed a conflict for the staff between the procedures mandated by the new legislation and the procedures that the staff believed would be most effective in handling situations on the wards. These remaining means of control—verbal warnings and PRNs—took on great importance and were ultimately portrayed by many staff members as an indispensable last resort in fulfilling their jobs.

In Michel Foucault’s landmark book *Discipline and Punish*, he suggests that legal reform would not actually eliminate or reduce the power of staff, but rather would better distribute their power so that it moves from being visible to being invisible (81). Erin spoke of walking

through the wards without seeing patients in wrist restraints, as used to be customary. Zoe remembered a time when she would see notes in the charts of a patient who was refusing medication that read “give PRN meds if person continues to refuse.” According to Zoe, “that’s blatantly wrong, that’s a violation of DMH’s own policy that PRN meds would be given just for refusal to take meds.” The ward control model seems to show, as Foucault suggests, that the power of the staff to exercise their own discretion does not actually disappear from the wards and the charts as new legalistic outlook would hope, but is rather dispersed among remaining staff powers in such a way that it becomes invisible. The danger is that this invisible power is unchallengeable; when held by the staff on the wards, it can only work to the disadvantage of new legalistic goals.

Whether these results could be observed in the absence of the legal reform is unclear. It is impossible to know pre-reform attitudes and behavior with any degree of certainty. Judging from the content of the interviews, however, the ward control model is upheld, and ultimately staff members indicated in their responses a paradoxical increase in the social importance of coercive control for ward staff in the execution of their daily tasks post-reform.

In arriving at this conclusion, my intention is not to argue that patients’ rights-based reforms were a step in the wrong direction, or that they left patients worse-off than when they started. Rather, what should be taken from this research is that such lawmaking must consider the unique ward control nature of working life on the hospital grounds. Without taking the ward control schema into account, new legalistic reform jeopardizes the rule-enforcing ability of the staff and risks unnecessary negative consequences. The staff’s desire to reduce the strain resulting from these negative social consequences seems to

lead to a tightening of control over coercive mechanisms that ultimately infringe upon the rights of patients and work to their disadvantage. Additionally, such reform seems to lower staff morale, which might lead to recruitment and retention problems. In interviews, Jack said that it was important to “think about the money aspect of it” in order to stay motivated, but as Marla suggested, “How about a higher pay for us? We don’t make half enough. Believe me.” In an environment with an unstable population, high staff turnover could be devastating to the progress of patients and could result in large-scale aggressive outbursts (Wulbert 5).

Working at a psychiatric hospital combines a volatile work environment with fundamental questions about identity and power. As the patients’ rights movement proceeds, it is important for reformers to recognize that the social situation of the staff at the hospital cannot be understood using the existing models of new legalism or medicalism. Rather, the relationship of the staff to hospital patients must be considered in light of a ward control model that recognizes the nature of power and control in the staff-patient interaction in the hospital. This understanding is vital to making provisions to ease staff through new patients’ rights lawmaking, which would otherwise be a difficult legal transition. Considering reform in light of the ward control culture of hospital staff will inform—and make more effective—future attempts at legal change within such institutions.

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APPENDIX A: SAMPLE STAFF INTERVIEW

Background

- ∞ How long have you been working for [hospital]?
- ∞ How long have you been on the intake ward?
- ∞ Gender/Race/Ethnicity

Role/Responsibilities and Attitudes

- ∞ What do you see as your responsibility to the patients? To the doctors? To the lawyers?
- ∞ What are your personal feelings/attitudes toward the patients? The doctors? The lawyers?

Life in the Institution

I am going to present a topic, and I'd like you to tell me more about it and how these happen at [hospital]. *(Also, tell me a story about this.)*

- ∞ Doctor presence on wards
- ∞ Complaints from patients (medical, social, etc.)
- ∞ Hearing requests/Voluntary court appointments
- ∞ Doctor interaction with patients
- ∞ Patient refusal of medication
- ∞ PRN administration

Legal Reform

- ∞ Some people say that patients at [hospital] deserve more rights. Other people say that the rights of the patients should

not interfere with the job of the staff at the hospital. What do you think?

- ∞ This reform was passed by 2004. I'd like you to think about what it was like to work at the hospital in the year 2000. If things at the hospital have changed, how have they changed since 2000? What things changed, if any?
- ∞ Can you think of any other changes that were happening in the hospital in the year 2000? Some things that might have changed include paychecks, number of working hours, number of doctors on the wards, the size of the staff, or hospital management.
- ∞ Did any of these changes affect what it was like to work at [hospital]?

APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

APPENDIX C: CODENAMES AND DEMOGRAPHICS SHEET

Interview Number	Codename	Job Position	Years at Hospital	Gender	Ethnicity
1	Jack	Psychiatric Nursing Assistant (PNA)	30	M	AA
2	Marla	PNA	20	F	AA
3	Brandy	Record Clerk	15	F	AA
4	Lily	Record Clerk	35	F	AA
5	Brooke	PNA	33	F	AA
6	Allison	PNA	32	F	AA
7	Maya	Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN)	6 months	F	AA
8	Chuck	PNA	5	M	C
9	Becky	LPN	9	F	AA
10	Laurie	LPN	12	F	AA
11	Tobias	Psychiatrist	20	M	C
12	Michael	Psychiatrist	-	M	AA
13	Kate	Public Defender	-	F	AA
14	Claire	Public Defender	7	F	AA
15	Nate	Attorney General	8	M	AA
16	Stella	Attorney General	-	F	C
17	Naomi	PNA	> 15	F	AA
18	Sandra	Mental Health Judge	-	F	C
19	Emily	Nurse	-	F	AA
20	Leonard	Hospital Administrator	1	M	C
21	Erin	Public Defender, Legal Reformer	-	F	C
22	Zoe	Public Defender	-	F	C
23	George	Psychiatrist	20	M	C
24	Ellen	Mental Health Judge	-	F	C

AA = African American

C = Caucasian

"Years at Hospital" does not indicate years spent exclusively on the acute intake ward.

Normative Dissonance and Anomie: A Prospective Microlevel Model of Adolescent Suicide Ideation

Jennifer Lee:

ABSTRACT

This study constructs a unique prospective model of anomie and adolescent suicide ideation in order to test the two dominant sociological paradigms of suicide—(1) Durkheim’s theory of anomie and (2) suicide suggestion. This model looks at normative dissonance between the adolescent and the adolescent’s two social worlds, the family and the peer network, as sources of anomie. Normative dissonance is defined as conflicting norms and behaviors, such as smoking, academic aspirations, and religiosity. Baseline variables, including individual characteristics such as race, sex, and depression, as well as other variables that may be related to anomie, but not through the mechanism proposed in this paper are included in the full regression model.

Bivariate analysis reveals that suicide suggestion is a significant determinant of suicidality among adolescents. However, in the multivariate regression model the significance of suicide suggestion is dramatically reduced while parental anomie becomes the most significant determinant of suicidality. Furthermore, contrary to expectation, parental anomie is a strong determinant of suicidality, while peer network anomie has no significant effect on suicide ideation. Moreover, depression appears to have a strong and independent effect on adolescent suicide ideation.

It is suggested that suicide suggestion may be a complementary, rather than a competing theory of suicide and that Durkheim’s theory may be expanded to include the effects of suicide

suggestion. Given the stronger effect and greater prevalence of parental anomie compared to suicide suggestion, it is recommended that suicide prevention policy and specialists prioritize parental normative dissonance as a suicide risk.

In 2001, suicide was the third leading causing of death among adolescents aged 10-19 years in the United States (CDC 2004(a)). In 2002, nearly 125,000 adolescents were taken to the hospital after an attempted suicide (CDC 2004(c)). Moreover, from 1970-93 the suicide rate among adolescents nearly doubled from 5.9 to 11.1 per 100,000 (US DHHS 2001) and has since decreased to 7.4 in 2002 (US DHHS 2004). Overall, there has been widespread concern regarding adolescent suicide, especially school-associated suicides. The CDC found that 25% of adolescents who committed suicide at school injured or killed someone else before committing suicide (CDC 2004(a)) and that 22% of students who carried out school shootings also killed themselves (CDC 2004(b)). Despite this increase in adolescent violence and suicides in schools, studies of adolescent suicide have largely adopted the theoretical approaches developed for studying adult suicide.

Within this broader area of suicide studies there are two dominant and competing sociological theories of suicide—Durkheim’s theory of social regulation and integration, established in *Suicide* (1897 [1997]), and suicide suggestion (Phillips 1974; Tarde 1903). This study seeks to resolve the debate between these two dominant sociological paradigms for understanding suicide within the specific context of adolescent suicide.

THEORY

Social Paradigms for examining suicide

I. Durkheim's theory of suicide

In his seminal work, *Suicide*, Durkheim (1897 [1997]) established a sociological theory of suicide based on the macrosocial effects of social regulation and integration on suicide rates. This interpretation examined suicide as a social phenomena rather than an individual, psychological problem. By examining situations with too much and too little social regulation and integration, Durkheim outlined four types of suicide: altruistic, egoistic, fatalistic, and anomic suicide.

Social integration refers to the social support and bonds that tie individuals to the greater society. Integration facilitates an interaction between the individual and society, enhancing feelings of solidarity and camaraderie. A strongly integrated society "...holds the individual under its control, considers them at its service and thus forbids them to dispose willfully of themselves" (Durkheim 1897 [1997]: 209). An individual who is too strongly integrated into a society can lose his/her self-identity and value the interests of the greater society over his/her own interests and commit altruistic suicide. On the other extreme, an individual who is not integrated can experience loneliness and a sense of lack of greater purpose and commit egoistic suicide.

The other dimension, social regulation, refers to the social forces and norms that limit humans' innate, insatiable desires. A society with too much regulation can constrain individuals too much and force them to commit fatalistic suicide. However, without regulation, Durkheim argues our desires would be both uncontrollable and unsatisfied, leading to perpetual feelings of disappointment and powerlessness. Societies in transition often lack these mechanisms and as a result, individuals begin to have unrealistic expectations and

experience dissatisfaction and feelings of meaninglessness and hopelessness. This feeling of normlessness Durkheim called anomie. Anomie and anomic suicide are now among some of the most widely studied concepts in sociology.

Adolescents' anomic social position

Sociologists have extensively debated Durkheim's distinction between anomic and egoistic suicide, which he vaguely articulates in his original work. Some have argued that the two concepts measure the same thing and the two dimensions of integration and regulation are coterminous. That is to say, a society cannot be high in integration but low in regulation (Johnson 1965). Yet others maintain that the two are, in fact, separate dimensions. Bearman (1991) argues, "the necessary condition for anomie is that individuals must be integrated into groups and yet not be regulated by normative demands of the group" (513).¹

Given this interpretation, adolescents' social position can be characterized as anomic, that is, highly integrated but lacking in regulation (Bearman 1991). Today's adolescents are in a unique position between two strong, inescapable social networks—the peer network and the family, both of which can exert strong normative demands on the individual. In this position adolescents experience strong social integration while the conflicting norms and expectations from the two social worlds render the adolescent unregulated by a singular set of normative constraints. The modern adolescent's social position is distinctly anomic, argues Bearman (1991), because unlike egoists, the adolescent is not lacking in integration, but rather is caught

¹ Some may argue that normative dissonance is not the same as normlessness, as anomie is traditionally defined. This discrepancy is reconciled with Merton's distinction between simple and acute anomie: "simple anomie refers to the state of confusion in a group or society which is subject to conflict between value systems...; acute anomie, to the deterioration and at the extreme, the disintegration of value systems" (Merton 1957: 163). In this framework, this model examines simple anomie.

in a liminal state between two increasingly separate worlds of the family and the peer group.

In both, the adolescent is integrated, and therefore subject to the normative demands and regulation of each. But the social worlds of the family and the peer group are frequently independent of each other, and the norms governing action and deportment that each society exerts on the teen are, consequently, often experienced as contradictory...The normative dissonance experienced by the teen is the same as anomie...It is the separation of these two worlds that generates for each the conflicting norms and values to which the individual is subject (Bearman 1991: 517-18).

Thorlindsson and Bjarnason (1998) add that this normative dissonance can enhance the feeling of anomie by also causing an ambiguity in goals.

One may also examine adolescents' anomic social position by analyzing the structure of their peer network. Unlike the social world of adults, the adolescent social world is characterized as both highly dense (high in integration) yet inclusive of a wide range of interests and norms (low in regulation). The high density of adolescent social networks is partly due to their separation from the adult world, but also results from the limited ability of adolescents to select their peers. While adults have many different spheres from which to select their friends (work, long-time friends, neighbors), adolescents are largely limited to the pool of peers in their schools.

Rytina and Morgan (1982) simulated a model with 2,000 high school students in a community with a population over age 15 of 50,000. In this model, adults had 500 ties while students, because of their younger age, had 300 ties. Students in this model activated ten percent of two million possible ties, a rate that is ten times greater than that of adults. This rate underestimates the density of students' social

networks because it assumes random contacts, when in fact high schools are stratified by age. If grade stratification is taken into consideration with 600 seniors in the high school and 1400 underclassmen, the internal density for students doubles from 0.1 to 0.2 while the social density for the rest of the community remains at 0.01.

In this simulation, while an adult can reject 99% of his/her fellow adults and still retain 480 potential acquaintances, adolescents would retain only about 20 potential acquaintances if they were equally selective. This restricted selectivity increases the social density of the adolescent social world and can contribute to peer pressure. With more at stake, social rejection and isolation become much more costly. The separation of the high school social world from the adult world, coupled with the limited selectivity of adolescent social networks results in a social world that is more dense and integrated than that of adults.

Because of this high density (high integration), adolescents are simultaneously exposed to a wide range of interests and norms, which can lead to a lack of regulation. Adult social networks generally emerge from shared interests (occupations, hobbies, religion, etc.). As a result, it is more likely that the adults in a given social network already share interests and values. Conversely, adolescent social networks are generally defined only by a common age group—the school grade. With age as the only common factor, it is more likely that adolescents will meet other adolescents with different interests and norms, some of which may be conflicting. This is yet another source of normative dissonance. This time, the dissonance comes from within the peer network, not from between the peer network and parents. These two sources of normative dissonance (between adults and peers,

and from within the peer network) can contribute to a significant lack of regulation.

This interpretation provides a unique lens with which to analyze adolescent suicide ideation that has not been used in previous sociological research. Today, “adolescence [has become] a more distinctive and culturally marked life stage during the second third of this century” (Furstenberg 2000: 898). This model is an attempt to expand and reinterpret Durkheim’s theory of anomie in a way that appreciates the uniquely anomic social position of today’s modern adolescent.

II. Suicide suggestion

Perhaps equally compelling yet long seen as a contradictory theory to Durkheim’s theory is suicide suggestion, an extension of Tarde’s (1903) theory of social imitation. This theory argues that suicidality may be influenced by exposure to suicide on both the micro and macrolevels. Suggestion at the microlevel occurs between close friends and family, while suggestion at the macrolevel occurs from suicide coverage in the media. This alternative paradigm has received much attention both for the evidence supporting its validity and also the direct challenge it presents to Durkheim’s theory of suicide.

Durkheim dismissed theories of suggestion on two grounds. First, he argued that the effects of suggestion are limited to those in the direct vicinity of the individual. Secondly, Durkheim argued that where suggestion is the perceived cause of suicides, suggestion is really the effect of underlying causes related to integration and regulation. That is to say, the perception that one suicide has influenced the suicidality of others is actually the result of underlying social forces that have influenced the suicidality of all of the individuals. Suicides

that occur after media coverage were going to occur anyway, but media coverage merely precipitated their occurrence.

Despite Durkheim's adamant theoretical dismissal of the effect of suggestion, this theory is strongly supported by empirical observations. In the 18th century after the publishing of Goethe's novel *Die Leiden des jungen Werther* (*The Sorrows of Young Werther*), there were several young men who committed suicide in the same manner of the novel's protagonist. Men were even reported as dressing in Werther's whimsical costume before committing suicide. Although formal investigation into the suggestion effect was never conducted, the novel was banned in several European cities. Because of this social phenomenon the suicide suggestion theory is also called the "Werther effect."

Macro studies of suicide suggestion have measured the nationwide suicide rate after media coverage of a suicide and discovered that suicide rates do increase in the year after a real-life or fictitious suicide has been covered in the media (Phillips 1974; Wasserman 1984). Phillips (1974) compared the rise in suicides in New York City and in the rest of the U.S. after a suicide report in the *New York Times* and found that suicide rates increased significantly more in New York City compared to the remainder of the U.S. After one suicide story was reported on the front cover of the *New York Times*, suicide rates in New York increased by 25.6% while suicide rates for the rest of the country increased by only 4.5%. Moreover, the increase in suicide rates was strongly associated with the amount of media coverage of a suicide. Suicide rates increased more after a suicide was reported on the front-page than when a suicide story was reported elsewhere in the paper.

There is also evidence that suggestion operates on an individual level and that having a close friend or family member can increase the likelihood of suicidality (Farberow et al. 1987; Tishier 1981). It is unclear whether this pattern within families is a result of social suggestion or biological tendencies inherited from family members. Bjarnason (1994) found that among Icelandic adolescents family support and suicide suggestion are equally associated with suicidality for females, while for males, suicide suggestion has a stronger effect. This microlevel analysis is harder to support because of the difficulty in separating the social and psychological consequences of having a friend or family member attempt suicide.

Despite the empirical support for this paradigm, there remain methodological problems that may undermine these conclusions. While studies suggest a strong association between suicide and suggestion, it is unclear whether these suicides on a macrolevel are actually a consequence of suicide suggestion or geographic clustering. On the microlevel suicide suggestion may operate through inadequate psychiatric support after the suicide of a friend or family. In this sense, suicide suggestion may be a distal rather than a proximate cause of suicide. A suicide attempt by friend or family may render individuals psychologically vulnerable and thus more likely to experience a range of psychological disorders, suicide being one among them. In this case it would be inaccurate to say that suicide has a suggestive effect, but rather it upsets the psychological well being of those near the individual who attempted or committed suicide. Durkheim would further argue that having a friend or relative attempt or commit suicide can upset one's sense of regulation. In this case, the effect of suicide suggestion would actually be mediated by feelings of anomie. The nature of suicide as an object of study makes it difficult to determine which

mechanism directly influences suicidality. As a result, studies that attempt to separate the direct effects of suicide suggestion and anomie often encounter methodological problems that make it impossible to confidently reject one paradigm over the other.

Although the empirical evidence for suicide suggestion may be theoretically questionable, the implications of this paradigm are culturally significant. Various countries and the World Health Organization have outlined journalistic codes that dictate how journalists and photographers are to report cases of suicide to minimize their suggestive effect (Norris et al. 2001; WHO 2000). These guidelines recommend that suicide reports not include photographs, nor should they specify the method used or details about the death, such as bridge locations, or specific buildings, nor should they report the suicide as a solution to a personal problem such as bankruptcy or divorce (WHO 2000). As these journalistic codes demonstrate, regardless of whether the suicide suggestion paradigm is sociologically valid or inferior to Durkheim's theory, it has nonetheless been incorporated into the social understanding of suicide.

Other Determinants Of Suicide

Psychologists have studied suicide extensively at the individual level and identified various individual determinants of suicidality. These studies of individual determinants examine suicide ideation, rather than suicide completion, due to the limited individual information available for people who commit suicide. Although these psychological theories emphasize biological and individual factors, many of these determinants can also be examined in a Durkheimian framework. By examining the social position of individuals with these characteristics, one may argue that these characteristics are common to

individuals in an increased anomic social position. The relationship between these characteristics and suicide ideation is not causal, but rather one that is mediated through anomie.

For example, individuals of mixed races, Native Americans (CDC 2004(d); US DHHS 2001), and females (Krug et al. 2002), are all at an increased risk of ideating suicide. Durkheim would argue that this apparent relationship between individual characteristics and suicide could be more accurately explained by looking at the social experiences of members of the group. It could be argued that these individuals inhabit a more anomic social position and it is this that contributes most directly to their risk of suicide ideation. Native Americans and individuals of mixed races are caught between two strong competing social and cultural worlds, placing them in an anomic social position. They may also experience greater social isolation and less social integration, increasing their likelihood of committing egoistic suicide. Females may be more strongly integrated into their family and also place greater importance on their friendships, increasing the normative influence of these two strong social worlds (Gilligan 1993). As a result conflicts with parents may be more upsetting for females than for males and this may make females more vulnerable to feelings of anomie. This hypothesis is also supported by Bjarnason's (1994) finding that for females, family support is equally associated with suicidality as is suicide suggestion, while for males family support has less of an effect

It has also been found that intra-family conflicts can lead to adolescent self-derogation and increased suicide ideation for both male and female adolescents (Shagle and Barber 1993). However, this association can also be explained by looking at the relationship between intra-family conflicts and an adolescent's sense of anomie. Normative dissonance between the family and the adolescent can enhance feelings of anomie and this normative dissonance can be especially powerful because adolescents cannot leave their families.

The same analytic framework could be used to explain the relationship between childhood physical abuse and later suicide ideation (Kaplan et al. 1998; US DHHS 1999).

Durkheim also used anomie to explain deviant behavior, which is highly correlated with suicide ideation on many dimensions (Stack and Wasserman 1993). An adolescent who feels unregulated by a single set of normative demands may resort to deviant behavior. In this case, deviance is seen as another effect of anomie, like suicide. The same adolescent who feels unregulated and commits deviant acts would also be more likely to ideate suicide. Thus suicide ideation and deviance are not related causally, but rather by a common cause—*anomie*.

Another social explanation of deviance interprets deviant behavior as a desire to exit adolescence and enter adulthood (Hagan and Wheaton 1993). Such behaviors include premarital sex, alcohol consumption, and drug use. Adolescents, especially female adolescents, who come from unstable households are more likely to exhibit adolescent role exit tendencies and suicide may also be included as an attempt to exit adolescence. Normative dissonance may contribute to intra-family conflicts and drive an adolescent to seek adolescent role exits, including both deviant behavior and suicide. Thus normative dissonance may influence deviant behaviors through both an explicitly anomic mechanism and through the role-exits theory.

Finally, psychobiological factors, such as mental disorders, especially major depression are a well-established predictor of suicidality. Bertolote et al. (2003) calculated that 53.7% of victims of suicide were diagnosed with depression. Khan et al. (2002) reported that patients suffering from depression have a suicide risk that is 60 to 70 percent greater than that of the general population. Personality

disorders such as bipolar disorder have also been related to around 10 to 15 percent of suicide deaths (Rhimer et al. 1990). Strong medical evidence supports the argument that depression has an independent and strong effect on suicidality, but that does not remove the possibility that anomie may contribute to or exacerbate feelings of depression on a social dimension.

This study attempts to test the two dominant sociological paradigms of suicide—(1) Durkheim’s theory of anomie and (2) suicide suggestion. The model in this paper looks at normative dissonance between the adolescent and the adolescent’s two social worlds (the family and the peer network) as an indicator of anomie. Normative dissonance is defined as conflicting norms and behaviors, such as smoking, academic aspirations, and religiosity. Baseline variables, including the individual characteristics outlined above as well as other variables that may be related to anomie, but not through the mechanism proposed in this paper are included in the full regression model. For example, feelings of parental care, or belonging to clubs and feeling socially accepted at school may contribute to an adolescent’s sense of anomie, but not through the normative dissonance theory in this paper. Variables such as these were included as control variables to ensure that the effect of anomie was specifically due to normative dissonance.

There is also no normative claim as to the behaviors of the respondents. For example, this model is not concerned with whether a student skips class or engages in risky behavior, but is more concerned with whether the adolescent engages in risky behaviors while his/her peers do not. Therefore a student who drinks alcohol and has friends and parents who also drink alcohol would be said to experience no normative dissonance and have little anomie in this sense. Conversely, a student who never drinks alcohol but is exposed to friends and family

who frequently drink alcohol would experience significant normative dissonance and greater anomie.

Although there have been studies examining anomie and adolescent suicidality (Bearman and Moody 2004), there has not been a study that looks specifically at normative dissonance as a source of anomie. Bearman and Moody (2004) use friendship transitivity as a source structural dissonance, while this study focuses on normative dissonance. Moreover, this model is prospective, an element which Bearman and Moody (2004) do not include in their model of dissonance. Other studies that relate deviance, anomie, and suicide make normative claims as to the nature of the behavior, but these studies conflate deviance and anomie, something this model seeks to separate.

METHODS

Data

This study uses data from Waves 1 and 2 of the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health). The sample was based on a stratified, random sample of all U.S. high schools and the study was conducted in three waves. Wave 1 took place between 1994-95 and had two sub-waves: Wave 1a—an in-school interview, and Wave 1b—an in-home interview, which also included an interview with the parents. The school sampling frame included all high schools in the United States if it included an 11th grade and enrolled at least 30 students. High schools were stratified into 80 clusters by region, urbanicity, school size, school type, percent white, percent black, grade span, and curriculum (general, vocational, alternative, special education). 90,118 in-school questionnaires were administered between September 1994 and April 1995. In addition to collecting data

on the adolescent's health, the in-school survey also collected data on the adolescent's in-school friendship network, which included the adolescent's five closest male and female friends in the school. These nominations formed the adolescent's peer network. The in-school friendship data was used to measure normative dissonance between the adolescent and his/her peer network. The in-home sample included 27,000 adolescents, drawing a core sample from each community in addition to oversamples. The core sample included 12,105 adolescents from grades 7-12 in the 1994-5 school year. Groups that were oversampled included students who were disabled, black from well-educated families, Chinese, Cuban, Puerto Rican, living with a twin, full sibling, half sibling, or non-related sibling. The in-home interviews collected more detailed data from the subsample as well as data on the adolescent's parents. Data from the parents was used to measure normative dissonance between the adolescent and his/her parents. 20,745 adolescent in-home interviews and 17,700 parent questionnaires were administered between April 1995 and December 1995.

Wave 2 was conducted one year later and had the same in-home sample from the Wave I in-home interview sample except for seniors. In this wave contextual information was also collected, including information about neighborhoods and communities. 14,738 adolescent in-home interviews were administered between April 1996 and August 1996.

Wave 3 was completed in 2000-01 and the sample included Wave I respondents who were available for interview. This wave also collected high school transcripts as well as urine and saliva samples. Between July 2001 and April 2002 15,197 young adult in-home interviews were conducted. Data from Wave 3 was not included in this

study. Only those students who had participated in both stages of Wave 1, answered the question regarding suicide contemplation in Wave 2, and whose parents participated in the in-home interview were included in this study, bringing the sample size down to $n=7578$.

The dependent variable, suicide ideation, was taken from Wave 2 and all other independent variables were either directly taken from or created from data in Wave 1. The independent variables of the multivariate regression model measured normative dissonance (anomie) from both the adolescent's parents (parental anomie) and peer network (peer network anomie). Other baseline variables and demographic variables were included, such as sex, age, family stability, depression, and having a friend or family member attempt or commit suicide. Details on how and when each variable was measured are found in Appendix A.

Independent Variables

The variables measuring anomie from the parents and peer network were created by comparing the adolescent's responses to a given set of questions to those of his/her parents and peers from Wave 1 surveys. Because the parents and peers answered different surveys, it was impossible to compare the two groups directly. While parents answered questions regarding smoking, alcohol consumption, academic aspirations, sex, and religion, peers answered questions regarding smoking, alcohol consumption, academic aspirations, deviant behavior, family relations, and social integration. The two interviews overlapped on too few dimensions to allow for a substantive comparison.

Parental Anomie Variable

For the adolescent-parent comparison, the absolute difference in responses to questions regarding smoking, alcohol consumption, academic aspirations, sex, and religion was calculated. These questions best reflect the norms and behaviors of the respondents and were most conducive to comparison. Moreover, these questions reflect both explicit expectations and implicit norms as reflected in the respondents' behavior. For example, a parent's voiced expectation that he/she wants the adolescent to go to college obviously exerts influence on the adolescent, but equally important are the norms that are conveyed implicitly through the parent's actions, such as smoking, drinking, and religiosity. A full description of questions used in the adolescent-parent comparison is found in Appendix B.

For each variable, the absolute difference between the adolescent's response and the parent's response was calculated. This number measured the discordance for that individual variable. All of the measures of discordance were averaged to yield a single measure of parental anomie.

Equation 1: Calculating Parental Anomie

$$\text{Discordance}_x = | (\text{adolescent's response}_x) - (\text{parent's response}_x) |$$

$$\text{Parental Anomie} = \sum_{x=1}^7 \frac{\text{discordance}_x}{7}$$

x = question measuring norm or behavior (e.g. Do you smoke? How often do you pray?)

Peer Network Anomie Variable

For the adolescent-peer network comparison, there were three peer networks from which to examine responses. In the in-school survey, all students were asked to list their five closest male and female friends from within the school. The up to ten students an adolescent

nominated correspond to his/her *ego-send network*. Those students that nominated the adolescent correspond to his/her *ego-receive network*. The group of students who nominated and/or were nominated by the adolescent correspond to his/her *send-and-receive network*. This study used data from the ego-send network. It is more likely that those students whom the adolescent identifies as his/her close friends will exert the greatest normative influence. Nominating a student as a friend is an indication of approval of the student, which entails, to a certain degree, approval or at least acceptance of that student's norms and behaviors. Conversely, students who nominate the adolescent may not necessarily enjoy approval or acceptance by the adolescent and may not be in a position to influence the adolescent.

In this comparison, questions regarding smoking, alcohol consumption, academic aspirations, deviant behavior, family relations, and social integration were used. Again, these questions reflect both the explicit norms of the respondent, such as academic aspirations, as well as those implicit norms that are reflected through behaviors, such as alcohol consumption. Moreover, the questions measuring family relations reflect the overall sense of adolescent-family relations that may permeate through the adolescent's peer network and subsequently influence the adolescent's relationship with his/her family. A full description of questions used in the adolescent-peer network comparison is found in Appendix C.

To calculate the normative dissonance between the adolescent and the ego-send network, all of the responses to a given question from the peers in an adolescent's ego-send network were averaged to yield a single response from the peer network. The absolute difference between the adolescent's response and the mean response of the peer network was calculated to produce a measurement of discordance for a

single variable (e.g. smoking, academic aspirations). All of the measures of discordance were averaged to yield a single measure of peer network anomie.²

Dependent Variable

Equation 2: Calculating peer network anomie.

Discordance_x = | (adolescent's response_x) – (mean response_x of peer network) |

$$\text{Peer network anomie} = \frac{\sum_{x=1}^{17} \text{discordance}_x}{17}$$

x = question measuring norm or behavior (e.g. How hard do you try to do your school work well? How often did you get drunk?)

The dependent variable measuring suicidality in Wave 2 asked the adolescent if he/she had contemplated suicide in the past 12 months. This prospective model ensures that the anomic social position of the adolescent as measured in Wave 1 preceded the adolescent's suicide ideation. Without this element, it could be argued that an adolescent's sense of anomie was a result of the adolescent's ideating suicide.

In this sample 894 students (10.65%) reported contemplating suicide in the past twelve months. To isolate and compare the effects

² The heterogeneity of the adolescent's peer network was also calculated to get an overall description of the adolescent's peer network. This measure was calculated by averaging the coefficient of variance for each question used in the peer network anomie measurement as well as demographic variables such as race, age, and sex. This overall measure of heterogeneity provided a measurement of the normative variance within the peer network itself, not just between the adolescent and the peer network. It was theorized that a heterogeneous peer network could serve as a protector against suicide ideation. A heterogeneous peer network would not exert a singular set of norms and behaviors, reducing the strength of influence from an adolescent's peers. This variable had no significant effects on anomie or suicide ideation and was dropped from the analyses reported below.

of suicide suggestion and anomie from the parents and peer network on suicidality, a bivariate analysis was followed by a multivariate logistic regression.

RESULTS

Bivariate Analysis

From the bivariate analysis (reported in Appendix D), several determinants were significantly associated with suicide ideation. Significant risk factors included being female (OR=1.98), having a family member (OR=2.95) or friend (OR=2.87) attempt suicide in the past year, having negative expectations of the future (OR=1.26), having poor health (OR=1.45), depression (OR=2.01), and experiencing normative dissonance from one's parents (parental anomie) (OR=3.37). Normative dissonance from the peer network (peer network anomie) was not associated with suicide ideation (OR=0.53). Significant protectors against suicide ideation included having a high grade point average (OR=0.81), feeling that his/her parents care for him/her (OR=0.56), having high self-confidence (OR=0.54), and feeling socially integrated into the school (OR=0.61).

Multivariate Logistic Regression Analysis

In the multivariate logistic regression model (reported in Appendix E), many of the variables' independent effect on suicide ideation decreased significantly. While the effect of parental anomie also decreased in the full model, of all of the variables, parental anomie had the greatest odds ratio (OR=2.74). These associations may suggest that the control variables that had significant bivariate associations with suicide ideation may have been mediated through another variable, such as parental anomie or depression. The effect of parental anomie decreased by 19%; the effect of having a family member attempt

suicide decreased by 44%; the effect of having a friend attempt suicide decreased by 30%; and the effect of depression decreased by 16%. Of all of the variables in the bivariate model, the effect of depression decreased the least in the full-regression model, suggesting depression independently affects suicide ideation. Peer network anomie continued to have no significant impact on suicide ideation.

The significant risk factors in the full regression model included depression (OR=1.69), not trying hard in school (OR=1.29) and having a family member (OR=1.65) or friend (OR=2.02) attempt suicide in the past year. Surprisingly, although peer network anomie did not have a significant effect on suicide ideation, having a friend attempt suicide had a greater effect on suicide ideation than did having a family member attempt suicide.

Variables that remained protectors against suicide ideation in the full regression model included older age (OR=0.82), thinking his/her parents care for him/her (OR=0.79), and having high self-confidence (OR=0.80). In balance, these findings are consistent with the hypothesis that parental anomie has a strong effect on suicide ideation, supporting the more general hypothesis that adolescent-parent relations are a significant factor in suicide ideation.

One surprising demographic variable that became an insignificant variable in the full regression model was sex. While in the bivariate analysis being female had a strong and significant effect on suicide (OR=1.98), in the full regression model, the effect was insignificant. To isolate the specific effect of confounding variables, the full regression model was repeated with specific variables eliminated. From these tests it was discovered that depression and suicide suggestion from friends were the two strongest confounding factors between being female and suicide ideation. Running the full regression model without depression, the effect of sex became

significant (OR=1.69). When running the full regression model without the effect of suicide suggestion from friends, being female again emerged as a significant variable (OR=1.38). Parental anomie did little to account for the diminished effect of sex on suicide ideation. It was further hypothesized that since it has been argued that interpersonal relations are more important for females than for males (Gilligan 1993), there would be an interaction between sex and parental anomie. Findings from these interaction tests were insignificant.

DISCUSSION

The independent effect of parental anomie on suicide ideation can be further examined by looking at the sample and calculating the predicted probability of ideating suicide with no anomie and full anomie. To do this, the parental anomie measure was divided into quintiles and the probability of ideating suicide for each quintile was predicted. The model predicted that an adolescent with no parental anomie would have an 8.7% probability of ideating suicide, while an adolescent with full parental anomie would have a 14.4% chance of ideating suicide. These predicted probabilities are compared to the observed percentages in Table 1.

Figure 1. Probability of ideating suicide by parental anomie quintiles.

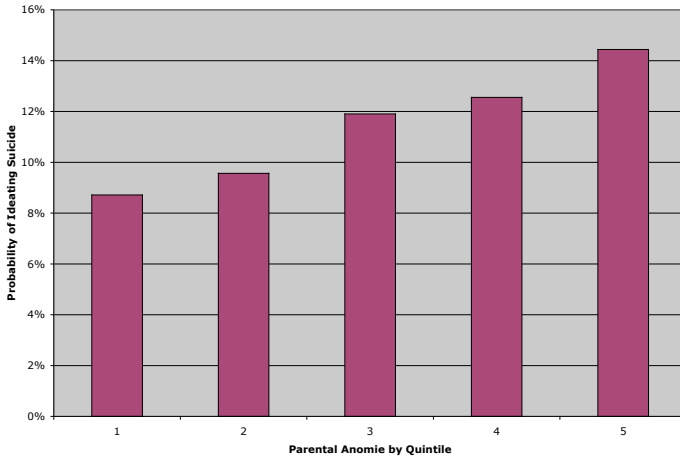


Table 1. Observed and predicted suicide ideation by parental anomie quintiles.

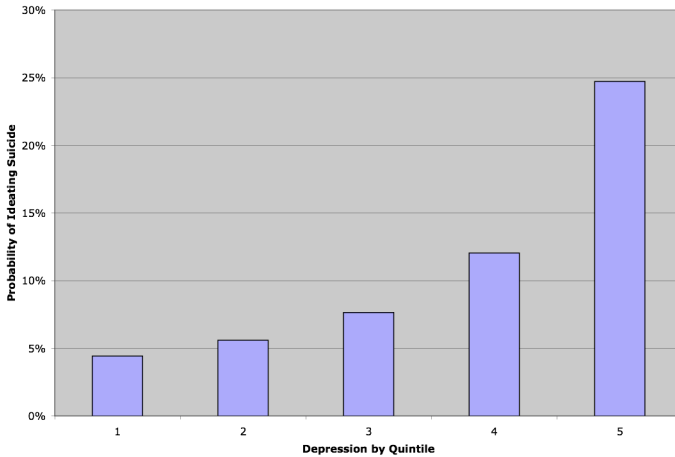
Anomie Quintiles	Observed Percentage	Predicted Percentage
1	8.0%	8.7%
2	8.8%	9.6%
3	12.3%	11.9%
4	10.5%	12.6%
5	13.4%	14.4%

These predicted probabilities were not dramatically different from the observed percentages in the sample. This suggests that the control variables included in the model did little to modify the association between parental anomie and suicide ideation.

To control for the effect of confounding variables that may contribute to anomie and suicide but not through the normative dissonance theory, the full regression model also included measures of perceived parental care, living with both parents, participation in school clubs, feelings of social integration at school, optimism about the future, and self-confidence. This wide range of potentially confounding variables included in the model reduces the likelihood that there is another significant variable that could be strongly associated with both parental anomie and suicide. Yet the possibility remains that there is another variable that operates on both parental anomie and suicide that is not included in this model or in the theoretical framework of this study.

Because the effect of depression on suicide ideation was diminished the least in the full regression model, depression and parental anomie seem to operate somewhat independently on suicide ideation. To further analyze the independent effect of depression on suicide ideation, the probability of ideating suicide given no depression and full depression was calculated. The measure of depression was divided into quintiles and the predicted probability of ideating suicide was calculated. An adolescent with absolutely no depression has a 4.4% of ideating suicide, while an adolescent experiencing the maximum amount of depression has a 24.7% chance of ideating suicide.

Figure 2. Probability of ideating suicide by depression quintiles.



These predicted probabilities differ dramatically from the predicted probabilities from the parental anomie test. The wider range of predicted probabilities of ideating suicide in the depression analysis suggest that depression may have a stronger independent effect on suicide ideation than parental anomie. The full logistic regression model predicted that if depression were eliminated from the sample, the suicide ideation rate would drop to below 5% while if parental anomie were eliminated, the suicide ideation rate would only drop to around 9%.

CONCLUSIONS

Previous sociological studies of suicide have focused on the general population and there has been little attention to the unique social position of adolescents. Moreover, there have not been many studies that have attempted to test the two dominant sociological paradigms for understanding suicidality in a single model, particularly as it pertains to

adolescents. This study fills in both gaps by recognizing the special position adolescents hold between two competing social worlds and by addressing the debate between Durkheim's theory of anomie and the theory of suicide suggestion on the microlevel.

The full regression model reveals that parental anomie, as experienced as normative dissonance between the adolescent and the parents, has a significant effect on adolescent suicide ideation, greater than that of suicide suggestion from friends and family members. The strong effect of parental anomie challenges theories of suicide suggestion and also theories of the effects of peer pressure on adolescents' sense of regulation. Depression appears to have a strong and independent effect on suicide ideation. This was not surprising and does not substantially influence the discussion regarding the two sociological theories of suicide.

The diminished effect of suicide suggestion in the full regression model suggests that the effects of suicide suggestion operate most significantly through an adolescent's experience of normative dissonance with his/her parents and other mediating variables. While this model does not explain the specific relationship between suicide suggestion and anomie, it does suggest that Durkheim's theory of anomie is a more useful paradigm than suicide suggestion.

However, the significant effect of suicide suggestion in both the bivariate and full logistic regression analyses supports the findings of previous research supporting the suicide suggestion paradigm. Given the strong association between suicide ideation and both anomie and suicide suggestion, it may be more helpful to view suicide suggestion as a complementary, rather than a competing paradigm to Durkheim's theory, as Skog (1991) and Bjarnason (1994) argue.

While friendships are undoubtedly important for adolescents, these findings suggest that friends with different norms and values do not exert as much normative influence on an adolescent as previously

believed. An alternative explanation is that adolescents are more resilient to normative dissonance from their peer network than from their parents because they may select their friends while they cannot escape their parents. Future studies on the mechanisms of and degree to which peer pressure operates in today's adolescent peer networks would be helpful in drawing more conclusions. Bearman and Moody (2004) examine the structure of friendships, particularly friendship intransitivity. A hybrid approach that includes Bearman and Moody's (2004) analysis of friendship structures with consideration of the friends' norms and behaviors could reveal more specific information on the mechanism through which friends exert normative influence on adolescents.

Although peer network anomie had no effect on suicide ideation, having a friend attempt suicide had a greater effect on suicide ideation for both males and females than did having a family member attempt suicide. This seemingly contradictory finding may be explained by Cialdini's (2001) theory of social proof. Suicide suggestion may be stronger from friends because adolescents are more likely to identify with individuals who are similar to them. One could also argue that this association is not necessarily causal. Rather than interpret the data to suggest that having a friend attempt suicide influences suicide ideation more than does having a family member attempt suicide, one could argue that people's reactions to having a friend attempt suicide differs from that of having a family member attempt suicide. After a family member attempts suicide, the family is often brought closer, providing greater support for the adolescent. This solidarity reaction may not be as strong when a friend attempts suicide. In this way, the family is better equipped to deal with a suicide attempt whereas a friendship network may not be able to react as effectively to an attempted suicide.

It is important to mention that the different effects of parental and peer network anomie on suicide ideation could be due to the construction of the anomie variables in this study. Because of constraints from the Add Health surveys, the two anomie variables measured normative dissonance along different dimensions. While the parental anomie variable measured norms and values along the dimensions of smoking, alcohol consumption, academic aspirations, sex, and religion, the peer network anomie variable measured norms and values along the dimensions of smoking, alcohol consumption, academic aspirations, deviant behavior, family relations, and social integration. It could be argued that the parental anomie variable more accurately measured norms and values, while the peer network anomie variable measured the behaviors of the adolescent, which may or may not reflect norms and values. A future study that constructs two comparable anomie variables would better identify the different effects of anomie from the parents and peer network. Such a model would also allow for direct comparison of norms and values between the parents and peer network, something this model is unable to do. Instead, this model measures normative dissonance as experienced separately between the adolescent and his/parents and peer network.

Although interactions between sex and anomie did not result in any significant findings in this study, the strength of the effect of anomie on suicide ideation across sexes should be further explored. The insignificant findings in this study may be due to the converging socialization of males and females in today's schools. Although it has been previously observed that interpersonal relations are more important for females than males (Gilligan 1993), this generation of adolescents may share similar, less gendered social experiences in schools.

The strong effect of normative dissonance between an adolescent and his/her parents on suicide ideation reveals significant

potential areas in which Durkheim's theory of suicide may be expanded. The findings in this study make a strong case for greater consideration of social factors, including anomie, on depression. Examining the specific interactions between anomie and depression as well as anomie and suicide suggestion could expand Durkheim's original theory to be reconciled with other dominant theories as well as invigorate a dialogue across social sciences.

These findings have challenged many previous understandings of suicide, adolescent social experiences, and the intersection between psychological and social factors and their effects on suicide ideation. Given the limitations of the data and methods used, one can only speculate as to the theories that may explain these findings. To understand the specific mechanism of the relationship revealed in these findings, further research is necessary.

Additionally, this study points to a less obvious but significant form of conflict for an adolescent. Adolescents who are depressed or have been directly exposed to suicide through friends and family members may already be identified as high-risk adolescents. Normative dissonance, however, is a less obvious indicator of suicide risk and deserves greater attention in suicide prevention policies. While today's adolescents may appear to be more independent compared to previous generations, the data undoubtedly reveals the strong influence adolescent-parent relations exert on an adolescent's social and psychological well being. This study also brings light to a specific aspect of adolescent-parent relations by controlling for perceived feelings of parental care and family structure. In doing so, it becomes clear that it is not only the quality of the relationship between the parents and the adolescent, but also the conflicting norms and values, both explicitly and implicitly expressed, that influence an adolescent's sense of normative conflict.

The conclusions of this research have significant implications for suicide prevention policies. The strong independent effect of depression on suicide suggests that reducing depression may be the most effective way of decreasing suicide ideation. However, this does not mean that other social factors should be ignored. The social variables of depression should be further studied to better understand how normative dissonance interacts with depression. This better understanding would help psychologists and parents identify specific factors of depression and target intervention. Although the suicide suggestion paradigm has already been incorporated in some policies, on the microlevel it appears that focusing on normative dissonance may be a more effective and efficient means of addressing adolescent suicide ideation. This is partly due to the greater number of adolescents who experience parental anomie and also the greater effect of parental anomie compared to suicide suggestion.

At a more basic level, unlike depression and suicide suggestion, normative dissonance is an important variable that may be addressed preemptively and without drastic interventions. As this study suggests, suicide ideation can be influenced by simple measures such as greater communication and compromise between parents and adolescents. Suicide prevention strategies need not be limited to institutionalized or medicalized means, but can be incorporated into daily activities that can positively influence the modern adolescent's social experience.

Appendix A: Table of control variables in multivariate regression model.

Variable Label	Minimum, Maximum	Mean (SD)	Source	Risk or Protector
Suicidality: Contemplated suicide in past year	0=no, 1=yes	0.11 (0.31)	In-home interview	n/a
Age	10, 19	14.65 (1.55)	In-home interview	Risk
Female	0=no, 1=yes	0.55 (0.50)	In-home interview	Risk
White	0=no, 1=yes	0.57 (0.50)	In-home interview	n/a
Black	0=no, 1=yes	0.20 (0.40)	In-home interview	Protector
Hispanic	0=no, 1=yes	0.14 (0.35)	In-home interview	n/a
Asian	0=no, 1=yes	0.07 (0.25)	In-home interview	n/a
Other/mixed race	0=no, 1=yes	0.02 (0.13)	In-home interview	Risk
Years at current school	1, 6	2.58 (1.59)	In-school survey	n/a
GPA	0=D or lower, 3=A	1.84 (0.79)	In-school survey	Protector
How hard student tries at school	1=very hard, 4=never try at all	1.71 (0.66)	In-school survey	Risk
Does not participate in extracurricular clubs, activities	0=no, 1=yes	0.15 (0.36)	In-school survey	Risk
Feels parent cares for him/her	1=not at all, 5=very much	4.72 (0.61)	In-school survey	Protector
Is adopted	0=no, 1=yes	0.03 (0.18)	In-school survey	Risk
Is a twin	0=no, 1=yes	0.10 (0.31)	In-school survey	Protector
Lives with both parents	0=no, 1=yes	0.74 (0.44)	In-school survey	Protector
Family members attempted suicide in past year	0=no, 1=yes	0.04 (0.20)	In-home interview	Risk
Friend attempted suicide in past year	0=no, 1=yes	0.18 (0.39)	In-home interview	Risk
Negative future expectations/life chances	0=no chance, 8=it will happen	1.30 (1.25)	In-school survey	Risk
Poor health	1=excellent, 5=poor	2.08 (0.93)	In-school survey	Risk
Self-confidence high	1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree	3.77 (0.86)	In-school survey	Protector
Social integration high	1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree	3.74 (0.82)	In-school survey	Protector
Frequent risky behaviors	0=never, 6=nearly everyday	0.80 (1.12)	In-school survey	Risk
Depression	0=never, 4=everyday	1.14 (0.94)	In-school survey	Risk
Parental anomie	0, 1	0.40 (0.18)	n/a	Risk
Peer network anomie	0, 1	0.27 (0.08)	n/a	Risk
Ego-send network heterogeneity	0, 1.39	0.68 (0.28)	n/a	Protector

Appendix B: Questions used for adolescent-parent comparison

	Adolescent Questions	Parent Questions
Smoking	Have you ever smoked cigarettes regularly (at least 1 per day for 30 days)?	Do you smoke?
Alcohol	Do you ever drink beer, wine, or liquor when you are not with your parents or other adults in your family? Over the past 12 months, on how many days did you drink five or more drinks in a row?	How often do you drink alcohol? How often in the last month have you had five or more drinks on one occasion?
Academic aspirations	On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is low and 5 is high, how much do you want to go to college?	How disappointed would you be if {Name} did not graduate from college?
Sex	Have you ever had sexual intercourse?	How much do you disapprove of {Name}'s having sexual intercourse at this time in (his/her) life?
Religion	How important is religion to you? How often do you pray?	How important is religion to you? How often do you pray?

Appendix C: Questions used for adolescent-peer network comparison

Variable Question	
Smoking	During the past year how often did you smoke cigarettes?
Alcohol	Have you ever had a drink of beer, win, or liquor more than two or three times in your life? During the past year how often did you drink alcohol? During the past year how often did you get drunk?
Academic Aspirations	How hard do you try to do your schoolwork well? During the past year how often did you skip school without an excuse? Grade point average.
Deviant Behavior	During the past year how often did you race on a bike, skateboard, rollerblades, or in a boat or car? During the past year how often did you do something because you were dared to? In the past year how often have you gotten into a physical fight?
Family relations	During the past year how often did you lie to your parents? How much student feels like mother cares about him/her. How much student feels like father cares about him/her.
Social integration	Student feels socially accepted. Student feels loved and wanted. Student is happy to be at this school. Student feels like a part of this school.

Appendix D: Summary of bivariate analysis

Variable Label	Minimum, Maximum	Mean response of those that did not ideate	Mean response of those that did ideate	Odds Ratio	t	Hypothesis
Age	10, 19	4.33	14.22	0.95	-0.18	?
Female	0=no, 1=yes	1.51	0.67	1.98	6.69*	+
White	0=no, 1=yes	1.72	0.75	1.22	1.81	?
Black	0=no, 1=yes	1.15	0.10	0.66	-2.29	-
Hispanic	0=no, 1=yes	1.09	0.08	0.85	-1.09	?
Asian	0=no, 1=yes	1.04	0.03	0.95	-0.20	?
Other/mixed race	0=no, 1=yes	1.02	0.03	2.24	2.40	+
Years at current school	1, 6	1.67	2.73	1.02	0.81	?
GPA	0=D or lower, 3=A	.89	1.75	0.81	-3.13*	?
How hard student tries at school.	1=very hard, 4=never try at all	.68	1.87	1.52	6.00*	?
Does not participate in extracurricular clubs, activities	0=no, 1=yes	1.14	0.17	1.34	2.42	+
Feels parent cares for him/her	1=not at all, 5=very much	1.76	4.48	0.56	-10.40*	-
Is adopted	0=no, 1=yes	1.02	0.03	1.11	0.41	+
Is a twin	0=no, 1=yes	1.03	0.02	0.60	-2.19	-
Lives with both parents.	0=no, 1=yes	1.76	0.74	0.56	-0.85	-
Family members attempted suicide in past year.	0=no, 1=yes	1.03	0.10	2.95	7.04*	+
Friend attempted suicide in past year.	0=no, 1=yes	1.17	0.37	2.87	10.61*	+
Negative future expectations	0=no chance, 8=it will happen	1.25	1.65	1.26	6.82*	+
Poor health	1=excellent, 5=poor	1.05	2.38	1.45	8.24*	?
Self-confidence high	1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree	1.82	3.30	0.54	-13.87*	-

Social integration high	1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree	1.78	3.40	0.61	-9.00*	-
Frequent risky behaviors	0=never, 6=nearly everyday	1.76	1.09	1.26	-6.06*	+
Depression	0=never, 4=everyday	.05	1.76	2.01	13.93*	+
Parental anomie	0, 1	1.39	0.42	3.37	3.86*	+
Peer network anomie	0, 4	1.28	0.27	0.53	-1.23	+
Ego-send network heterogeneity	0, 1.3937	1.69	0.69	1.03	0.14	-

* significant effect

+ hypothesized positive effect on suicide ideation

? no hypothesis on effect of suicide ideation

- hypothesized negative effect on suicide ideation

Appendix E: Summary of multivariate logistic regression analysis

Variable	Odds Ratio	t	95% Confidence Interval	
Parental anomie	2.74*	2.41	1.20	6.26
Peer network anomie	1.38	0.31	0.18	10.60
Age	0.82*	-5.91	0.77	0.88
Sex	1.24	1.46	0.92	1.66
Black	0.85	-0.85	0.58	1.24
Hispanic	0.94	-0.26	0.59	1.51
Asian	1.31	0.74	0.63	2.70
Other	1.69	1.22	0.72	3.99
Lives with both parents	1.15	0.78	0.80	1.66
Thinks parents care for him/her	0.80*	-2.83	0.68	0.93
Negative future expectations	1.08	1.37	0.97	1.21
Poor health	0.97	-0.42	0.84	1.12
High self-confidence	0.80*	-2.94	0.69	0.93
High social-integration	0.91	-0.92	0.75	1.11
Frequent risky behaviors	0.96	-0.71	0.85	1.08
Depression	1.69*	6.56	1.44	1.97
GPA	0.96	-0.48	0.82	1.13
Does not try hard in school	1.29*	2.38	1.04	1.59
Does not participate in clubs	1.12	0.63	0.79	1.58
Family member attempted suicide in past year	1.65*	2.20	1.05	2.60
Friend attempted suicide in past year	2.02*	5.36	1.56	2.63

* significant effect

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Academic and Social Motivators for Public and Private School Choice: A Case Study of a Small Town

Anne Martin

INTRODUCTION:

The main street of Midcoast is dotted with small storefronts and large old colonial houses. The speed limit is only 25mph, and one of the local cops is generally hanging out on a street corner, waiting to ticket anyone who might roll through the cross walks. Large SUVs and station wagons fill the parking spots, and on Sunday the streets are packed with traffic from the three churches in the few blocks. Where the main street branches down the hill, the campus of Midcoast Academy sits to the right. This private school has existed for over a hundred years, and the extensive campus stretches back behind the imposing front brick building. A mile up the coast on Rt. 1, past large homes with views of the ocean, the driveway for the recently renovated public high school is on the left. This modern looking building is brand new and surrounded by well-kept athletic fields that are frequented with children playing soccer and lacrosse. Mothers wait in idling cars for practices to end and chat about their children's busy schedules and upcoming school events.

I chose this town as a case study to evaluate public and private schools. I was interested in the factors that drove the choice between these two options for parents. I wanted to understand some of the complex dynamics of choice in a population of parents who highly valued education. The privatization of education is a hotly debated topic in the United States, as is school choice. These issues are generally discussed in the context of the class or racial divides that

exist between those who have the resources to demand better, and those families who settle for the educational option available to them. However, Midcoast provides an interesting case study because of the population demographic. Most Midcoast families have the economic resources to afford private school. Religion is not a dividing factor, and both the public and private school are centrally located so transportation is not an issue. A study in Midcoast can ignore these reasons that traditionally dominate school choice and examine some of the ideological and social issues that guide the decision. Academics, teachers, athletics, college, and peer groups are a few of the concerns most parents have regarding their children's school experience. Parents in Midcoast are informed and integrated into their children's education, and academic learning is a clear priority. However, I discovered that satisfaction with a school or a parent's desire to choose a new learning environment is governed by many forces outside of the classroom. The question of school choice takes on new meaning in a small town because of the intricate social networks and the importance of inclusion in the community.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

Many diverse factors are involved in evaluating parent choice, and accumulating a common body of literature on the topic is a challenge. Several explanations and structures are brought together to evaluate the situation in Midcoast. First, parents' value of academic success and the importance of learning cannot be ignored. It is also necessary to evaluate why this population of middle and upper class parents might have different expectations than other lower class groups, and how increased economic support in a community changes the nature of school choice for families there. For individual families, school choice

is mediated by many factors from peer groups to student motivation. Finally, it is impossible to discuss schooling in Midcoast without examining the effect of a small town and tight social network on parents' interactions with each other and the local schools.

The relationship of a school and its community can be studied on many levels, and the demographics of the community are a huge influence on the interactions that take place. There is a great deal of research regarding schools that struggle because they deal with limited resources and community problems, but much less information regarding affluent communities or successful schools. It is often easier to analyze problems than it is to explain successes, and it is hard to generalize most research about public schools in the United States to include schools that have a large economic base and successful student body. However, the town of Midcoast provides an interesting case to examine the entitlement of upper-class families (Lareau 1987) as well as the various social forces that are navigated when a parent makes the decision to choose between a public and private school.

Annette Lareau (1987) provides the most comprehensive study about how parents in communities like Midcoast interact with their children's schools. She finds that significant cultural factors related to class strongly influence how families navigate their interactions with schools, and that parents who are educated and economically stable are much more comfortable making demands or intervening on behalf of their children. Parents expect to engage in an equal partnership with the school and integrate home and school life in order to promote their children's academic success. Parents know each other outside of class and interact both at formal school events and outside the classroom. She finds that this level of involvement can increase to the point where it is unhelpful, due to parents being over-demanding of teachers or

feeling that they can override a school's decisions. However, parents are generally informed and active and schools are responsive partners to promote high academic achievement. The parents Lareau describes tend to be the ones who seek out the best educational options for their children, which directs many toward private schools.

Goldring and Shapira (1993) look at school choice in the context of social class, identifying deciding factors for middle and upper class parents. While they do not isolate any of the factors that motivate parents' decisions to choose, they conclude that satisfaction is connected to the socio-economic status of parents. Higher SES parents are highly educated and are increasingly satisfied with the school they choose because of the empowerment they feel. When they feel that they are partners in the decision-making and the school is in compliance with their interests, parents are the happiest with their children's educational experience at that school. Goldring and Shapira (1993) join parent satisfaction with school choice. Parents are not driven to exercise their right to choose unless they are dissatisfied with their status quo. When their partnership in the school fails, parents are motivated to look for other options.

Gemello and Osman (1984) try to identify the factors that push parents to demand private school, but the findings of their study also assume an inherent difference in public and private schools. This study reaffirms the limited applicability of many educational studies to the Midcoast community. The authors find that private school attendance is directly related to economic limitations, and that higher incomes directly correlate with higher attendance at private high schools. They also find that as public school funding improves, private school attendance decreases. A private school is selected when the family prefers more resources than are available at the public school or

when the income level of the family creates a higher “taste” for education. The small size and homogeneity of income levels in the Midcoast community makes this difference in “taste” impossible, because most parents are professionals and well-educated themselves. The private school is also not a choice only because of the resources it offers due to the fact that Midcoast High School is able to offer a similar education to Midcoast Academy. No parents claimed that MHS was a bad school or that the public experience in the town was significantly inferior to the private option. While Gemello and Osman’s findings can easily be generalized to school districts with under funded public schools, which unfortunately is a larger segment of the American education districts, the unique nature and funding of the Midcoast community requires a different framework to explain the decisions to send a child to public or private schools.

So, in the rare community where public school funding is high, how do we explain the demand for private education? Coleman and Hoffer (1987) offer a structure of social capital that helps understand the exclusionary forces of a community that could push a family to a private school. The authors claim that students need social connections with their peers, their families, and their communities in order to be successful in a school. Within this framework, private schools are designed to specifically meet these social needs in order to help these social connections be established. In Midcoast, many of these needs are also met in the public school, but the relationship between schools, families, and communities that Coleman and Hoffer explore points us toward the non-academic factors that parents value when selecting schools regardless of the type.

Some sociologists believe that public and private schools represent inherently different philosophies of education. J.B. Rotter’s

classic theory of “locus of control” provides an interesting framework to examine key differences in public and private school families. This theory generally applies to students themselves, but also offers another way to explain parents’ expectations of schools. Rotter’s model separates the kinds of forces that dictate behavior into internal and external categories. Internal control means that an individual feels that he or she has direct control over an outcome; in schools students would feel like it was their own task to work hard and take initiative to get better grades. External control means that other things determine the outcome, so a student would place the blame on teachers, environment, or any factor outside of his or her individual self. Bartel (1971) discusses the “locus of control” of students of different classes, finding that middle-class students were more self-aware and proactive about their role in school than their lower-class counterparts. Wigfield, Eccles, and Rodriguez (1998) look at student motivation in a broader sense; examining the many factors such as peers and school environment. They believe that the categories internal and external are too basic to fully understand the many complex motivating factors.

Outside of families and individual relationships, the small size of the town of Midcoast is a defining factor in school choice. Schmuck and Schmuck (1990) look at the performance of a school through the eyes of the community in which it is located, specifically focusing on high schools in small towns. Their population is more rural and less affluent than the one examined in this study, but the role of the high school in the town dynamic is very similar. The authors discuss the level of democratic participation in small town high schools, finding that despite the high levels of social integration, there is an absence of collaboration and actual participation in the schools. Midcoast would be seen as a success in their model because the school has the resources

to promote the kind of integration they suggest and avoids the problems they find in many small towns. Despite these differences the Schmuck study highlights the importance of the public high school in the social and community life of a small town, acting as a physical and symbolic gathering point for members of a community.

Salganik and Karweit (1982) reinforce this value of community in a school, although they believe that public schools struggle because of a lack of community support. They claim that parents will not support schools until there is a general ideology of education that is demonstrated, and claim that public schools in the United States lack this common philosophy. Their structure ignores the ability of small towns to have common ideals that are exemplified in public schools, and the support of the public school in Midcoast disproves their claims. However, their findings do highlight the importance of community support and social acceptance of a school. These studies provide frameworks to uncover, separate, and examine the many factors that parents consider when choosing public or private schools.

METHODS:

I conducted my study in Midcoast, a small coastal town in New England. Midcoast is a town of about 8,500 residents in the most populated county of the state, about a half hour drive from a metropolitan area. This location gives Midcoast the community feel of a small town, but means that the residents are generally commuters to the city. Midcoast attracts a very affluent population, and the average income and price of property has been steadily increasing. In the years from 1990-2000, the population grew about 6%. Some residents are concerned because the average age of the population (currently at 41.6)

has also been rising due to the number of affluent retirees who are moving into the community and purchasing property. However, this has not yet negatively affected the number of children in schools or the economy of the town. The average family income in 1999 was \$73,234, and three-quarters of property is single-family owned homes averaging \$242,250 (Appendix A).

Education is valued highly in the community and it is supported through the large tax contributions from residents to the schools. Midcoast residents have a strong educational background: 94.6% of adults graduated from high school while 57.3% held Bachelors Degrees or higher. Midcoast schools have consistently been ranked near the top in the state for both utilized resources and student performance. The per pupil cost in 2000 was \$7,280, almost \$2,000 above the state average. There are four public schools in the town, one elementary school that serves grades K-1, another elementary school that serves grades 2-4, a middle school for grades 5-8, and a high school for grades 9-12. In 2003, a \$20.5 million building renovation program was completed in all the schools, which built a new middle school and renovated the remaining buildings. Not only do the schools have the physical space to provide an excellent learning environment, but the high school also boasts only a .83% drop-out rate and a 90% college matriculation rate. There is an expectation of excellence and the resources to promote success in the public schools.

I selected Midcoast for my study because it also has an excellent private school that offers instruction in grades 6-12. Midcoast Academy is located in the heart of downtown and has been there since 1814. 300 students are enrolled at MA and roughly 30% receive need-based financial aid to offset the \$17,280 yearly tuition. All students are day students and come from 43 communities in the state, some

commuting over an hour to be there. Despite this geographic diversity, 54 students and 45 families at MA live in the town of Midcoast. This 18% is a significant portion of the population. There is a 25-acre campus with academic and athletic buildings, and the school recently started construction on a new science center. MA offers a similar curriculum to MHS, although the classes are smaller and there is an individualized student advising system. There is also an intense focus on college applications, and generally every MA graduate goes to college. All students at the school are required to play a sport and participate in at least one artistic activity; so all students are active in extra-curriculars. This is not hugely different from the public high school, which without a requirement still has 80% of its students involved in after-school activities. There is some difference in these activities offered; MA is known for a strong hockey program while MHS has a better track team. Athletics can be a minor influence in the decision process, but equal opportunities are provided at each school in most extra-curricular activities.

These similarities between the schools led me to the community of Midcoast because I believed that I could look at the decision between public and private schools without having the basic factor of superior education be an influence. The schools have different teaching philosophies, but the private school does not produce more students with high test scores or better college admittance rates. Midcoast Academy is known for teaching a traditional curriculum with standard subjects and pedagogical styles. MHS has been much more exploratory with the curriculum, offering team teaching and an integrated curriculum. Some of these projects have been successful and have been permanently implemented; others have been eliminated after a year or two. These philosophies of teaching offer a contrast to each

other but do not set one school as clearly better option for learning. Parents feel that one style might be better suited for their individual child, but there is not a majority sentiment in the community that one school is better. This balance allowed me to ask questions about the other individual and social factors that influence parents' decisions.

I interviewed twelve parents for this study. Eight of the interviews I conducted with one parent in a family, one I conducted with both parents together, and two I conducted with each parent from the same family separately. I spoke with members of ten different families, but conducted eleven separate interviews. Four families had children in the public school, four had children in the private school, and two had children in each. I traveled to the homes of each family for six of the interviews and then did the remaining five over the phone due to travel restraints. Most of the interviews lasted about an hour in length and I recorded the sessions by hand and on tape. I found my first three families through a friend who had attended MA himself. He put me in touch with these contacts and then I used the snowball method to make connections with other families in the community. All of my interviews were conducted in a two-month period.

All of the families I interviewed were two-parent homes with at least one child who was enrolled in or had gone through the Midcoast school system. While I never asked about income levels, the appearance and location of each home and the occupation of the parents led me to assume that all families ranged from comfortably middle-class to very well off. All parents who worked held professional level positions. A few of the families enrolled in MA mentioned receiving some level of financial aid, but no family ever cited economic limitations as a reason for not exploring a private school option for their child. All the families were white, but in 2004 the town population

was 98.5% white. While my survey population is homogeneous, I believe it is an accurate representation of the total racial composition of the town.

FINDINGS:

“You want to know about my kids’ educations and how we picked schools? Well, have you got all day?”

–Mrs. Lawson, mother MHS and MA students.

The decision to choose between a public and private school is one that is mediated by many factors. Each child has individual needs, different schools offers specific resources, and every community shapes a family’s experience in the school system. In talking to parents, there were hundreds of circumstances that motivated their choice, but as my interviews progressed I began to see a distinctive organization of these reasons. Individual needs and social forces mediate the choice between public and private schools in a small homogeneous community where religion and economic limitations are not factors. Scholars such as Annette Lareau (1987) have pointed to the level of individualization that middle and upper class parents demand for their children, and Midcoast is no exception. Parents in this socioeconomic class are integrated in their children’s educations and demand specialized attention and resources from their school. If these needs are not being met, the parents will explore options to place their child in an alternative learning environment.

Social networks are also important in the small, tight-knit communities of small towns. The residents of Midcoast were all extremely sensitive to feelings of social network and acceptance, whether they were referencing their child’s peer group or the connection they felt with other parents and residents. Social

interactions for children and parents both focus on the schools, and families need to feel included in social groups, in decision-making processes, and in the educational process a child undergoes. The public schools, especially the high school, also serve as a unifying physical and social space for residents of a small town. Through sports, activities, and opportunities for parent involvement, high schools help residents feel a sense of identity with their town. When any of these connections are not established, families are driven to look elsewhere. The private school in Midcoast caters to this need by repeatedly emphasizing the importance of various levels of community to its students and their families.

I found that community connections for families have many dimensions, ranging from the peer networks between children to the integration of a family in the town social scene. These relationships might seem disconnected from school choice, but all revolve around the school community in Midcoast and are central to parents' choice between the public and private school. At the most basic level, the importance of students being socially included in the peer group of their school is extremely important to parents when they evaluate their happiness with their child's educational experience. If a child does not make friends or has problems with other students that are not resolved, some parents will simply find a new school environment for the student to alleviate the social pressures and start over. Parents also value the types of friends their children have and have expectations for the level and type of peer pressure their child experiences. Not only do parents want their children to have friends who are kind and morally conscious, but they want them to be around other children who have appropriate goals and aspirations. Families at the public and private school had very different ideas about the role of a child's peer group, and the

source of a child's motivation differed in the two school communities. Public and private school parents had very different ideas about what influences would best motivate their child. Parents at each school had different expectations for who should push their child and how involved they should be in their child's academic education.

The relationship between the parent and the school is also an extremely important one, and all parents expected a high level of access. All stated that they needed to feel included in the decision making process at the school and spoke of the importance of accessibility and responsiveness on the part of teachers and the administration. Finally, parents used the school community to connect with the larger community. Parents stated that they needed to feel included in the school community and parent social network through volunteering or attending school events. Several who had older children out of school felt that they were no longer a part of the town community and their personal social circles had shrunk because they were no longer connected to the school system.

These categories encompass the most important dimensions of connection and inclusion that parents need in a school community in a small town like Midcoast. Despite my separation of these levels of community, they are all closely interconnected. When a relationship failed at one level, for example if a child was having a hard time making friends at school, relationships at other levels would suffer as well. The child's parents might have problems with a teacher because of it, or interpersonal relationships between families would be strained. Because of the close level of integration in a town of this size, inclusion is important and social networks are far reaching. Any level of conflict in the community can lead to social isolation. When this breakdown of community occurs, parents look to remove their children and

themselves from the environment that is no longer inclusive and in Midcoast, most turn to the local private school, which works particularly hard to market a strong school community. Most families were willing to give public education a chance, and it was clear that poor academic opportunities were not the reason that most parents left the public schools in Midcoast. Parents who left did so because a relationship broke down, either with their child's social group, with the goals or individuals at the school itself, or with the town in general. Parents were satisfied with a school not only when their child was academically successful, but also when their family was socially included into the educational experience on all levels.

INDIVIDUALIZED ATTENTION: "MY KID WAS GETTING LOST THERE"

The parents at both MHS and MA have the expectations and individual focus that is standard for a population in this socio-economic class. Parents at both schools demand a high level of instruction and attention for their children, and parents who do not feel that their children's needs are being met look for alternate schooling options. Parents expect that education is individualized to their child's specific needs and that the necessary attention is directed to a child to specialize curriculum for him or her. Because MHS has extensive resources, the school's ability to cater to these expectations is far above most other public schools, and it can retain many families who value this individualization of education. The residents of Midcoast fit the profile Lareau (1987) creates of involved and demanding upper-middle class parents. Parents who are educated and economically stable are very comfortable promoting their values and engaging themselves for the sake of their children. This level of integration leads parents to demand that the school focus attention and meet the specific needs of their child.

Parents at both the public and private school in Midcoast have these expectations for their children's education. Parents who were unsatisfied with MHS frequently used the phrase "my kid was getting lost there." Five hundred students for four grades is hardly a large school, but the 300 student population of MA over seven grades creates smaller classes. This size is better suited to students who were quiet or less aggressive about participating. Mrs. Adams has two boys at MA, but kept her youngest daughter in the public school. Mrs. Adams sent her second son to MA because "he was an introvert... in a small setting he felt exposed and was made to participate and was drawn out in a way." This attention is coupled with an involved advising network at MA, in which a faculty member frequently checks on a student and reports his or her progress and mental health to the parents. The parents at MA and MHS both valued small class sizes and the attention from teachers in school, but some parents felt that only MA could create this environment for their child. Coleman and Hoffer explain these expectations; although they generalize that such attention can only be found in private schools (1987). The authors explain that private schools are smaller and allow for more intensive relationships between students and teachers because students spend more of their time with a smaller number of faculty. In Midcoast, the private school does fit Coleman and Hoffer's definition, but the public school offered a structure that satisfied many parents' expectations as well.

The public school did accomplish the same individualization and close relationship building as the private school for many families. I found that parents who were happy at MHS talked about the same type of environment and individualization that parents at MA vocalized. In both groups felt that their child was in an environment where they were receiving a large enough amount of attention, so the

system at MHS did not fail everyone. Mrs. Pelham, a mother of four students in the public system told me that “our kids have all been able to get into all the courses they wanted and the classes are small.” Public and private school parents did not have different expectations for individualization, but they differed on how they felt their individual child’s needs were being met in the public school.

Some parents who felt that MHS was not small enough had children who had specific needs that needed to be dealt with. All parents felt that their child was unique—some were outgoing, others shy or easily distracted. However, there were students for whom the small, structured environment of MA was better suited because of disabilities or diagnosed social disorders. Two families had children in high school with ADHD, one of whom knew before getting to MA and the other diagnosed while there. These parents felt that their children were better served by the attention at MA than they would have been at MHS. Some parents of children who were particularly bright had similar feelings about the two schools, complaining that MHS catered only to the middle and did not offer enough support for children with higher academic performance. Mrs. Franklin, a mother with two sons in private school in the Midcoast area, explained that “the public school really caters to a midline, if not lower, so when you have kids on either end of the spectrum I think their needs tend not to be addressed as much.” MHS failed to provide the specialized attention that some parents felt their children needed. Mr. Sawyer, a member of the school board and father of a son at MHS, explained that these concerns are impossible to fix due to the nature of public education. Because all students have to be accepted, the range of abilities and needs that must be addressed is very large and resources must be distributed equally across all levels of performance.

Individualized attention for their children is important to parents in Midcoast, as is expected given the nature of the population. There was no difference in the general educational ideology of parents in the public or private schools; instead they were separated by their perception of the resources at each school. Physical differences of class sizes or structural aspects such as the advising system separated the two schools, which otherwise offered very similar academic opportunities. The individual needs of children varied from family to family, and the education and feelings of entitlement of parents in Midcoast encouraged them to take a very active role in exploring school options for their children. Parents in Midcoast all expected individualized programs for their children, and some felt that this was provided at the public school, while others felt it necessary to enroll their children in an environment where personal attention was a priority. The personality and needs of their individual children strongly influenced this decision.

Personalized aspects of school choice varied from family to family, and so I looked for larger social structures that might also influence parents to pick between MHS and MA in this community. Another mediating factor was the level of community and social integration that students and parents experienced in the public high school. Once again all the parents were willing to give the public schools a chance but at the point where a social relationship broke down they looked for a replacement. MA not only provided an individualized academic environment, but also an alternate community dynamic and social group. The individual needs of their children are at the forefront of all parents' minds, but community integration is also deciding factor in a small town like Midcoast.

SOCIAL NETWORKS AND PEER GROUPS: “NICE KIDS AND NERDS”

Children’s own happiness was a strong determining factor of parents’ contentment, and no study of parent choice can ignore the feelings of the children themselves. Social inclusion is especially important to adolescents, and their focus in school is generally much more social than academic. This was evident from the importance of social stress in middle school that repeatedly arose in the interviews. Every one of the parents I spoke with recalled problems from their child’s middle school years. None of these problems were academic; there is no change in the curriculum that challenges students in a new way. Instead, middle school is a difficult social environment with new pressures and intense social stratification. For example, Mrs. Davis is a mother of twin daughters and transferred her girls to Midcoast Academy just before sixth grade in an effort to fix a negative social experience.

“We volunteered to coach basketball and Molly was having a hard time making friends. The woman who was helping me explained to me, ‘oh, Molly’s tall, she’s thin, she’s pretty, she’s athletic, she’s smart, they hate her’. And she just said it so matter of fact, like this is why they don’t want your daughter here. So socially we found the public schools to be pretty much a nightmare.”

If a child does not fit in socially with his or her classmates, most parents seemed to feel that trying to promote academic success would be useless. For the Davis family, moving their daughters to a new social environment allowed the girls a chance to start over when they felt that integration was a lost cause. The Jacksons moved both their son Chris and their daughter Jenny to MA, and both children had social problems that influenced their decision to switch schools. Mrs. Jackson told me, “Jenny wasn’t that happy socially in the in the public school by the time she got to middle school.” This exclusion encouraged the

family to explore private school options, which only exacerbated the social situation for their daughter. She was socially ostracized even more for wanting to leave, and “the kids were pretty nasty to her. You know middle school.”

Parents felt that these social problems were generally alleviated at Midcoast Academy. MA promotes its small size to parents and students and claims that it is too socially intimate to have cliques. With only 30 students in each graduating class, all students know each other well. When the Jackson family moved their son Chris to Midcoast Academy to follow his sister, one of the positive benefits of the school for Chris was this lack of social hierarchy. Mrs. Jackson explained that,

“For the boys there is really only one social group. There’s not a huge caste between the jocks and the non-jocks or something, because athletics are required and everyone participates in sports on some level.”

Other parents were not quite as supportive of this idea of social integration, despite the school size. Mrs. Davis ended up removing her other daughter from MA after her junior year in high school because she still felt that she did not fit in with her peers. This experience shows that no school can offer a perfect social environment, especially in the middle school years, but private schools in this setting can exist to offer a change and a chance for many students who are not socially integrated to start over.

Midcoast Academy allows this fresh start because it creates a social structure that encourages integration. Coleman and Hoffer (1987) point out that private schools can have problems with social integration because their students are not all from the same external community. Midcoast Academy forces students to play sports and participate in

extra-curricular activities; a strategy that these authors claim is a method to encourage integration. Activities outside the classroom create groups or teams, which serve as structured social communities for students who lack informal social peer groups. Mrs. Lawson had moved to the community from New York and her four children were enrolled in both public and private schools. She explained how her children became socially integrated, and pointed to extra-curricular activities as a very influential agent. “Because my kids moved her from New York, they had to learn to make new friends. Sports teams help, especially when kids are from all over.”

All parents recognized the importance of a child’s social experience and the struggles each one faced in middle school, but parents who left their children in the public school either had children with fewer problems or believed that they would outgrow it. The Pelham family sent four children through the public school system in Midcoast, and the youngest daughter dealt with social drama in her middle school years. In the end, her mother was happy with how her social experience turned out despite the imperfections that she seemed to feel were a standard part of an adolescent experience.

“They’re all very nice girls, very supportive of each other, not competitive among themselves, but there’s a lot of drama. Not picking on each other like in eighth grade, they have resolved those differences with each other. It’s very tiring, but not catty because the school is small enough and they’ve outgrown that.”

Public school parents generally had more patience that their child’s social problems would shift and he or she would be included in a peer group again. All parents were concerned that their children were socially integrated into the school community. When the situation

appeared unfixable, private school provided an alternative social group for a child to start over.

Parents were also concerned about their children's peer groups, but for different reasons. These social networks that students develop with their peers can be the most influential motivators to promote or discourage behavior. Students want to be included in a peer group, but parents want to make sure that the pressure coming from this group is a positive influence on their child. Parents in Midcoast were surprisingly unconcerned with drugs, alcohol, or sexual activity. Instead, many spoke extensively about the role of peer groups in promoting motivation and academic excellence. When a child was not as self-motivated as he or she might be, the parents had very different views on who needed to provide the incentive for a child to work harder and how this encouragement should take place.

The importance of peer group was repeatedly stressed among the private school parents, who also felt that the school should be the primary actor to encourage hard work. The higher expectations at Midcoast Academy put pressure on all students to achieve, which parents felt influenced peer pressure to promote academic achievement. When MA parents spoke about the deficiencies of the public high school academics, they rarely claimed that there were not enough opportunities. Instead, they felt that MA was a more "academic setting" with "higher expectations." These families felt that it was the job of the school to not only provide resources, but to demand that students challenge themselves and make use of the opportunities given to them.

Private school parents felt that this focus also created a certain social group that was more motivating for their children. Because there was a high expectation for behavior, all students made an effort to live up to that. This creates different values in high school social groups,

who will then place a much higher value on performing well academically. Many parents at MA felt that their children's performance in public school had not been as good as it could have been because they had been limited by the expectations of a social group that did not value academics. Ms. Adams, a divorced mother with three children sent her two older sons to MA. She moved Andrew, the eldest, so that he would be surrounded by students who would have goals that she found more appropriate.

“Being a male and an athlete in the public system, he was really getting feedback that that was what he was about and a lack of nurturing for his intellectual, academic self... MA provided a better peer group for Andrew to maximize his potential as a student and an athlete.”

She felt that Andrew's school and his peer group were better motivating influences than their family might be. Mr. Jackson, Chris and Jenny's father, summed it up when he explained that, “you didn't feel like a nerd if you were working hard.” He felt that his children had not performed up to their potential in public school, where they were afraid of being teased for being smart. The students at MA had different goals and valued academic excellence as an indicator of popularity.

Public school parents recognized the value of peer groups, but were more concerned that their children's friends were “good kids” rather than smart or motivated ones. Mrs. Sawyer has three children, two of whom were currently enrolled in MHS and a third who is almost old enough to enter. I asked her about her son's friends and she explained that “he has a huge group of freshman boys who hang out together, all nice kids... some struggle with certain things, but they're doing their work, going to school, not getting arrested, not getting caught drinking, smoking, or doing drugs too much.” Her daughter's

friends included a group of junior boys “who are pretty interesting...just goofy, nice kids.” Public school parents seemed to be more in touch with the social happiness of their children without being concerned with the academic success of their peer groups.

THE PARENT-SCHOOL RELATIONSHIP: “DOING A LOT OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL”

The difference in the role of a peer group on a child’s motivation is rooted in one of the critical differences between public and private school parents. All parents, even those with children at MA, felt that any child who was intrinsically motivated could succeed at MHS. Each child has a very different approach to learning and schoolwork, and all need different levels of structure. For those students who were not able to push themselves to succeed in their classes, parents at each school disagreed on who should step in. Parents at MA wanted the school to intervene and influence the children to value academics above everything else. Mrs. Lawson, a mother of four children who all went back and forth between MA and MHS, differentiated the academic environments of each: “MA, academically, pushes the kids a bit more and provides more structure than MHS. I think there are great teachers at both, but I feel that the framework is more important.” Expectations came from the school, and students’ performances were a product of what the school demanded.

Parents looked to the school to reinforce the goals they had for their children, although they differed in how great a role they expected the school to take in motivating students’ performances. These different expectations support the primary finding of Goldring and Shapira that states “the extent to which the parents perceive the school’s program to be compatible with their expectations of the school has the strongest

influence on parents' sense of satisfaction" (1993, 406). When parents were picking a school for their child to attend, they wanted an institution that would communicate a mission and value structure in line with their expectations.

Parents in the two schools differed in their expectations for the children themselves, so the schools were expected to play different roles to encourage performance. All of the families described their children as very bright, and all went on to college. However, if a child was struggling because she or he was not working up to potential, parents at MA immediately looked to the school to provide a better environment to promote success. Not all public school parents shared this belief that any child could excel if placed in the right structure, and a few parents at MHS conceded that their children might not be the smartest ones in the class. Mrs. Sawyer, a mother of three children at MHS, has a husband on the school committee and is a huge supporter of the school. However, she told me in the same sentence that her son was "not bright, actually pretty average" and that "the school is pretty content with anyone not causing a lot of trouble or flunking out." No parent at MA ever suggested that a child might be struggling because he or she was not intellectually capable of handling the work.

Parents valued the same educational outcomes for their children, but they had different expectations for the learning process. Rotter's concept of locus of control (1966) can be expanded to apply to parents instead of students, explaining the internal or external control differences in Midcoast families. Most MHS parents value internal control and feel that it is the job of the individual parent to control academic outcomes for children. MA parents rely on external control and place the responsibility in the hands of the school. This model does not explain differences in student attitudes or in school responses, but

does provide an accurate framework to understand the difference in public and private school parent expectations in Midcoast.

Midcoast Academy parents wanted the school to create a new community where expectations were higher and pressure was put on everyone. Mrs. Franklin is a mother of two sons, both of whom she enrolled in private school after a terrible public experience in a different community. She explained to me that for her, the crucial difference between public and private schools for her was the school's role in promoting academic excellence.

“At MA, it's not just that you're in seventh grade and here's the curriculum so that's what you're going to do. They expect more, they demand more, and they raise the level of expectation so kids have to meet it.”

Midcoast Academy parents felt that their children were capable of excelling in school if the right structure was provided for them and if the school demanded a high level of performance from all students.

Parents at the public school felt that the family should be the most active source of motivation for a child. It was not the role of the school to demand that a child perform at a certain level, it was the parents job to monitor that the child was doing what was asked of him or her. MHS does have high expectations for their students, and have a large number who excel in the classroom. Mrs. Pelham's son was one of those students, and she explained that his success was due to teachers, conferencing, and the school environment provided to him. However, when I asked about the source of her son's motivation, she first explained to me that she and her husband have law degrees and because she is able to stay home with her children, “obviously there is encouragement at home.” Her son was given the resources in public

school to succeed, but she considered it her job, along with his father, to promote achievement.

All parents in both schools were highly involved in their children's education, public and private school parents felt differently about their active role in the process. These differences in sources of student motivation are in conflict with Lareau's generalizations about parent involvement (1987). She finds that the level at which parents push their children compared to the expectations set by the school vary based on socio-economic status, and all middle and upper-class parents were engaged in their child's learning both through involvement in the classroom and supplemental work at home. Parents at MA seemed reluctant to provide this extra assistance, and expected the school to do its job fully so that the education of their children could be taken out of their hands. They were very involved as volunteers in the school and had high expectations for the results of their children's academic work, but their involvement did not seem to include lots of outside academic time with their children. This could be due to a time constraint from their job, but seemed to be a more of a philosophical difference. Public school parents viewed the family as a motivating influence, while private school parents left this task up to the school. One mother in the public school had hired a Spanish tutor from a nearby college for her son, and another was quizzing her daughter for a science test when I called to conduct the interview. If an MA parent sensed that their child needed extra help, it was the job of the school to supply it.

The dissimilar college search processes of students at MHS and MA reinforce the differences highlighted by the locus of control model. Parents demonstrated a huge difference in their willingness to engage in the application process. All parents expected similar outcomes, but MHS parents internally controlled the situation, while

MA parents left the control to outside forces. MA provides an extensive college guidance process that starts freshman year and provides personal counseling to each student at the school. Mr. Johnson has two sons who have already graduated from MA and two more who will, so he was an expert on the college search process. He explained to me that “the head guidance counselor is unbelievable, and all the kids do their applications early and she reviews each one to make sure they dotted all the I’s and crossed all the T’s.” Public school parents were generally disappointed with the help the school provided, but did not demand that the guidance counselors do more. Instead, parents took on the responsibility themselves. Mrs. Sanders has two sons who went to college after graduating from MHS, and she told me that when it came time for her oldest son to apply, “whatever charge there was [of the application process] I would have to say that I did most of it.” Mrs. Sawyer reinforced this approach and explained that with her daughter who is a junior, “we’ve been doing a lot outside [of the school].”

Coleman and Hoffer (1987) would explain these differences as a lack of social capital in private school families. Midcoast families possess human capital, which is measured in parent education and values for their children. Social capital exists when these parents create meaningful bonds and directly impart this human capital on their children. The authors explain that many well-educated parents do not have the time to impart meaningful social capital on their children. The difference between MA and MHS parents is not related to time constraints. The two groups had different views of how active parents needed to be in promoting learning in the home. Parents valued the need and effectiveness of social capital differently.

Parents who stayed at the public school were much more willing to fill in the holes that they perceived in their children’s

education, whether it be a motivating influence or the college application process. Private school parents expected the school to fill these roles. These differences show that parents have contrasting expectations for the relationship they build with the school. Their satisfaction with their choice was rooted in how well the school's environment and philosophy matched their own. Parents chose a school based on this alignment with their expectations.

THE PARENT SCHOOL-RELATIONSHIP: "WE WENT RIGHT TO THE PRINCIPAL"

All parents had clear expectations for their role in the family-school relationship. Parents had different perspectives on how much they would be involved to educate their child, but all agreed that they expected the school to be accessible and receptive to them. Not all parents perceived themselves as equal players in their relationship with the school. Parents at both schools actively approached the teachers and administration about problems, despite having very different views about their role in carrying out the solution. Every parent at both schools said they felt comfortable contacting the school with problems and had done so at some point in their child's educational experience. The level at which parents got involved varied greatly, but there was no connection between how often parents contacted the school regarding their child and what type of school they sent their child to. However, inclusion in this relationship was extremely important for most parents. The relationship between the parents and the school was expected to be a partnership, even for public school parents who took more individual responsibility for their children's education. Parents wanted to feel like a part of all decision-making processes and needed to be assured that the school was listening and responsive to their needs. When a school

upheld their end of the responsibility, parents offered time and volunteer support.

Goldring and Shapira find that “parent involvement and empowerment are two possible ways in which parents express their sense of ownership and commitment to their school” (1993, 398). If this connection does not happen, parents will look elsewhere for a school that offers this relationship. In Midcoast, once again parents are willing to try to build this relationship in the public school until something happens to make them feel alienated or ignored. Some families felt that this breakdown was due to structural problems in MHS, but in listening to individual stories it seemed more that specific problems had not been addressed as a parent would have liked. Because the school could not solve every academic or social conflict in favor of the child or parents, the breakdown of this relationship is sometimes inevitable. Parents who feel most strongly about these feelings will seek a new environment in which they feel they can build a partnership with the school.

The schools understand the importance of this relationship and the communication that fosters it. MHS and MA both attempt, to varying degrees, to facilitate this connection with parents. Parents do not contact the schools about their own children only because they feel it is important, but also because this behavior is actively encouraged by both MHS and MA. MHS gives parents the home phone and email address of their children’s teachers, and MA furthers this openness by having teachers call home to give frequent progress reports. Mrs. Pelham told me that she was extremely comfortable going to MHS about her children, “but that’s my nature. I think all parents are encouraged to do that... they encourage you to contact them when there is an issue and parents really feel that they can do that.” She felt that

the structure for parent feedback and the reception of the public school to her needs was sufficient. Other parents disagreed.

The parents who moved their children to MA all experienced a clear breakdown in this parent-school partnership. It cannot be determined whether the school was not responsive or the parent's claim was not substantiated; regardless, when parents felt that they were not in an equal and open dialogue they searched for somewhere that allowed them more access. The Jackson family had the most serious instance of a failure in this relationship. They moved their daughter to MA after a disastrous middle school teacher-parent conference.

“Jenny is pretty shy, we felt like she got lost. We literally went to a teacher conference in November and she started talking about Jenny and she was talking about another kid. It was her homeroom teacher talking to us about someone else's child.”

It was clear to the Jacksons that the public school system was not putting in the effort they expected in regard to their daughter's education. Mrs. Davis had a similar experience when she called the public school about a gun threat her daughters had overheard and was dismissed by the administration. “I never got a single reply back from anyone. I even sent [a letter] to the Department of Education and never got a response.”

The administration at each school plays a key role in this parent-school relationship, and all parents knew a great deal about their principal. Both MHS and MA have administrators who are well liked and supported by the community and both schools place the burden of maintaining a school community in the hands of this individual. Mrs. Pelham is a veteran of MHS and has had one of her four children at the

school through the last two principals. She raved about each and the sense of community both brought.

“She [the first principal] was in at 5am and knew every kid by name. And at her speech at graduation she went through the entire class and mentioned every graduating senior and something about them.... Recently he [the new principal] announced he’s leaving and all the girls started crying, just to give you an idea of the relationship he has with them. He comes to every game, every performance. It’s wonderful having a small school, and we’ve been very lucky.”

Mr. Sawyer, a father of three children who is also on the school board, pointed to the strength of the administration in the Midcoast public schools as an explanation for the district’s excellent performance. “We’re lucky enough to have experienced principals, and because Midcoast is considered well-performing and a high-paying district, we can attract well qualified individuals.” He also pointed to the superintendents as key individuals who monitor the many people below them and maintain a standard for performance. “There is accountability, not to make sure that every parent is placated, but to make sure that every concern is addressed fairly and evenly.” The school district understands the expectations of parents and the administration is the key player in creating an intimate and accessible environment. The principals are organized and receptive about parents’ individual concerns while also attentive to the needs of the school and Midcoast community.

The role of the headmaster at MA is slightly different because of the nature of the school community. Instead of being part of a larger district, MA exists as an isolated entity and the headmaster is in charge of dictating the spirit and procedures for the school. A veteran of MA, Mr. Johnson has sent three children through the school with a fourth

about to enroll. He pointed to the recent switch in headmasters as the only negative aspect of MA. A new administrator recently came in and tried to change how things were done, to the dismay of long-time families.

“The headmaster before was very strong, very good communicator, very good vision for where he wanted the school to go, met with parents often, very accessible and visible. And while the new headmaster; while he was visible and somewhat accessible, he didn’t always listen to what people were saying about how some of his actions he was taking would be changing the environment of the school.”

Mr. Johnson recognized the power of the administrator in not only dealing with procedural problems but also in influencing the nature of the school community, and strongly valued this latter responsibility.

It is interesting that the most important figure to most of the parents I talked to was the administrator of the school, given that individual teachers are the ones who spend the most time with their children. Parents at both schools recognized that the quality of teachers could be erratic and that no one was guaranteed a solid succession of quality instructors. The quality of teaching seemed to not be a factor in the choice between public and private schools, as long as the parents felt that the administration was on their side and accessible to hear their complaints. In the public school, Mrs. Pelham told about a conflict she had with her daughter’s language teacher.

“In the case of this one teacher some of us had a problem with... we went right to the principal and he sent the assistant principal in to monitor the classes and see what’s going on. The school was extremely responsive.”

These priorities of parents in both schools prove that it is not the quality of teaching that satisfies the parents as much as the administrations' ability to handle and resolve complaints. The quality of instruction was valued below the leadership of an administrator, suggesting that for all parents the community of the school was more important than the academic learning in the classroom.

This idea was more strongly reinforced at MA, where I found more discontent about the quality of teaching than at MHS. Mrs. Davis felt that because teachers at MA were not required to have their teaching certificate, many were experts in their subject but unable to deal emotionally with adolescents' developmental needs. Other parents complained of high turnover due to the lower salaries offered by the school. Mr. Johnson justified these salaries by explaining that because teachers taught for less than in the public school, they were at MA for reasons other than money and more engaged with the school. "They prefer to be in that small environment where they can get close to the kids, watch them develop, and really be creative." These comments all point to the importance of community over academic learning. Individual teaching abilities were rarely mentioned, but the values of the school community were frequently highlighted. The climate of the school and the community that is fostered by the administrators was seen as far more important than the classroom instruction that took place. Parents seek alternatives when this relationship between the parent and the school breaks down in the public school. Midcoast Academy offers an environment in which accessibility and community are highly stressed to rebuild this partnership for those who lost it in the public school.

COMMUNITY INCLUSION: “YOU’RE LEAVING US”

The public and private school options in Midcoast are clearly differentiated by the social networks and relationship to the community that parents experience. Other factors have focused on the differences in the ideology and structure of each school; none have examined the inherent divide between publicly funded education and privatized options. The level of parent-to-parent networking and community integration that is maintained at MHS is directly connected to the fact that the school is public. Public schools are maintained through local taxes, and in small towns like Midcoast, the high school is a central icon in the town social life. Basketball games are town events, the high school booster clubs are the largest fundraising booths at the summer fair, and the building is used for a variety of events. A general connection to the community is maintained through an allegiance and integration into the public schools.

Patricia and Richard Schmuck highlight the role of a high school in a small town in their study on democratic participation in such environments. Schmuck and Schmuck find that “people go to the school for education, entertainment, social life, and community identity” (1990, 14). While most of the schools in this study are much more rural than Midcoast High School, the community is still brought together with an identity around the high school in a way that an urban school would not be. The schools supplement and structure local culture for students and their families. Mrs. McDonald, the mother of one son who graduated from MHS, explained that most activities in the town, even the large summer festival that draws people from all over the state, focus around the high school. “The crazy event of the summer, the festival, is tied to the school and groups like the basketball boosters. That definitely, because of the big focus which is mainly

through the high school, makes us more of a community.” Midcoast is not an area isolated by geographical distance, so people do not attach themselves to the high school because of a need for resources. Residents look to the school to create a community identity and supplement social life.

Parents whose children had already graduated remembered feeling like more active members of the town of Midcoast when their children were enrolled in school, primarily because they had more social interaction with other parents. The familiarity of people in the small town fueled parent involvement. Mrs. McDonald explained to me that despite the small size of the town, “now that I don’t have anyone in the school I feel less connected to the community.” This reinforces the importance of the school’s role in the social atmosphere in Midcoast. Parents have personal relationships with the school because they are concerned with their children’s individual education, but parents also have a social relationship with the school to establish their place in the social network of the community.

All parents I spoke with commented on their level of involvement and volunteering in the schools, and even those who felt that they could have given more time were engaged at some level. Mrs. Sanders, a mother of two sons who went through the Midcoast public school system, told me both that “I don’t think I have been enormously involved” but then mentioned that she “just got home last night from working at the Jazz Festival because I was president of the parent support group for the drama program.” This shows that the expectation for parent involvement is very high, and parents in Midcoast feel the pressure to give their time to help with school activities. This is not a negative pressure; most parents felt that their volunteer time was a natural expansion of the time they would have given to their children’s

activities. Mr. Sawyer explained, “the community is emotionally attached to the school... activities bring people together even if they don’t have kids on the team or in the play.” School-based gatherings provide a chance for people to support their own children as well as the community as a whole.

Parent involvement is not rooted only in academics or the environment at the school; parents are also concerned with creating a community for the town. For example, parents emphasized sports because this was the method through which members of the community were brought together as spectators and fans. Mrs. Sawyer highlighted these priorities by explaining,

“there’s a lot of sports emphasis which is maybe not so great—a lot of nurturing around that and the booster parent association. Parents will do almost anything for their kids, and while I think that’s true academically as well it’s not that visible.”

Not only were parents involved through sports, but also through drama, the arts, or the PTA at the school. These parents were the same ones who spoke about being active on the board at the library, coaching travel soccer teams, going to church, and getting their kids involved in community service outside of the school.

Coleman and Hoffer’s model of social capital (1987) helps explain the importance of community inclusion to local families. On a basic level, the small size of the town promotes a close social community, only because many people know each other and the social circle is tight-knit. Coleman and Hoffer’s social capital legitimizes these social connections and illustrates the importance of such a community network on schools. Social capital in a family is the connection between parents and children. Social capital in a community

is a connection between members of a town. These relationships allow information to be shared and provide support for education. MHS parents were highly integrated into this network. Without social capital in a community, a family will look to a school to provide an alternate social network. Parents at Midcoast Academy find this in private school.

The one common factor among all private school families that differentiated them from the public school population was the fact that despite living in a small town, none felt like a part of the Midcoast community. Private school parents felt ostracized from the Midcoast town community most acutely, and this isolation was a factor that drove many to explore options outside the public school. The Jacksons are an excellent example of this situation. At the time of the interview they had been living in Midcoast for over fifteen years. Despite this, Mr. Jackson explained that because they were young parents and in a different economic position when they first arrived than other children's parents, they failed to be integrated into the community. Even after their children went through school, he said that "we are not a large part of the social scene here; our social life revolves around family or work." While this was not the most dominant reason they sent their children to private school, there was no connection to the community that encouraged them to stay in the public system. The Jacksons, and other parents like them, achieved a level of community integration at Midcoast Academy that made up for their disconnect from the town. Mrs. Adams explained, "mandatory athletics really put me on the sideline a few hours a week year round, and that was of value. It just gives you time to talk to people... you're all together for however many minutes and I think a sense of community really grows from that." MA parents found a community in the school to replace the

social network they felt separated from in Midcoast. Midcoast High School parents had either raised their children in the community or immediately been welcomed and integrated into Midcoast when they first arrived. They all felt that they were active members of the town, especially while their children were attending the schools.

A family's feelings of community integration were not dependent on the length of they had spent in Midcoast but instead on their process of integration and the welcome they received. This immediate social inclusion greatly dictated whether they stayed in the public schools or not. Several families were disconnected from the Midcoast town community shortly after arriving and they sought a more welcoming environment at MA. Parents who were already strongly integrated into the community claimed that Midcoast was a welcoming town, but many new families told stories of being ostracized when they tried to break into the social network. The Davis family felt this strongly after their arrival, and the girls struggled on a club soccer team that they felt was biased against newcomers. Mrs. Davis recalled,

“One mother said to me, now, she was mad that her son didn't make the Lions, which is the Midcoast travel soccer team, ‘Can you believe it? Justin made the team and his family just moved to town!’ I was thinking, how long to we have to pay our taxes and live here before our kids get any respect?”

Mrs. Davis felt that to other mothers in the community, there was a sense that her family had to spend a certain amount of time in the town before they could be accepted as members. Without this level of inclusion, they could not enjoy benefits such as belonging to a team. Others mothers told stories of being rejected by Girl Scout troops or play groups because they had not lived in town long enough.

Mrs. Pelham, a mother at MHS disagreed and told me that “it is not hard at all to move into the community.” She then explained that integration happened through involvement in the churches and at the school. She explained that, “A family finds their place and starts integrating themselves.” If this “place” is not found or accepted, a family does not seamlessly fall into their role in the community. This process suggests a high level of assimilation and homogeneity. To Mrs. Pelham, the idea that a family might not immediately join one of the five churches was inconceivable. She explained that “the Universalist is very open” and that seemed to be where families who might not be perfectly mainstream were expected to go. I do not think that Mrs. Pelham’s views on religious integration can be generalized to the entire Midcoast population, but there is a clear sense of socialization that must occur in order for newcomers to be integrated.

Most families had moved into the community and gone through this process of community integration. About half had done so after they had children. None of the parents at either school had grown up in Midcoast themselves. When I asked about why they had moved into the town, every family who moved cited the reputation of the public schools and community as one strong reason for picking Midcoast over other small towns in the area, and all of them had given the public schools a chance. The reputation of the schools, established both through their consistent high performance and word-of-mouth, was extremely important to all residents. Mrs. Sawyer explained that above everything else, “we moved to Midcoast based on what we had heard about the quality of the public school system.” The fact that this much value is placed on the feelings of other residents reaffirms the strength of the Midcoast community, and the value that is held for opinions of others in the social network. Mrs. Sanders moved to

Midcoast with her family just before her children entered middle school, and the educational system was the Sanders' primary reason for choosing the town. Reputation had been extremely important to her family, and not only was academic success valued, but "it was not just a [academic] school issue, we were looking for a community and a community school." Academics can be measured numerically, but the Sanders were more concerned with the aspects of the school that are spread through reputation and social connections rather than what they could learn on a piece of paper.

This is contrary to the findings of Salganik and Karweit (1982), who do not recognize the importance of school reputation, especially in a small town where everyone knows each other. The authors claim that private schools are legitimate when they achieve the respect of families, as demonstrated through enrollment. Public schools force students to attend and so they are legitimate institutions only because the government allows them to remain open, regardless of whether parents respect them. Midcoast is a community where public and private school choice is an option for most families, and thus the public school is held to the same standards as the private school and these different structures of legitimacy and respect do not exist. MHS attracts most of its students, many of whom move in from other towns, because of its repeated high performance and community reputation. Whether a school is public or private, legitimacy does not come only from serving students, but from the reputation the school receives and the kind of students it is able to attract. The nature of school choice in Midcoast shows just how important the reputation of a school is, regardless of whether it is public or private.

The excellent reputation that drew many families to Midcoast did not hold true for every family. When parents had problems with the

schools, this reputation proved untrue. This did not encourage a family's failing community involvement in any way. When a family left the public system, their integration in the community essentially ended. Every family that moved its children to Midcoast Academy eventually felt disconnected from the town as a whole, and the MA community was substituted for the town network. The Franklin family also moved to Midcoast for the reputation of the schools, but immediately placed their son in MA. Mrs. Franklin explained that she was distanced from the town community because of her separation from the public schools. "Maybe if I had been here before... and had some sort of core involvement, it might have been different. But we moved here and our son was at MA and so my social focus revolved around that." This disconnect was not the factor that drove all families to the private school, but the replacement of the private school community for the town community was an eventual consequence for every MA family.

This separation from the town was due in part to the lack of connection to other parents in the community itself. MA students come from many towns, and no geographic community is supported. The Adams family lived outside of Midcoast, and Mrs. Adams' perception of the MA community highlighted this idea. "MA is a community but it draws from all over... people travel miles and they really get there which is a function of how much everyone is invested in so many ways." Many students felt this division most acutely when they separated from their peer groups. Not only were they geographically distant, but many children also experienced social isolation from their public school friends when they went to MA. While these students replaced their peer groups with new ones at the private school, many parents told stories of hostility and exclusion that their children

experienced from their old friends. Both of the Jackson children faced this animosity from their peers.

“Chris had a very hard time leaving his friends at Midcoast and they didn’t make it easy for him. There was a lot of peer pressure and the feeling that he was deserting them... It wasn’t that they were mad that he was going to a private school, it was more like, oh—you’re leaving us.”

Children were as aware of the connection between the school community and attendance at public school as their parents, and the decision to attend MA was seen by many as a betrayal of the community. Once a family chose to move to the private school, their connection to the community continued to breakdown. This process highlights the many levels of relationship built between students, families, schools, and communities and the dimensions of interplay between them.

CONCLUSION:

“[Changing schools] is a hard decision to make, especially for the kids who come up through the ranks and have a close set of friends. You have to pull them out of that environment, so it’s good to have some set criteria about why you’re making that decision.” –Mr. Johnson

Mr. Johnson’s comment summarizes several key conclusions about school choice in Midcoast. First, the decision to choose between a public and private school is not one that is taken lightly by any family. Parents highly value their children’s development, and selecting the environment for their child to attend school is one of the most important parts in the process of a child’s education. Second, Mr. Johnson points out that while every family has different characteristics,

there are set guidelines that govern school choice. The criteria for the Johnson's probably differed from the factors their neighbors considered, but there are some common themes among all families in this community. One of these commonalities is the importance of the community for families in a small town, as shown by Mr. Johnson's concern for his children's social integration and the environment they were immersed.

The decisions of Midcoast parents cannot explain school choices across the country, but studying this community provides a focused look at some of the key influences that motivate families. This study is specific to this site, and the homogeneity of the population isolates the kind of communities to which we can apply the findings. However, Midcoast provides a chance to closely examine the expectations and actions of parents in higher socio-economic brackets. Parents who are well educated and financially secure tend to have many demands about their children's education, and in this study I hoped to better illustrate what those demands are and how they influence parent's choice of schools.

One of the important lessons from Midcoast concerns the nature of public and private schools in the United States. It is generally the case that public schools cannot offer the same quality of education that private academies do. Private schools perform better than public schools in most parts of the nation, but Midcoast proves that a public school with appropriate resources can offer a competitive education to a local private institution. Well-funded public schools can consistently perform well, and these schools will earn a reputation and be respected. Midcoast shows that parents in higher SES brackets do not inherently prefer private schools, and public education can be as successful as private. It is also important to note that the success that parents measure

is not always academic. Schools can have high test scores and send children to good colleges, but Midcoast parents showed that in small communities, parents care about more than classroom learning. We cannot ignore the personalized attention that parents demand for their children, and the level of individual focus each family has is extremely high. However, parents are also concerned with a number of relationships that the family builds with the school and the community.

Schools in towns like Midcoast can learn from these findings. All administrators monitor community relations and parent satisfaction, but my findings indicate that feeling involved in a school that is accessible and responsive is extremely important to all parents. Parents pick schools based on where their family feels like a part of a relationship and a community. Children need to be socially integrated, parents need to feel that the school supports their values and is responsive to their involvement, and families need to be part of a larger community. These findings are specific to small towns, but show the importance of intricate social networking to be intricate and very important. School choice is not only about teaching, learning, or academic success. Parents want their children to be educated, but the environment at a school and the relationships fostered in that community prove to be just as important as the material taught in each classroom.

APPENDIX A:

Midcoast Demographics:

(Some Slightly Altered to Preserve Anonymity)

Source: Town of Midcoast Website, 2003

Economy:

Household Income (1999):
\$58,000

Family Income (1999): \$73,200

Local Jobs (2000): 3,635

Labor Force (2001): 4,830

Unemployment Rate (2001):
1.5%

Education:

School District: Midcoast
School Department

Per Pupil Cost (2000-01):
\$7,680

Dropout Rate: Midcoast
High School: 0.80%

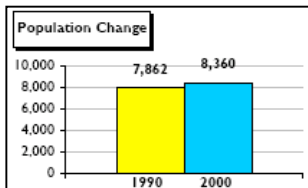
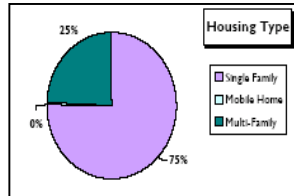
Housing:

Median Home Sales Price (2002):
\$242,200

Median Rent (2000): \$670

Rental Vacancy Rate (2000): 3.2%

Housing Units (2000): 3,700



Population:

Population (2003): 8,522

Net Change, 1990-2000: 498

Growth Rate, 1990-2000: 6.3%

Median Age: 41.6

% High School Graduates: 94.6%

% Bachelor's Degree or Higher:
57.3%

APPENDIX B:

Biographical Information for Interview Subjects:

Midcoast Parents:

Mrs. Adams:

Lawyer. Recently divorced mother of three children, two boys and one girl. Both boys went to Midcoast Academy for four years, the daughter attended a public high school. The family was not from the Midcoast area and the children commuted an hour everyday.

The Jacksons:

Father in business, mother is an Ed Tech at a local public elementary school. Children were on financial aid, but they said they could have managed to afford school if they had lost the economic help. Interviewed both parents together. Two children, Jenny is the oldest and Chris is two years younger. Both children transferred into MA in middle school after attending the public elementary system. In high school the son was diagnosed with ADHD. The family moved to Midcoast when their older daughter was in kindergarten.

Mrs. Franklin:

Very well-off family, father is a highly educated professional and mother works part-time. Two parent household with two sons. Moved to Midcoast from a nearby town due to the reputation of the schools, immediately sent their kids to MA in middle school. One son recently graduated from MA, youngest is in a private elementary school outside of the community, plan on bringing him back to MA in middle school.

Mr. Johnson:

Father from the state originally, but left for graduate school and started his own business. Moved back to the state when he was “very financially stable”, continues to run his business from home. Two parent household with four children. Two boys, one age 21 and the other 19 and two daughters, one 15 and the other 11. Grew up and live in the town right next to Midcoast, sent all their children to Midcoast Academy. First kid they pushed in, the others all wanted to attend. Mr. Johnson was the most enthusiastic supporter of MA, had very little to say negative about the school.

Mrs. Davis:

Children on significant financial aid. Two parent home with twin daughters. Moved to Midcoast just before fourth grade and the girls stayed in public school until sixth grade. They both went to MA and stayed there for high school, although one left for boarding school at the beginning of her junior year. The twin who stayed has ADHD. The

family moved to Midcoast due in part to the reputation of the schools but were very unhappy with the social community of the town.

Mrs. Lawson:

Mother is a child psychiatrist. Two parent home with four children, three boys and a youngest girl. Oldest went to Midcoast High for four years because didn't get into MA. Second son transferred into MA before sophomore year in high school, third son was the first to go to private school and started at MA in sixth grade. The daughter started at MA for middle school and then went back to MHS. The family moved to Midcoast when the oldest was going to be a freshman in high school from a wealthy suburb of New York City.

Mrs. Pelham:

Both parents are lawyers. Two parent household with four children, three boys and a girl spread apart by 6 years. All children were born in Midcoast and went through the public school system. The third son did a semester at a Wilderness School.

Mrs. Sanders:

Mother is a professor at the local branch of the state university in the social work department. Two parent family, two sons who are three years apart. Both sons went to public schools. Moved to Midcoast from a nearby city where they were commuting their kids to a magnet school and came to Midcoast due to the reputation of the schools.

Mrs. McDonald:

Father is a doctor, mother works part-time. Two parent family. One son who just graduated from college. The family moved to Midcoast just before their son enrolled in kindergarten, he stayed in the public system for twelve years.

Mrs. Sawyer:

A lawyer. Two parent family with three children, married to Mr. Sawyer. Oldest daughter is 17, middle son is 15, youngest daughter is 11. Moved to Midcoast before elementary school based on the good reputation of the school system.

Mr. Sawyer:

Also a lawyer. On the school board, strong supporter of public education. Recognizes how lucky Midcoast is to have resources and public support for the schools. Feels that too many parents are concerned only with benefits to their individual children.

APPENDIX C:

Interview Subjects' Opinions on Key Themes:

	Child Attended Private or Public School	Did the parents feel that the child received an individualized education in public school?	Did the child have problems in middle school?	Was the child ever excluded by his/her peers?	Source of Motivation/ Expectations	Were the children raised in the community?	Did the parents feel included in the Midcoast community?	Did the parents feel included in the parent community at their child's school?
Adams	both	mixed	yes	no	Peers	n/a (not from Midcoast)		yes
Lawson	both	mixed	yes	no	School	No	no	yes
Mr. And Mrs. Jackson	private	no	yes	yes	School	No	no	yes
Franklin	private	no	yes	no	School	No	no	yes
Johnson	private	no	yes	no	Schools and peer group	Yes	no	yes
Davis	private	no	yes	yes	School	No	no	yes
Pelham	public	yes	yes	no	Family	Yes	no	yes
Sanders	public	yes	yes	no	Peer group, Child	No	yes	yes
McDonald	public	no	yes	no	Child	Yes	yes	yes
Mrs. Sawyer	public	yes	yes	yes	Family	No	yes	yes
Mr. Sawyer	public	yes	yes	no	Family, school	No	yes	yes

APPENDIX D:

Human Subjects Committee Application

Description of Research, Subjects, and Interview Schedule

I. Purpose, Background, Significance:

As debate rages about the problems in the American public school system, increasing value is placed on the private sector of schooling. In my research I am looking to identify motivations behind parents' decision to send their children to public or private schools and then I would like to speak with the students to correlate these motivations with the child's actual experience. I am conjecturing that better resources at private schools are not the only factors drawing parents, but there are social networking and mobility factors that suggest private school is a better option.

II. Test Procedures:

I am going to interview six families in one community who have children attending the public school and six families who have children at the private school. I will conduct an hour-long interview with one or both of the parents, and then interview their child for a half hour. While some of the questions about class and social mobility may be stressful for the participants, there is no serious risk due to their participation. There are also no personal benefits for the participants, but I hope their answers will help bring about better understanding of the role of public and private schools in America's social hierarchy.

III. Subject Population:

I am going to use Midcoast as my test case due to the homogeneity of income levels, race, and family background in that community. It is also ideal due to the nature of the school system. Midcoast Academy is a secular private school that serves only day students. Many parents choose MA over Midcoast High School, despite the fact that MHS recently built a new facility, is known for having some of the highest quality of education in the state, and is free. I hope that in looking at this community I will be able to erase some of the usual motivators behind leaving private schools (better teachers, more recourses, etc.) and look at some of the social factors that would then play a role. I am originally from a community in the state about an hour away, and while I am acquaintances with several students at both high schools, none of these families actually live within Midcoast. I am going to use them to refer me to other families who I will be able to interview without any prior knowledge of their educational experience. I do not feel that this minor connection to my community will make me biased; instead I believe the benefits of connection will help me receive more honest and open answers from the families I am referred to.

I am going to interview 12 families, six who decided to stay at MHS and 6 who sent their children to MA. The families I know will refer me to a few other students to begin, and I will use a snowballing technique from there. I am going to ask each family personally to participate and then ask for referrals to other applicable subjects. Due to the homogeneity of my population as a whole, this snowballing technique should offer me a broad enough range of experiences. In speaking with the parents, I will obtain permission to interview their children (who may still be underage). My conversations with these high school students will focus on their experience at their high school

regarding social interactions and their perception of their parents' decision.

IV: Treatment of Data:

I will tape record all of the sessions and keep the identities of the individuals confidential. Should any evidence of illegal activity or other incriminating information come out in the interview, I will erase that portion of the tape as soon as the interview is concluded. The only people who will have access to the information in my interviews will be my advisor and myself. In my report I will use alternate names and exclude any defining characteristics that would make the family or individuals identifiable.

V: Interview Schedule:

1. Why did you choose to send your kids to MA/MHS?
2. Did they want to go there?
3. Has the experience been what you thought it would be?
4. Did your children always attend private/public school? If no, why did you switch?
5. Would you ever consider sending your child to the other high school?
6. Do you feel that in general public or private education is better? Why?
7. Did your children have a positive experience at MA/MHS?
8. What was a negative feature of their education there?
9. What kinds of kids did they end up being friends with?
10. Do they have any friends from different schools?
11. How would you describe a typical family from MA/MHS?
12. Do you feel a part of the community at this school?
13. Do you feel like a part of the community of Midcoast?
14. Are there any significant differences between the members of each of these populations?
15. How do you think your child would be different if they went to the other option of schools right now? How would this affect them down the road?

Added Questions: (1/15/05)

16. How do you think your experience as a parent compares with others at your school?
17. Do you feel that the administration is sensitive and responsive to your needs and the needs of your child?
18. How comfortable are you being aggressive about your child's needs?
19. Do you feel like a part of the community of parents at your school?
20. How is this community fostered/what keeps it from existing?

VI: Research Informed Consent

Public v. Private Choice

Purpose:

I am conducting a research study to examine the factors motivating parents' decisions to send their children to public or private schools and the connection to their children's actual experiences. I hope to uncover assumptions held by the parents' about the social environment at the school and then see if these perceptions are true.

Procedures:

Participation in this study will involve one interview and possible follow-up questions for clarification. I anticipate that your involvement will require an hour.

Risks and Benefits:

Participants in this study may experience some emotional discomfort regarding the nature of the questions, although you are free to decline to answer. Although this study will not benefit you personally, we hope that our results will add to the knowledge about school choice and the public and private systems in the United States.

Confidentiality:

All of your responses will be held in confidence. Only the researchers involved in this study and those responsible for research oversight will have access to the information you provide. Please note, however, that unlike information you provide to your doctor or lawyer, the investigator can be compelled by a court to disclose this information

Voluntary Participation:

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You are free to decline to participate, to end participation at any time for any reason, or to refuse to answer any individual question.

Questions:

If you have any questions about this study, you may contact the investigator:

Anne Martin
PO Box 203861
New Haven, CT 06520
207.240.9118

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant or concerns about the conduct of this study, you may contact the Yale University Human Subjects Committee, Box 208337, New Haven, CT 06520-8337, 203-436-3650, human.subjects@yale.edu.

Agreement to Participate:

I have read the above information, have had the opportunity to have any questions about this study answered and agree to participate in this study.

(printed name)

(date)

(signature)

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