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"Sociology is the disciplined effort to understand society, social and cultural relations, the workings of institutions, and the persistent patterns of behavior that characterize all social life. Thinkers have always concerned themselves with these problems; modern sociology analyzes them systematically and rigorously." YCPS - 2000

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Introduction

As I write this introduction, the Department of Sociology at Yale University is undertaking its first major organizational renovation in many years. In part as a reflection of this transformation, the faculty and students of the department, under the leadership of the previous Director of Undergraduate Studies, Joseph Soares, Ph.D., thought it was desirable to create a venue in which the research carried on in the department could be made available to a wider audience. The Undergraduate Affairs Committee of the department decided to create the Yale Journal of Sociology, in which some of the most distinguished work done by undergraduates in Sociology would appear each year. In this inaugural issue, we are fortunate to be able to feature essays by two members of the Yale class of 2000, Ayanna Johnson and Daniel Murray. Both essays reflect the value of intensive research projects undertaken by students under the guidance of committed faculty advisers. Our hope is that the Yale Journal of Sociology will, in addition to publicizing the work of our talented students, demonstrate in the most concrete way possible the truth in the proposition, frequently repeated but just as frequently forgotten, that instruction and research are best seen not as competitors but as two sides of the same coin: scholarship.

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Resource Mobilization in Schismatic Movements: A Case Study of Corpus Christi Catholic Church

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Research conducted over the last thirty years has identified American Catholics as a problematic group; although American Catholics declare their fealty and allegiance to the Church and to Rome, many if not most of them differ radically from the institution on issues ranging from birth control to women's ordination. The question, then, for sociologists, has been, "What makes American Catholics stay Catholic?" That is to say, why do American Catholics remain with the Church despite their differences with its leadership on doctrinal issues?

Several sociologists have attempted to answer this question. Perhaps the most famous is Andrew Greeley, who pioneered the study of Catholic communities. Together with Michael Hout, Greeley (1987) theorized that, in spite of their disagreements with church leadership, many Catholics continued to go to Mass and affiliate with Catholicism out of loyalty to the Church-its rituals, symbols, and community. They argue that those who stayed had loyalty to the Church because they had been born into the Church, they were raised by their families as part of the Church, and thus they perceived Church membership as a birthright. This birthright consisted not merely of the building and hierarchy, but also of church symbols (i.e., the cross), rituals (communion), and community (bake sales). Because American Catholics had familial ties to the church, and symbols and rituals to connect them to it even as they grew alienated from its conservative leadership, they remained with the Church while agreeing to disagree with it.

More recently, Michele Dillon has argued (1999) that Catholics who disagree with the Church hierarchy have stayed in the church because the Church has a wide array of cultural resources and traditions available

to them from which they can make a case for change. She further argues that the Catholic Church has opened the doors to the laity to debate matters of doctrine, in a sense, with the issuing of Vatican II. Thus, Dillon argues, Catholics who disagree with the Church stay with the Church because they feel they have the power and the tools with which to advocate change in the church.

Although much has been written about what keeps Catholics in the Church, little has been written about what makes them finally decide to opt out, even when they have stayed in the Church and fought for change for years, in some cases. These are Catholics who still feel a strong resonance with their Catholic past and Catholic traditions, yet who have decided to break off and form a new congregation. What causes American Catholics to decide they have had enough with the institution, and leave? Such a situation occurred in 1998 in a Catholic parish in Rochester, New York.

The Schism at Corpus Christi: A Brief History

Corpus Christi's evolution from moribund urban parish to overflowing Catholic mecca and breakaway movement has attained legendary status within the Rochester community. Corpus Christi is located on the edge of Rochester's downtown, in a neighborhood that has deteriorated rapidly in the years since the Second World War. By the 1970s, its congregation, all told, had dwindled to fewer than 500, and the Diocese of Rochester was on the verge of closing the parish's doors.
In 1976, Father James Callan was assigned to the parish. He had requested assignment at a declining urban parish because he "wanted to experience the joy of resurrection. I wanted to see God work a miracle and make a dying church come back to life" (Callan, 1997:67). Shortly after his arrival, Callan instituted a number of changes designed to make Corpus Christi a "missionary church" to its troubled neighborhood. Informal "folk" Masses were held on Thursday nights, church workers (including Callan) plied the streets encouraging local residents to attend services, and the first of many Corpus Christi outreach programs, the Corpus Christi Health Center, opened its doors in 1977. Between 1977 and 1997,

Corpus Christi established fifteen such outreach ministries in its neighborhood, providing services ranging from soup kitchen to halfway house, child care to hospice care, clothing to drug rehabilitation.

In addition to bringing in new members from the immediate neighborhood, these programs, along with Father Callan's "electric" performances in the pulpit, attracted many young people from neighborhoods outside the parish boundaries. Corpus Christi soon gained a reputation as an activist, youthful, liberal church with a character distinctly different from traditional Catholic Churches, both in terms of outlook and in terms of ceremony (the Our Father was sung rather than recited, the sign of peace was extended, etc.). As its reputation grew, so did its membership, and by the mid-1990s, Corpus Christi regularly pulled in over 5,000 parishioners on any given weekend, from all walks of life, but largely from middle- and upper-class neighborhoods and suburbs. These wealthier parishioners contributed generously to Corpus Christi, which annually ranked among Rochester's top dioceses in contributions; these contributions went in large part to finance the outreach ministries.

As Corpus Christi grew, however, so did its differences with the Church hierarchy. Father Callan preached a "liberal" message to his audience. Departing from Catholic doctrine, he espoused three messages in particular which drew him into conflict with the Catholic hierarchy. First, he elevated Mary Ramerman, a member of the congregation, to associate pastor, and assigned her duties in the Mass that Catholic doctrine reserves for priests. She was also allowed to wear an alb and half-stole, two garments that are symbolic of the priesthood. In such a way, Callan promoted equality of the sexes in pastoral and ritual duties. Second, he called upon individuals of all faiths to take part in the sacrament of the Eucharist, including divorcés and Protestants, who were not, under Catholic doctrine, permitted to take part in the sacrament. Finally, he promoted an active ministry to gays and lesbians, and adopted a sympathetic stance toward homosexuals, in opposition to Church teaching on homosexuality. Because of his positions on these three issues, Corpus Christi drew large numbers of women, Protestants, and homosexuals, while at the same time rousing the anger of traditional Catholics. These traditional Catholics sent letters to the Bishop, Cardinal, and Pope, com-

plaining about the services at Corpus Christi.

As the years went by, Callan became increasingly vocal about these issues. He preached not only to his congregation, but to the entire Catholic Church as well, publishing a book, *Can't Hold Back the Spring*, in 1997, which offered a scathing indictment of Church doctrine. The publishing of this book, in which Callan compared the Church to "a Cadillac with four flat tires [and] a parking ticket for staying too long in the same place" (Callan, 1997:214) caused a stir in the offices of his superiors (Wentzel, 1998).

It was only a matter of time before the conflict came to a head. On August 16, 1998, Father Callan was advised of his reassignment to a parish near Elmira, New York. Callan announced his reassignment-or, in his words, his "firing"-at Mass that weekend. The congregation, stunned, immediately began to file protest to all levels of the institution. Callan preached his last Mass in early September, and a "transition team" took over administrative duties while a new pastor, the Rev. Daniel McMillin, settled in. The transition team dismissed Mary Ramerman in October, after she refused to accept a less prominent role at the altar. Shortly thereafter, she began to lead a "support service" on Tuesday nights at a nearby Presbyterian church. Meanwhile, a "Spring Committee" was established to continue the fight for the return of Father Callan and for the issues he stood for.

On December 9, Mr. Tom Riley was installed as "interim parish administrator," without notification of, or input from, the parish staff. Three days later, the parish staff (which includes the heads of the outreach ministries and other administrators and administrative assistants) delivered a public vote of no-confidence in the new church leadership in the form of a letter distributed at the Mass; the following day, six of them were fired. At this point, members began abandoning Corpus Christi in droves; attendance waned to eight hundred people a weekend. Father Callan, who had been suspended from his duties as a Catholic priest for refusing to sign a pledge not to contravene Catholic doctrine, began attending and conducting the support services as an assistant pastor to Mary Ramerman. The alternate services soon spread to include a Mass on Sunday. In late February 1999, the Diocese issued a proclamation that the

"New Faith Community" had lapsed into schism, and had thereby excommunicated itself from the Catholic Church.

Argument

The case at Corpus Christi raises a number of interesting questions about the process of schism and the ways in which schismatic movements are able to successfully establish themselves. Specifically, in studying the schism at Corpus Christi, I hope to address two primary questions. First, I hope to reexamine our understanding of the process of schism. Current understandings of schism do not adequately address the issues that attend the establishment of new sects, often dwelling on the set-up and ignoring entirely the follow-through. Steed (1986) has developed a four-stage model for schisms that broadens the avenues open to researchers. Yet in many cases, it may not open the avenues wide enough. The New Faith Community provides us with an excellent opportunity to test Steed's process model and to determine what, if any, changes should be made to it to allow for better scholarly pursuit.

Secondly, I hope to better demonstrate the important role resources play in the establishment of schismatic movements. Harrison and Maniha (1978) have noted that schismatic movements have difficulty succeeding in establishing themselves if the parent church has a strong hold over the resources (i.e., ideological authority, financial capital, etc.) necessary to build a legitimate alternate church. What role do resources play? How do secessionist movements (and their institutional counterparts) mobilize them? What sorts of resources are necessary to create a successful schism? To address these questions, I draw on work by social movement researchers (Williams 1995, Kniss and Chaves 1995, Hannigan 1991, Zald and McCarthy 1987). These scholars have attempted to apply the ideas of social movement theory to religious institutions. Williams (1995) provides a good starting point with his idea of "cultural resources" as a key commodity in the mobilization and success of social movements. The case of Corpus Christi and its schism is an excellent opportunity to examine how the breakaway movement's leadership was able to mobilize the structural and cultural resources available to them, allowing them to

successfully challenge the hierarchy's authority, and in the end redefine and "co-opt" the cultural resources for their new religious movement.

Greeley and Dillon have both explored the reasons why Catholics stay in the Church even though they disagree with its doctrine. In doing so, both scholars discuss the importance of symbol and ritual in Catholics' conception of their belief. By examining the use and appropriation of cultural resources-including symbol and ritual-we can come to understand how these powerful adhesives can become equally powerful solvents in the hands of the right schismatic movement. By examining the way resources are mobilized by schismatic movements, we may come to understand why people decide to leave an established church for a new one.

The Correlates of Schism

Sociologists have long been fascinated by denominationalism. Doubtless, this is because schisms present an excellent opportunity to study both the social dynamics of religion and the dynamics of religious institutions. As such, studies of schisms have tended to focus on either the social conditions which underlie religious conflict, or on schism's intradenominational (institutional) roots.

Most analyses of schism of the first sort trace their roots to H. Richard Niebuhr's classic study *The Social Sources of Denominationalism* (1972 (1929)). According to Niebuhr, schisms arise not from differences of opinion alone, but from the social divergences which underlie these differences. Most sectarian movements tend to be lower-class movements that occur within middle-class, bourgeois churches; when the church fails to transcend social conditions which perpetuate societal inequalities, schism can result as congregants seek new forms of moral authority outside of the "system." As a result, Niebuhr believes most sects (the results of schism) are lower-class phenomena in conflict with the larger society.

This view, generally speaking, still is very much the standard wisdom. Bainbridge and Stark (1980), for example, basically paraphrase Niebuhr when they define sects as being in a high state of tension with their sociocultural environment; by this they simply mean that the sect

rejects the moral standards of its society and separates itself socially from the rest of the world. Similarly, Vrga & Fahey (1970) found evidence that a schism in the Serbian Orthodox Church of America was not a result of doctrinal differences, but instead was caused by various "psycho-social" factors between the differing factions, revolving more around issues of ethnicity, social background, and political and class aspirations.

Those theorists who are more interested in the ways in which conflict within the religious institution promotes schism have focused on other structural factors. Shin & Park (1988), in their study of schisms in Korean-American Protestant churches, found evidence that suggests that schisms may be linked to the congregational nature of the churches' organization. Competition for lay leadership positions and ambitions of individual ministers tended to precipitate those schisms. Steed (1986) found the qualities of religious administrators (in particular, bishops) played a large role in the outcome of secessionist movements. This, she notes, has much to do with the bishop's legitimacy as an authority figure-"when making the decision to leave or stay, members are also facing the question of whether or not they can continue to accept the authority of the parent church" (1986:346).

On the other hand, Liebman, Sutton, and Wuthnow (1988) found that while structure and denomination do not affect schism likelihood, the size of a congregation can be a good predictor (the larger the congregation, the more likely). They also found evidence that churches with links to liberal denominational federations (such as the National Council of Churches) were less likely to fall into schism than those without. They propose that "federation linkage may operate independently of doctrine to confer a broader sense of legitimacy and collective significance on the member denomination" (1988:351).

More recently, some theorists have reexamined the role of doctrine in secessionist movements, challenging Vrga and Fahey's proposition that doctrine is not a major source of schism. For instance, Zuckerman (1997) found that differences over doctrinal interpretations of gender are often a legitimate cause of schism in their own right.

In all of these cases, sociologists have sought to find connections between schismatic movements and the environmental conditions which

surround them. Unfortunately, although scholars have performed a great deal of research to uncover the sources of schismatic movements, few have studied the ways in which secessionist movements establish themselves following a split from a "mainstream" denomination. Many sociologists seem to lose interest in schismatic movements once they have set off on their own. This has left us with a gaping hole in our understanding of a vital question: how do new religious movements arise from existing ones?

Of the few scholars who have tackled this question, Mary Lou Steed's (1986) approach stands out. She believes that it is important to understand schism as a process which occurs in an organizational context. Her study of schism among Protestant Episcopal churches led her to develop a theory of schism which incorporates four stages: 1) disagreement and factionalization, 2) escalation to open conflict over the disagreement, 3) resolution of the conflict, in which the losing side leaves to form a new church, and 4) the formation of a new church. Most importantly, Steed's study opens the door to a study of sectarianism that extends beyond mere root causes.

Steed's observations provide a sensible context for Harrison & Maniha's (1978) observation that parent organizations have greater control over separatist movements if the separatists need to acquire resources from the parent organization in order to succeed. That is to say, there appear to be stopgaps in the process of schism that can prevent the foundation of a new church. If these stopgaps exist, it is worthwhile to study the ways in which they are overcome (or not overcome) by schismatic movements in their struggle to establish themselves as viable and vibrant religious traditions in their own right. In the terms of this case study, the question is not merely, "How did conflict arise at Corpus Christi," but instead, "How did the New Faith Community successfully form a new and successful church?"[1]

Schisms as Social Movements

One way to look at this problem is through the lens of social movement theory. Over the last twenty-five years, the study of social move-

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[1] Since the New Faith Community is an outgrowth of Corpus Christi parish, in this paper, I will use the terms Corpus Christi and New Faith Community more or less interchangeably.

ments has grown as sociologists have tried to understand the ways in which movements and groups of people are able to mobilize resources available to them in order to advance their causes. More importantly, in recent years, sociologists of religion have sought to use the insights gleaned from social movement research to illuminate the processes that occur in the ecclesiastical realm, and in particular in the field of intradenominational conflict. Katzenstein (1998) has shown the possibilities of the study of intra-institutional protest groups as social movements in her study of feminists in both the army and the Catholic Church. The study of schismatic movements as social movements fits nicely with this precedent.

Many sociologists have raised their voices to encourage a rapprochement between the sociology of religion and other fields (Hannigan, 1991; Kniss and Chaves 1995). Kniss and Chaves, in particular, have been strong advocates of this sort of cross-fertilization. They propose that social movement theories be applied to the sociology of religion. In their opinion, studying religious conflict as a product of groups rather than of individuals provides a more valid and insightful view of intradenominational conflict. They demonstrate the salience of resource mobilization theory as applied to the field, and cite works such as Ammerman (1990) to demonstrate the potential rewards to be gained by examining the resources at issue in conflicts within churches. Yet they gloss the fact that the resources traditionally studied as part of social movement theory-capital, time, manpower-fail to provide an adequate explanation for intradenominational conflict.

Rhys Williams (1995), however, fills in this gap nicely with his reconceptualization of resources, broadening the traditional resource pool to include "cultural resources." Williams argues that cultural resources play an expressive role as the tools used by movements as part of their overall strategy. These resources are not simply concrete objects, but rather include ideas, symbols, and expression. Williams notes that cultural resources differ from more traditional ("structural") resources in that they are "contextual and public" (1995:127, emphasis in original). This means that (1) their meanings are subject to change depending on time and place, and (2) that they are effective only when situated in a pub-

lic context. Because of these two factors, cultural resources must be understood as "social level constructions that may be wielded by specific actors but depend on consumption and interpretation by others for their effectiveness...because cultural resources are public properties, control of them is tenuous; rival interpretations may easily arise. Who controls cultural resources is a contest over who sets the terms of their meaning" (1995:127). In other words, the public nature of the cultural resource means that it is open to reinterpretation and reappropriation.

Fred Kniss (1996) has established that cultural resources-ideas and symbols-are extremely important in understanding intradenominational conflict. He rejects the notion that arguments over ideas are mere "epiphenomena" of conflict, instead arguing that "ideas and symbols have a significant impact on both the process (the effectiveness of rhetorical strategies) and outcome (the likelihood of schism or compromise) of conflict events" (1996:21). Kniss divides cultural resources into two categories, concrete and abstract. He argues that each type of resource plays a different role in the process of schism.

Concrete resources, according to Kniss, tend to be easily recognizable and difficult to divide. They include things as diverse as the church structures themselves, outreach programs, liturgies, church practices, and other symbolic expressions of the faith. Because they are less divisible, struggles for control of these concrete resources will tend to be all-or-nothing battles. Most conflict, says Kniss, arises over concrete resources, and in most cases, concrete resources' indivisibility and uncompromisability will tend to lead the conflict to culminate in a complete break.

Abstract resources tend to be vague or broad, including things such as principles, schools of thought, and ideologies. Kniss uses "communalism" and "nonconformity" as examples of abstract resources. Abstract resources are subject to debate, because of their vagueness, and as such tend to be manipulable by both sides of any conflict. Abstract resources are more easily mobilized because of their conceptual character, and hence are extremely useful for "strategic mobilization"-the development of rhetoric and reasoning in support of a side. While arguments will tend to be fought over concrete resources, they will be more likely be carried out in terms of abstract resources. In Kniss' study of intradenomina-

tional conflict among Mennonites, he notes that two conflicts over Sunday schools (a concrete resource) led to schism, while a conflict over legitimacy ("a more abstract resource" (1996:21)) led to a compromise. Kniss also notes that abstract resources are more or less useful in rhetorical arguments depending on their salience to the religious group in conflict. This means that an abstract resource must be relevant in the context of the conflict situation; this relevance is largely dependent on time and place.

Taken together, Williams and Kniss provide a view of cultural resources as ideal factors open to public discussion. Depending on the "concreteness" of the resource, the debate is more or less subject to compromise, as each side struggles to control the resource. In the process, additional abstract cultural resources may be called upon to mobilize support among the audience.

This analysis presents a blueprint for ways in which cultural resources can play a major role in intradenominational conflicts. Mark Chaves (1997) has shown how this blueprint works in practice. In his study of women's ordination, he demonstrated that "formal denominational policies about women's ordination possess a symbolic significance over and above whatever practical and pragmatic import they may have for the internal operations of denominations" (1997:111). That is to say, women's ordination took on a disproportionate symbolic significance for the church and its members, "part of a larger process by which denominational identities are constructed." In his study, women's ordination became a cultural resource in the struggle between conservative and modernizing forces in the church.

The interpretability and contextuality of cultural resources make them important for two other reasons-they are important conduits for emotional responses, and they can serve as a source for group-building vocabularies. Jasper (1998) has distinguished between affective (strong and abiding) and reactive (transitory) emotions, and argues that both types play important roles in protest movements. Emotions "affect whether a movement continues or declines, and when," writes Jasper (1998:405). Resources, it stands to reason, can affect emotional responses from individuals. Certain cultural resources (such as symbols and ritu-

als) can induce affective emotions such as pride or hostility when properly mobilized, while a conflict that arises over a cultural resource (such as Sunday School) might lead to a reactive emotional response, such as outrage and its attendant tendencies toward blame and punishment (Jasper 1998:406). In both cases, the emotional responses triggered by the deployment of cultural resources can be powerful motivators to individuals in social movements.

Similarly, cultural resources can be crucial in the development of a "vocabulary" that is in turn used by the schismatic movement. Vocabularies are "common definition[s] of a social problem and a common prescription for solving it" (Snow *et al.*, 1986; cited in Jasper 1998:413). Robert Benford's study (1993) of the nuclear disarmament movement highlights the importance of understanding these collective terminologies that social movements use to advance their agendas. According to Benford, these vocabularies are integral in mobilizing and recruiting a base of support. Ellingson's study (1995) of abolitionist discourse in antebellum Cincinnati seems to support the significance Benford places upon the vocabularies used by various movements. Ellingson's study demonstrates the dialectical relationship between events and vocabularies. He demonstrates the ways in which a social movement (in his case, abolitionism) draws upon events and incidents in its environment (such as race riots) to advance its agenda. These studies highlight the importance of understanding how social movements develop and manipulate a vocabulary as a cultural resource in the context of a larger public debate. Being able to refer to cultural resources can make the formulation of vocabularies easier; similarly, cultural resources can often work their way into the vocabularies of a schismatic movement.

Cultural resources thus seem integral to the inner dynamics of protest movements in general, and schismatic movements in particular. However, although the distinction between concrete and abstract cultural resources (Kniss) and the concepts of emotions and vocabularies are valid and useful in understanding how resource mobilization determines whether a schism happens, like so many other theories, they do not help us understand how a new movement establishes itself. We must extend these arguments to include the final stages of schism and the establish-

ment of a new church. To complete this picture, we must look at schism as both a social movement and as a process, and for that, we must return to Mary Lou Steed.

Schism as Movement and Process: An Integrated Approach

As discussed earlier, Mary Lou Steed has argued (1986) that schism must be viewed as a process. Religious splits do not simply occur instantaneously. Instead, argues Steed, a church in schism proceeds through four stages. During the first stage, disagreement arises among members over an issue. The second stage begins when these disagreements "escalate into conflict" (Steed 1986:344). The third stage occurs when the conflict is resolved, and the losing side's leadership departs to form a new church. This is the stage which is commonly understood to be the "schism." Steed argues that there is then an important fourth step, which she describes as "the actual formation of secessionist congregations within the new denomination" (1986:344). In other words, the process of schism is not complete until a self-sustaining congregation has formed within the schismatic movement.

Steed argues that it is necessary to understand schism in these terms because "conceptualizing secession as a final stage in the process of schism highlights the significance of considering the organizational context within which the angry church member decides whether to exit or remain loyal" (1986:344). But beyond this point, it is also important to understand schism as a process because only in doing so can one identify the resources that were marshaled by the schismatic movement which enabled it to become a self-sustaining congregation. As Steed has noted, schism does not automatically lead to a successful new church. To understand how a schismatic movement establishes itself, one must study the way it mobilizes and utilizes the cultural resources available to it, and for that, one must view schism as a process.

Viewing schism as a process also fundamentally changes the way we look at resource mobilization. I propose that cultural resources function differently at different stages of the schism process. During the first two stages of conflict, Kniss' symbolic division between abstract and con-

crete resources holds, and is important in determining whether a compromise can be reached in stage two. When the conflict is resolved, however, and stage three (the schism itself) begins, I argue, the distinction between abstract and concrete resources becomes irrelevant. Both abstract and concrete resources become important cultural resources in the struggle for establishment and legitimacy. A successful schismatic movement needs not only to gain authority and control over the abstract ideas and principles that underlie its movement, but also to gain authority and control over a critical mass of the concrete resources, *regardless of whether they "won" or "lost" the battle over them in the conflict stage*. That is to say, even though a schismatic movement may have "lost" in its conflict with the institution, it must still gain authority and control over salient resources if it is to succeed in establishing itself. To use Corpus Christi as an example, schismatic leaders had to not only lay claim to the abstract ideals (inclusiveness, the nature of God), but also the concrete resources (the liturgy, the Mass, the community), even though in their conflict with the Catholic hierarchy, they ultimately "lost" their battle to reinterpret those concrete resources.

Since the successful schismatic movement must control not only abstract but also concrete resources, it makes sense to consider them as cultural resources in general. Yet the term cultural resources does not seem specific enough in describing the importance these resources have to a schismatic movement. There are plenty of cultural resources that are not salient to the schismatic movement and its potential followers, and which as such rarely are taken into consideration or worked into the rhetorical vocabulary of the movement. Instead, it is important, during the establishment stage, to consider these cultural resources as *symbolic resources*. By symbolic resources, I mean cultural resources with particular salience or resonance within the conflicted community, usually rooted in the church tradition. Symbolic resources can be abstract or concrete, but in the end their importance lies in their emotional impact upon the target audience (potential recruits in the old congregation), and in their resonance within both the siring religious tradition and the new schismatic movement. The success or failure in using symbolic resources to create a contextual emotional connection between the old tradition and the new

movement is of great importance in determining the success or failure of a schismatic movement. Importantly, symbolic resources include authority; I will discuss this at length below.

In addition to symbolic resources, schismatic movements in the third stage of schism must gain control of the economic and support resources necessary to establish themselves physically. Ideology and symbolic resources alone are unlikely to win the hearts, souls, and pocketbooks of recruits. There must be the prospect of success in very elementary terms to convince recruits that a schismatic movement is likely to succeed. A disorganized movement, without economic or political resources, is unlikely to last into the fourth stage of schism, the successful establishment of a church. These resources include finances, locations for services, promotional material, outside support, and organization. For ease of presentation, I will refer to these economic and political resources as *capital resources* - the necessary non-ideological capital for the creation of a schismatic movement. Capital resources become important as stage three begins, once the new movement begins trying to establish itself as a distinct congregation.

Beyond symbolic and capital resource mobilization, I argue that a schismatic movement requires a catalytic event to pass from stage three to stage four. A schismatic movement, once it has marshaled its symbolic and capital resources, needs a startling event to convince wavering recruits to ultimately join the schismatic movement. This catalytic event must have the transformative ability of evoking the symbolic resources mobilized by the schismatic movement to such an extent, that an emotional bond is created between a large number of recruits and the schismatic movement. At the same time, the catalytic event is one that so extremely damages the authority of the parent institution that there becomes no reason for recruits to remain in the old institution. The recruits, thus "activated" by the catalytic event, and assured of the schismatic movement's viability by its capital resources, will make the final switch from the old tradition to the new movement. The catalytic event, if successful, marks the transition from the third (transitional) stage, to the fourth (established) stage of secession.

The rest of this essay demonstrates how symbolic resources, capi-

tal resources, and a catalytic event all came into play in the successful schism at Corpus Christi in the fall and winter of 1998. Drawing on interviews and documentary evidence (see Appendix), I begin by discussing briefly the doctrinal disagreements at issue at Corpus Christi, and by examining the abstract and cultural resources which were the source of the conflict. This discussion represents a look at the first two stages of schism. Following that, I examine in depth the symbolic resources the schismatic movement mobilized, and the way in which they mobilized them, followed by a parallel discussion of the capital resources mobilized by the New Faith Community. Finally, I analyze the catalytic event-in this case, the firing of the Corpus Christi outreach directors-to illuminate the ways in which this event was crucial in establishing the schismatic movement.[2]

Official Church Teaching

Both the Catholic Church and the New Faith Community agree that this dispute was over three key doctrinal disagreements-the role of women in church leadership; the stance of the church towards gays and lesbians; and eligibility to receive the Eucharist. This conflict was made more prominent because of the institutional structure of the Catholic Church, and its attendant doctrine.

The Catholic Church has a very strong, centralized organizing structure. Priests are responsible to Bishops, who are responsible to Cardinals, who are responsible to the Pope, who is, by Church tradition, in direct communication with God. As such, decisions made by the Pope are treated as law within the church. Orders are passed down the "chain of command." The hierarchy has all power to control offices within its structure, to ordain priests, and to assign and reassign them.

The Catholic Church has adopted a strong stand against allowing women to take on clerical leadership roles within the Church. While it supports women's leadership in lay roles, it frowns upon their participation in any priestly duties. The Vatican arguments take three forms. First,

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[2] "Schismatic movement" as used in this text is defined as those individuals who had made the decision at the indicated time to pursue a distancing from the Catholic Church. It should not be read simply as the movement's leadership; rather, it represents the combined effort and attitude of all schismatics.

they argue Christ did not call women to be apostles, and that ordaining women would go counter to his intentions. Second, they argue that women cannot take on the role of Christ during the Eucharistic ceremony because they do not physically resemble him. Third, they argue that women cannot be priests because it is Church tradition to have an exclusively male priesthood (Dillon, 1999:61). In spite of outcries from many Catholics, the Church has remained steadfast in its teachings on this issue.

The Church has been equally firm in its unwillingness to tolerate homosexuality. Because homosexual union cannot transmit life, the Church views homosexuality as a sin against natural law, it has said that "homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered and can in no case be approved of" (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith 1976:488, cited in Dillon 1999:56). Homosexuality is viewed as a self-indulgent, deviant behavior that is not to be tolerated. The Church has insisted that homosexuals abandon homosexual behavior, although it has suggested that "the orientation is not immoral in itself" (Dillon, 1999:59-60). The Church's position remains firm that homosexuality is a sin, that homosexuals should not have homosexual sex, and that movements that embrace homosexuality should be frowned upon.

The Church's position on the Eucharist is that one must understand the theological significance of the ceremony before taking part. The Church has a long Eucharistic tradition, and the sacrament of First Communion is preceded by an education into the ritual significance of the event. Catholics believe that the Eucharistic ceremony transforms the bread and wine into the real body and blood of Christ, so that the Eucharist becomes "a memorial of his death and resurrection: a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity, a paschal banquet in which Christ is consumed, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us" (Vatican Council, 1962:16). More importantly, however, Catholics "do not come to the Eucharist simply as isolated individuals, but rather as persons who are members of a community" (Shannon, 1999:4). Taking part in the Eucharist is something reserved for members of the Catholic community, who adhere to Catholic doctrine and understand the significance of Catholic rituals. Hence, the distribu-

tion of the Eucharist to those who are not members of the faith (i.e., Catholicism, not Christianity) is improper, and calls into question "how we understand the Eucharist, [and the] process of the Christian initiation of adults" (Clark, 1999:2). The Catholic Church officially refuses to give the Eucharist to non-Catholics.

Resources and Conflict: The First Two Stages of Schism

Corpus Christi had been building its own theology apart from the Catholic Church almost from the time of Callan's arrival in 1976. While it retained much of traditional Catholicism, it differed from Church theology in three key areas: the nature of God, equality within the Church, and lay leadership. These three general concepts were the abstract resources the New Faith Community had mobilized leading up to the schism, which led to the conflict over the more concrete resources of Mary Ramerman, the Eucharist, and the gay ministries.

The Nature of God

First, the parish at Corpus Christi had developed a very strong notion of God as a lover, rather than a judge. Many of the members who eventually decided to split and join the New Faith Community indicated that they felt very strongly that their understanding of God had undergone a radical change at Corpus Christi. Many members drew stark contrasts between their two conceptualizations of God:

> *I hear things that sound right, that make sense, that make me feel good: that I'm loved and accepted, that whatever I've done that I think is terrible is not so horrible in the eyes of God, that I'm accepted and that I'm OK, that all is well. These are the things that I grew up not hearing. There, I heard that if you didn't go to Mass, it was a mortal sin. I grew up feeling judged, and if I wasn't perfect, I wouldn't go to heaven. Here, I am forgiven.*

> *I was afraid of God. I had learned I was going to Hell by the end*

of the first grade. I felt flawed and weak. I'm a recovering drug and alcohol addict; I spent many years doing things God didn't like, so I never pursued a relationship. I started to go about fifteen years ago, when I started to search. And it was great, because it was a place I went where I felt that I was OK...I walked out feeling in touch with what's good about me. We weren't talking about the weeds, we were talking about the seed...The God I've gotten to know through Corpus [is] there to help with the shortcomings. God is there to help me. Before, I turned my back because I felt I was going to Hell. I would never talk to God. I was breaking his rules, and I sure wouldn't talk about my faults with my jailer.

The recharacterization of God from "jailer" to "helper" was a key draw to Corpus Christi. Almost every person I interviewed characterized God as friendly, warm, open, or forgiving. As one woman said, "Our God doesn't punish you." This statement reveals two interesting things. First, it indicates that the judging aspect of God is almost completely removed from the collective theology of the New Faith Community. Second, the use of "our God" reinforces the idea that the God preached at Corpus Christi was utterly different from the God preached in other Catholic churches.

The God preached at Corpus Christi was not only forgiving, but also somewhat romantic. Reminiscent of some Catholic devotional poetry of the seventeenth century, one parishioner at New Faith gushed about God, "He's my best friend, my lover, my mentor." Another echoed these sentiments: "There's something very intimate about that church there. There's an intimacy, almost a romantic feeling about it." This romantic, intimate understanding of God paved the way for a more emotional attachment to God, and by association to the church and to the community. Jasper calls this sort of bond "reciprocal"- a tie of "friendship, love, solidarity, and loyalty"-and suggests that it "yields many of the pleasures of protest" (1998:417). Members of the New Faith Community loved the God they "came to know" at Corpus Christi and took pride, if not pleasure, in defending their vision of God and God's love.

Secondly, and perhaps most important to the understanding of the conflict, was the idea held by most members of Corpus Christi about equality within the church. Corpus Christi made a point of being far more congregational in its parish structure, in ways that deviated considerably from the standards of the episcopal hierarchy. The three "issues" that led to Callan's ouster were, to a large extent, outgrowths of the heavy emphasis placed upon equality within the community at Corpus Christi.

This equality was rooted in Callan's determined efforts to equalize the status between clergy and laity. In his book, *Can't Hold Back the Spring*, Callan recalls that he "didn't want to live higher than the people I was serving" (1997:68). This sentiment was picked up by members of the congregation. Some respondents specifically noted, with appreciation, Callan's efforts to be just another part of the community:

> *One reason Father Jim only wears the collar at funerals, and not normally, is that he feels it sets him apart, makes people feel they should be deferent to him. But he thinks he shouldn't be treated that way.*

> *When I was a girl, I worked in the rectory, and I was basically this priest's servant. But Jim is a person that-our parish priests were elitist and thought they were great because they were a priest. That always turned me off...Jim, it's been said, you can tell him by his shoes. And if you look at his shoes, they're not shiny and polished, they're worn and secondhand.*

Other members showed a similar appreciation for keeping the clergy and the laity close. There was a general aversion to "pomp and circumstance" many members felt characterized the clergy in the Catholic Church. One woman, who was a former nun, shared Callan's sentiments as a member of the laity:

> *When I became a nun, I began to see a separation between religious and non-religious-the laity-and that bothered me. I saw dis-*

crimination against lay people. We nuns were supposedly worthy
of more respect. I became very acutely aware that we were living
in beautiful convents while we were supposedly living a vow of
poverty and helping the poor, and it didn't make any sense.

Yet even those who had no clerical background seemed to feel the same. Said one man, describing the sort of church he had been seeking when he came to Rochester, "We had studied the church history, and had had some experience in Latin America, where it was more a church of equals, the spirit of Vatican II, with a priest of the people." The desire for a more equal relationship between priest and people formed the groundwork for Corpus Christi's theology of equality.

The notion of equality between the congregation and the leadership did much to establish an atmosphere of diffidence in dictates from the organizational hierarchy. Many individuals couched their anger at the church's actions in terms of control and service. In its most basic form of this theme, one man said simply, "I wish they would serve people and not their hierarchy." In its most vehement form, one woman simply could not contain her anger:

Ugh! Rome! The Pope needs to die. He'd be much happier that
way. He belongs in Heaven. I have no use for Rome, none. I know
little about them except that they're patriarchal, dominant, and
oppressive. They have lots of gold with people starving everywhere.
I have very little use for Rome.

Here, the inequality of the hierarchy is singled out as a source of mistrust. The perceived inequality of the Church structure, laid out during the first two stages of schism, would prove to be a major reinforcing factor in the ultimate rejection of ecclesiastical authority by the New Faith Community.

In my interviews, it became increasingly clear that the idea of equality lay behind all three of the "issues" that led to the schism. This is perhaps most visible in the conflict over the role of women, and specifically of Mary Ramerman, the pastoral assistant at Corpus Christi, in lead-

ership. Most respondents portrayed the issue as a question of equality between the sexes, in one way or another:

> *Mary is beautiful, and she delivers beautiful homilies. I think, "Why not?" They're as equal as men; they have the same right.*

> *I want the church to be inclusive, not one that discriminates against women.*

> *Women are just as capable. The rules are just part of the culture that was there at the Biblical times. The authors wrote from their perspective. Women, I think, have a lot to contribute in terms of their life experiences.*

> *I need to see women and men together at the altar- not just a man or just a woman, but both. It's balanced. It balances my spirituality to see both held up in the same place for all to see.*

Although not all of the responses were as direct as the first one, each quote demonstrates a different way in which Corpus Christi parishioners viewed the gender issue as an issue of equality. The second response was extremely typical. Many respondents talked about "discrimination," which implies an inequality between the sexes. The third response is representative of others, who were concerned with ensuring the equal capabilities of men and women were put into full effect. Still others personalized the issue, and talked about their need to see "balance," another type of equality. In the fourth response, the subtext is that in a position of power in the Church, there needs to be equal representation to ensure full spiritual participation.

Similarly, there was a concern about equality in the Church's relationship with gays and lesbians. Some respondents were clearly not entirely comfortable with homosexuals, but these same respondents had convinced themselves of the "rightness" of their position by deferring to the idea of equality.

I don't feel I'm anyone to say that you're not welcome, or we won't have a ministry for gays, we'll just sweep it under the rug. I'm not totally comfortable with it, but I definitely think they have a place in our church. They're as welcome as I am...I don't see how God could frown on a relationship of any kind.

For this man, viewing ministry to homosexuals as an equality issue helped him overcome the fact that he wasn't "totally comfortable with it." Others mentioned how homosexuals were equal to heterosexuals in other contexts, such as society at large:

I used to go to debates in college where we would debate if homosexuality was right or wrong, and their arguments were baseless. To get to know some gays-You know, they say they're sick, but if they're sick, how can they be doctors and lawyers, be fully functional members of society? How can they have relationships with the community? People with mental problems have deficiencies, but they [gays & lesbians] don't. That moral thing, I think, is just shoved down our throats.

Yet others centered the issue in theological terms. Here, one man presents a rationale for the equality of gays and lesbians.

One of the Beatitudes says, "I am the Lord, lover of all life. I do not hate anything I have created." If that's the way that we're created, I think that the lifetime commitment option is a good one. I don't think that the act itself is bad, if you can do it faithfully with one person. We are married to the Lord, and we have a partner for the journey. Marriage is just a step along the way to help the partners become more holy. Why can't that be true for gays, too? We just push them outside.

Some just keyed into the emotional dynamics of equality:

Would you like a priest to say to you, "Your son can't come in

because he's gay"? They love; they need a place, too.

Whether theological, rational, or emotional, all respondents were in favor of actively including gays and lesbians in the parish. In all these cases, acceptance of gays and lesbians was understood to be a product of viewing all persons as equal, regardless of sexual orientation.

The third "issue," the distribution of the Eucharist, was slightly more complicated. Although equality between Catholics and Protestants is still a dominant theme in rationalizing the practice, the issue of Church control and doctrine comes heavily into play. For many, the rule that only Catholics can receive the Eucharist seemed unnecessary and unreasonable:

> *I think the Eucharist is a beautiful thing, where you invite all up to be fed. Really, it's a reward, a gift from Jesus to his children. I don't think that's how it's presented in the institutional Catholic Church. Jim likes to say that the church should be like this [arms open], with its arms open. But I think the institution is like this [arms closed]. And the Eucharist, the most important part, is very closed. It's like the church is saying, "Only we can have this. Ha, ha, ha." I remember as a child learning that we were going to heaven because we were Catholics and others weren't, and I thought, "Wow, that's cool!" Now, I look and I think, "How ridiculous. How controlling." It's ludicrous. I still think the institutional church would have you believe that.*

> *I would prefer that. It was not meant to be restrictive. At the Last Supper, Jesus didn't say, "Take this, all of you, when you understand, and drink from it." I don't think you need to have rules that exclude. The church, at its best, doesn't. But now we have ways to distinguish. It'll take some time to reconcile...I see it as a real presence, because of my upbringing. I'm not worried if the person next to me sees it as a symbol. If it helps them to live a holy life, I want as many to receive it as want it.*

We went to Harrod's once, and there was a sign on the door that said, "No torn jeans, no cameras, no anything." Well, the church was like that: you had to kneel, you couldn't let the communion touch your teeth. The rules made no sense. We were at Mass at a private home a year ago, and we were all having something to eat, and Jim said, keep eating and drinking, and I had forgotten about the rule that you had to fast for an hour before taking communion. Why? Are you afraid Christ will mix with my donut? And what if I run out and eat afterwards?

For these individuals, the inequality is heinous because it seems unnecessary, "ridiculous," "controlling," and "exclusionary." The last comment in particular shows how the members of the New Faith Community take pride in their willingness to throw off these exclusionary rules in the name of equality.

Members of the New Faith Community believe almost to a person that the Eucharist should be open to everybody, regardless of creed. Many of them base this argument in the Bible. Probably the most common argument advanced in this regard is the one advanced by a man who said, "There were no Catholics at the Last Supper, but everyone still got part of the host." In appealing to the symbolic source, these parishioners found rationalization and inspiration for their stand for equality.

Other members supported equality between Protestants and Catholics at the Eucharistic table for other reasons. Some had spouses of a different religious background. Others were adamant that their "official" affiliation was less important than the way they felt spiritually. Many respondents, too, echoed the sentiments of the following man:

When I studied theology, we talked about there being a sign in each sacrament. There was a grace there, and each sacrament has the power to bring about its sign. For the Eucharist, it's unity. In the church, there never has been that unity, because we haven't allowed people to bring it. Maybe a third of the people who come to our services are not Catholic. United, though, we are one body. Think of what it would do if it were open to everyone. We dwell on our differences, but those are only things we see, not God.

These members believed that through Eucharistic equality, there was the possibility to achieve unity among all Christian denominations-to re-achieve "small-c catholicism." Members of Corpus Christi believe very strongly in the veracity of their message, and view the Eucharist as a means of uniting all believers in the worship of their God.

In addition to unrestricted distribution of the host, the use of grape juice as an alternative to the wine at the Eucharistic ceremony had also taken on a symbolic sense of inclusion and equality, this time between recovering addicts and non-addicts:

> *I think the grape juice at communion is a very big thing. You know, many of the people I work with are recovering addicts, and to be able to enter a community where allowances were made to enable them to take communion in the full sense of communion was so important to them. And they say we were breaking the rules? Well, it was a bad rule.*

Again, the issues of authority, equality, and justification all come into play in this ceremonial addition. The removal of the grape juice, while not one of the big three "issues," turned into a rallying point for the community largely because of its symbolic importance as a symbol of inclusivity and equality.

Lay Leadership

The third important abstract resource that was mobilized prior to the schism was the notion of lay members as leaders in the community. One of the major reasons why events escalated so rapidly after the firing of Callan was that parishioners felt that they were losing control over the direction of the congregation. Indeed, some of the key events that occurred between August and December came about precisely because of the importance members of Corpus Christi placed on being actively

involved in leading the church.[3] These events included the establishment of the Spring Committee and the vote of no-confidence by the outreach directors. One woman, describing the change that took place following the installation of the transition team, recalled:

> No one knew what was happening anymore. Before, we always knew, because we ran it as a community. We all knew what would be happening. They came in and just took control. We had information only because the Spring Committee was set up.

The abrupt end to running the church "as a community" came as a severe system shock to many members of the congregation. One man likened the style after the arrival of the transition team to a "dictatorship," and insisted that it was "against what we had learned"-namely, that the laity were supposed to have an important voice in church affairs. Some members tried to maintain this relationship with the new pastor, Father Daniel McMillin, but were rebuffed.

> Dan used to say, I have this plan, I have this outline about how things should go, but then he'd never share the plan. He would be all sugary and syrupy about the whole situation. He never addressed the pain. When he was confronted about the firings, he said he wouldn't discuss it, in effect that it was none of our business, because it was contradictory to policy procedures in the parish.

The desire for greater lay input carried over to the New Faith Community, where, if anything, it was strengthened by the schism process. With the reuniting of Callan, Ramerman, and Rev. Enrique Cadena as pastors, some members who had been actively involved in the schismatic struggle left the New Faith Community because they felt they were losing their voice as well. One couple, who were on hiatus from the

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[3] The evidence of the importance of lay involvement is residual, and all of the following examples took place during the third stage of the schism. Their existence, however, can only be explained (as is demonstrated through the quotes) as coming from a deep-seated value congregation members placed on lay involvement, fostered before Callan's dismissal, and as such, I include it in this section.

New Faith Community when I interviewed them, cited decreased lay participation as the reason for their departure:

> When we were in trouble, you know, the laity took over. They were involved in changing things. We had this dream where we were all on equal footing, but when Jim and Mary came back- They don't want any lay people involved. Jim has said that explicitly. I have friends who went to talk to them, and he's said he wants to do it his way, where he makes a decision and everybody jumps. It's all human stuff. But I agree with the philosophy. We'll start back up again when the lay people are involved beyond the handpicked staff. There are lots of good people; they should be more involved.

Asked what the ideal church looked like to them, this couple replied, "Involvement of the laity," and "Participation." For them, the importance of lay participation had become so strong, that they had to leave the church (even if temporarily) when they felt that the coagulation of the New Faith staff was infringing upon it.

Perhaps the most important effect of this sense of lay empowerment was the way it led to the vote of no-confidence in the transition leadership, which led in turn to the firing of the outreach staff in December 1998. In an open letter to the congregation, the parish staff members complained that the hiring of interim parish administrator Tom Riley was a violation of "the spirit of collaboration with which we have lived and ministered as a parish," and an indication that "the staff, parishioners, and especially the poor are losing their voice" (Donato et al., 1998). One of the fired outreach ministers confirmed that the vote came directly out of a feeling of disempowerment: "It was a vote of no-confidence in Mr. Riley. We felt we had no options, like we had no voice and no forum, so we appealed directly to the congregation." This desperate attempt to reclaim some control of the church-to reclaim their "voice" in church affairs-by people who had come to view congregational structure as their right was, as will be elaborated below, a key event in the successful establishment of the schismatic movement.

Thus, during the period leading up to the split, the congregation at Corpus Christi had mobilized a number of key abstract resources. By conceptualizing God as an understanding lover, a proud emotional bond was established between the members and the Church community (as the representative of that God). Equality, an abstract resource, was understood in concrete terms in the ministry of Mary Ramerman, the ministry to gays and lesbians, the Eucharistic offering to people of all creeds, the grape juice, and the bearing and mannerisms of Father Callan. Finally, a culture of lay participation was fostered, raising expectations of a congregational structure within the parish, and laying the groundwork for the dismayed reaction to the transition team and the establishment of the Spring Committee, and ultimately in the vote of no-confidence in Tom Riley.

With these resources in play, the Catholic Church began to wield its institutional authority to settle the debate on its terms (through the reassignment or dismissals of Callan, Ramerman, and the parish staff). In doing so, a schism slowly began to form at Corpus Christi, and the nascent schismatic movement began to shift its focus. Instead of mobilizing *concrete* and *abstract* cultural resources to assist it in its doctrinal struggle with the church, the schismatic movement began to mobilize what I have termed *symbolic* and *capital* resources in its struggle to establish a new church-a New Faith Community.

Symbolic Resource Mobilization in the Schismatic Stage

"Schism" began with the initiation of the alternative support services in the end of October. Once the process had begun that would lead to the successful establishment of the New Faith Community, the focus shifted from embracing the cultural resources needed to bond their community together, to accumulating those symbolic resources necessary to validate their beliefs. The most important "resource" that must be mobilized during the third stage of any schism is authority, and in a sense all of the symbolic resources (abstract and concrete) that are mobilized during this phase are mobilized with an eye to legitimating the schismatic movement's authority claims. The successful establishment of a new

church depends above all upon convincing potential members that a movement has sufficient theological authority; after all, an individual will not entrust the care of his or her soul to a church he or she does not believe is in good standing with God. Thus the focus of symbolic resource mobilization becomes the struggle for legitimacy. Ideas are tweaked and retooled to establish a theological groundwork for authority claims, and concrete resources are cast in new lights for the same purpose. In the case of the New Faith Community, its leadership mobilized symbolic resources (such as conceptions of God, Scripture, and the relationship between the parish and the authority structure) to authoritatively ground their movement in the Catholic tradition, redefine "Catholicism," and create a group of symbols for their new community to rally around.

Michele Dillon has documented (1999) the way "pro-change Catholics" who stay within the Church have contested official doctrine. Interestingly, much of what she has written applies to the New Faith Community, a group of Catholics who decided to leave the Church. Dillon notes, in particular, that pro-change Catholics participate in "reflexive engagement with the Catholic tradition that both grounds their authority to contest doctrine and empowers them to challenge official church practices. It is evident, moreover, that the process of doctrinal conversation is one in which no one resource is privileged" (Dillon, 1999:185). In this passage, Dillon makes two critical observations. The first is that in an intradenominational conflict, the struggle for authority is grounded in the terms and tradition of that denomination. The second is that in making an argument, critics are free to use whatever tradition-based resources are available to them; no one part of the tradition is objectively valued above any other.

With the New Faith Community, we see that both of these points are applicable. In the Community's struggle to gain legitimate authority, members attempted to redefine the font of authority in a locus other than the institutional Church; as such, they evoked God (the ultimate authority), Jesus, and other parts of the Catholic tradition. In doing so, they rejected claims that the institution had final say over matters of dogma,

freely allocating from other sources of authority to make their case to the congregation.[4]

Legitimizing Insurgency

Most of the members of the New Faith Community legitimized their position by appealing to the authority of God or Jesus. Those who appealed to God's authority were primarily interested in doing what was right or just. God's law, they said, trumped all else.

> *I've realized my obligation is first to God, not to the Church and its laws.*

> *The reason we went to Corpus Christi-about fourteen years ago-we went to a service, and I saw a student there, one of mine-I was a special education teacher in Rochester public schools. We went to this Mass, and he was there. He had become a street person. Now when he was in school, he had bad hygiene. He lived in a house-I went there once, and there wasn't a toilet, just kind of a hole in the floor. No shower. We used to invite him to our house, and we'd let him take a bath, because he just stank, and he'd get those clothes all dirty too next time we saw him. Anyway, he had become a street person, and was doing drugs and alcohol by that time. He was much worse. But what struck us was that he was accepted there. And I thought any community that could accept him had to be special. It was being faithful to a greater law.*

> *I would say that I was Catholic, raised Catholic, if you asked me. But my relationship with God is more important than what I am. Doing what is right is more important than what I am. I don't think these controversies have anything to do with God.*

Members of the New Faith Community appealed to God as a "greater

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[4] It is possible that, because the New Faith Community had a protracted schismatic stage, it demonstrates more of these "pro-change Catholic" tendencies than it might otherwise; after all, the initial intent, and continuing goal, was always to change the Catholic Church. It is likely, however, that in a struggle for authority, the religious tradition must be engaged to attain legitimacy, irrespective of whether the conflict arises with a "pro-change" group, or with a schismatic movement.

law" above the ecclesiastical law of the institution to plead their case. Since God is right and just, his law supersedes that of the Church. By pitting God against the Church, members located their authority in the ultimate authority source, and cast the Church as the criminal, interloping between God and his people. This is perhaps best captured in one man's declaration, "There are directives from Rome that are in contradiction with what God wants." By citing God as their source of authority, New Faith Community members not only legitimize themselves, but cast doubt on the authority of the censuring Church.

Those individuals who were concerned less about laws than philosophy were more likely to turn to Christ as their source of authority. Instead of discussing "greater laws" and "directives," many parishioners evoked the "spirit of Christ" as a source for their movement's authority:

> I think the church should be about powerlessness. Jesus called us to be faithful, and I think there's a real spirituality about powerlessness. I think Rome is very controlling, and not at all in the spirit of Christ.

> I feel they're not following the tenets of the Gospel, not following Jesus. They're going contrary to the Gospel's teachings...The Church has abandoned the Gospel, and that's why people are disenchanted with it.

> When Father Dan came, there was a contrast in attitudes, in the arguments that were used, as to the way things had to change. We went counter to the diocese. We did it the way a Christian community should be.

To these members, the source of authority lay in Jesus Christ as the founder of the movement and spiritual mentor. Their authority sources were his ideals, his actions, and his words.

Other members of the New Faith Community also pointed to Christ as a rationale for rejecting the Catholic Church. One man pointed out that Christ was the initial source of the Church, and then bitterly

accused the Church of forgetting that fact. He said:

> This split is about the social structure of the Catholic Church being unwilling to change. They think we're like a cancer that they have to cut out. And the church has this dogma and mores, and it doesn't matter where it came from. It came from Jesus Christ. The church thinks it came from God himself.

In all of these cases, Jesus Christ and his teachings represent a source of authority that, again, supersedes that of the Catholic Church. The implication is always that the Church has forgotten the true path, and that the New Faith Community has claim to the theological "high ground," as it were, because of its loyalty to an older, more valid tradition.

Some carried the authority of Christ to a second level, and used ancient Church history as a source of authority. Some members of the New Faith Community expressed the desire to "return to the Church's roots" in terms of the Church that Christ and the Apostles established. This frequently played out in terms of the "big-c/little-c" catholicism dichotomy. In the words of one woman:

> Early on, when the label was formed, it was because it was a universal, inclusive idea. Then, there started to be factions as people created an organizational structure, so that today what is "Catholic"-the Roman Catholic Church-is so far away from the original idea of inclusive, universal. They're really very limited who they let in...We believe in the original catholic ideal. We want to go back to our roots.

The desire to return to the roots of the Church is in a sense a desire to return to the Church established by Jesus, and as such, a tacit recognition of Christ's authority. At the same time, of course, it denigrates the authority of the Catholic Church, once again, by accusing it implicitly of corruption and theological muddling.

Whether individuals looked to God or to Christ as a source of authority, in all respects it was very clear that neither the institution nor

any individual was an adequate source of authority. Members scoffed at the idea that any ecclesiastical body had the power to dictate their beliefs, and in particular, every individual was skeptical of the claim of papal infallibility. As one woman said, she "didn't understand how people could follow rules that are put in place by one man." In short, the members of the New Faith Community refused to see worldly institutions or individuals as a legitimate source of authority.

Most impressively, members of the New Faith Community seemed not to be afraid to apply the same standard to their own group. One woman, who had expressed reservations about making the split, reflected with disgust upon the behavior displayed toward Father McMillin, who replaced Father Callan:

> Some people made a t-shirt, with caricatures of Jim and Mary and Enrique, and that was just disgusting. It's not their church; it's not about them. That makes us look like Callan worshipers. The people who threw the host were following Callan, not Christ. They had Christ in their hands and they threw it back. I'm upset that no one addressed that. It should have been addressed.

This woman rejected the behavior of her peers for the same reason she rejected the Catholic Church-it didn't follow Christ's example. Christ's actions and teachings for her were the only legitimate measure of authority in determining her choice of faith or the way in which faith should be expressed. As she commented shortly after the above speech, "Christ didn't say he wanted everyone to be Catholic." In all domains, the authority of Christ had to be recognized, beyond that of the Church, and that of any individual in the Church.

Undermining Institutional Authority

The counterparts to these repeated embraces of alternate sources of authority were attacks on the authority of the institutional church. Frequently vicious, they reflected a disgust at perceived abuses of authority in the Church, which rendered that authority null and void. Attacks

on authority primarily took the form of portraying authority as "control," as in "mind control." For the members of Corpus Christi, the institution had squandered its authority by trying to control their minds instead of following Christ:

> I think that over the past couple of centuries, it has become the biggest cult ever. They do this mind control, with the Catholic schools; they bring people up not to question their authority. They claim to speak for God directly.

One man extrapolated his experience to include theologians and Biblical scholars. The range of the Church's insidious censorship knew no limits:

> You know, the church condemns its greatest Biblical scholars. The Vatican tells them, you are teachers, you can't learn. But we can learn from everyone.

In addition to attacking the Church's authority as a control mechanism, members of the New Faith Community were quick to portray themselves as victims of an out-of-control, tyrannical "authority" that was bent on their destruction from the beginning. Frequently, members invoked terms like "sacrifice" and images of death and destruction to portray the institutional Church as a vicious monster:

> The institution is so ingrained, concerned with their dogma and their ritual, that they were willing to kill a beautiful church in order to maintain it.

> I don't think the diocese cared about the people here, or it would have tried to understand us better. But they were willing to sacrifice hundreds of people to get their point across, to keep control. That's all it is: they're trying to keep control. They're afraid to let it go.

> If this were three hundred years ago, we'd probably have had three

or four beheadings by now.

The implications of this rhetoric are clear. It is impossible to obey an authority structure that seems bent upon your destruction and the destruction of everything you stand for. By casting the Catholic Church in a pernicious light, the schismatic movement diminished the Church's moral authority, and made wavering members more likely to be open to alternate sources of authority.

Redefining and Refocusing "Catholicism"

Beyond simply relocating the source of religious authority from the Catholic Church to God and Christ, the New Faith Community also had to redefine Catholicism apart from the Catholic Church. This was done mostly by shifting the focus of the Church from the institution itself to the symbolic rites and rituals of everyday service. Because services at the New Faith Community are modeled after the Catholic Mass, and because their services retain many traditional Catholic rituals, the leaders of the New Faith Community seem to have been able to convince people that they were not actually leaving the Church. Thus, Father Callan was able to say, "We are an identical parish, minus the connection to Rome and minus the discrimination."

What, then, defines this split? When asked to name the things that define Catholicism, members of the New Faith Community cited a wide variety of things, ranging from the Mass to the Scriptures to the baptism rite to the mystic tradition of the Saints and miracles. There seemed to be no one thing that defined Catholicism for these people, but what they all had in common was that they based their definition of their religion on symbolic rituals, ceremonies, and other aspects of the services. No one connected Catholicism with the institutional Church. Instead, they defined themselves as Catholics because of the traditions they upheld.

Indeed, most members seem to have reconciled their departure from the Catholic church with their maintaining the symbolic traditions of the Catholicism by simply lopping the "Roman" off the front of their

name:

> *The Vatican doesn't make up Catholicism. It's in the hearts of the people, in the connection during the Eucharist with Jesus Christ. I feel that more than before.*

> *I'm not a Catholic. But I believe in the tradition, the baptism, the Eucharist, marriage and what's truly catholic. In the truest sense, I am catholic, in the sense of universal catholic. I don't want to be considered Roman Catholic.*

Members were able to make this jump because the services and traditions were maintained from the father parish to the new congregation. Some took this similarity between old and new and extrapolated to come to the conclusion that Corpus Christi and the New Faith Community were, in fact, the true Catholic Church. As one woman said:

> *I still feel I'm a Catholic. I don't feel excommunicated. I still feel the same. I feel that the Catholic Church is the New Faith Community.*

Cutting-Edge Catholicism

Although the members of the New Faith Community had cut their ties to Rome, they shared the belief that nevertheless they were on the cutting edge of the Catholic Church. Father Callan stated explicitly that he expected reconciliation with the Church would occur within "maybe twenty years, maybe ten." Members voiced grave concerns about the fate of the Catholic Church, and reiterated their belief that the Church would have to "come around" to their point of view.

Generally, this view was stated in one of three ways. The first set of responses declared that change was bound to come for "economic" reasons. These individuals played up the perception of the institutional church as a business that needed to adapt its practices or risk losing its clientele. For them, they were not so much trying to change the church,

but had simply overtaken the church in its development and were waiting for the church to catch up. This response was typical:

> I think the institutional Catholic Church is destined to fail. We aren't going to change it. Economics will be the driving force. It's run like a business. And I think as fewer and fewer people are priests, they will have to change-maybe they'll have married priests, maybe female priests. I think they'll have married priests before female priests-but one way or the other, they'll have to change, and I think economics will be the driving force. Or it won't survive.

The second type of response keyed into the members of the New Faith Community's self-perception as agents of change. While lamenting the Catholic Church's backward ways, they portrayed themselves as catalysts bringing the Church into the future by drawing attention to its flaws, as in this response:

> I feel that nothing gets done in the Church. I like to use the example of Kevorkian. It's terrible what he does, but no one's attention will be drawn to the needs of the dying if he doesn't do it. I think if they had stayed in the church, the movement wouldn't have happened, and nothing would get done in our lifetime.

The third type of response argued for the inevitability of change. Some depicted this in rational or historical terms, while others, such as the woman whose quote appears below, argued in terms of theology and theodicy. These respondents saw themselves as neither pioneers nor catalysts, but instead as people having a paternal patience, waiting for the Church to end its wayward ways:

> God understands what I'm going through, and he's waiting for people to smarten up. God is all-just, so He can't be holding back on these issues. He's just waiting for the Church to grow into them. It can't hold back; they're going to happen. Just as slavery

> didn't last forever, this discrimination won't last forever either. It
> will change. It's just too bad it's going to take so long.

In all three cases, members argued they had a broader vision than the
Church, and were simply doing what the Church itself would eventually
end up doing down the road. Almost every respondent considered him-
or herself to be on the cutting edge of Catholicism.

Additional Symbolic Resources

In addition to mustering the authority needed to gain the support
of parish members, the New Faith Community also mobilized additional
abstract and concrete resources to help their secession effort. This is most
clearly visible, perhaps, in the way several concrete resources took on a
new, symbolic meaning, following the dismissal of Father Callan. While
prior to the dismissal, these objects might have been a source of associa-
tion-"this is what we do at *our* church"-after the dismissal, they became
symbolic rallying points for the community to assert its identity, solidari-
ty, and determination. Among these resources were the grape juice at
communion (discussed above); the sign of peace; the sung Our Father; the
outreach ministries; and Mary Ramerman's alb and stole. In each case,
the resource took on an additional symbolic meaning that resonated and
united the dissident congregation, which created a salubrious atmosphere
for successful schism.

One event which took on particular symbolic meaning for the
parishioners at Corpus Christi was the sign of peace. In contrast to the
quick, staid sign of peace found at most Catholic services, the sign of
peace at Corpus was extended to nearly five minutes in some cases, dur-
ing which time parishioners would roam the aisles, freely calling to one
another, engaging in giant hugs and joyful shouts of "hello." Parishioners
are very proud of this innovation, and see it as symbolic of the open,
accepting nature of their community. In contrast with the closed-off
world of the traditional Catholic church, the extended, boisterous sign of
peace came to represent, for them, the joyful sense of community and
involvement that they believed defined their congregation:

Just today, I was reading, somebody was complaining to Miss Manners because people shook her hand at the beginning of church! To me, that's what God is-loving, giving. At most churches, if you turn to shake hands with people during the sign of peace, they look at you like you're a wacko. They just want to shake and move on.

At the end of May, we went to New York and kind of unintentionally attended Mass at St. Patrick's. And the whole Mass lasted as long as our sign of peace does now. It felt empty.

The lengthy duration of the sign of peace became a symbol of community for the Corpus Christi congregation.

The sense of unity and brotherhood embodied in the sign of peace could also be found in the "Our Father." Although all Catholic Masses include the prayer, Corpus Christi and the New Faith Community have made it a centerpiece of their Masses by setting it to music. Members join hands to sing the song, and raise their hands at the phrase, "For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever, Amen." As an experience unique to their church, members came to view the "Our Father" as symbolic of solidarity in community, in an almost nationalistic sort of way. One man expressed the emotional connection he felt with the song:

One thing was the invitation to say "hi" at the beginning of Mass, and the sign of peace is just a big party...We all join hands when we sing the Our Father. That's a very emotional connection, and I think it's all the more precious when it's sung.

Beyond these emotional connections to certain portions of the Mass, other aspects of church life became symbolic rallying points. Foremost among these were the outreach ministries. The New Faith Community prides itself on "walking the walk" of Christianity-reaching out to the poor, finding ways to "be present where the need was the greatest" (Callan, 1997:86). Because the ministries were integral to this vision,

and because they served as a focus for community activity, the ministries came to be almost synonymous with the congregation and its ideals. Thus, any attack on the ministries came to be viewed as an attack on the people who worked in the ministries.

After the dismissal of Callan, many parishioners expressed dismay that the ministries were mentioned with less frequency in the homilies and in the announcements. In the words of one man:

> *Father Dan is not supporting the ministries. He won't incorporate the ministries into his liturgies.*

The ministries, they felt, were being "hung out to dry," in the words of another man. Support for the ministries grew in the face of this seeming abandonment, and the return of the ministries as a focus of community life and as a symbolic expression of God's love became a key goal to the members of Corpus Christi.

Finally, the issue of women's place at the leadership table was symbolized in the alb and stolette vested upon Mary Ramerman. Those who believed in women's ordination saw these priestly garments as symbolic of her role as leader and "mother" to the congregation. Many came to see the conflict over this issue solely in these symbolic terms, as did this woman:

> *The community decided to vest her with the stole, and I think that's just symbolic of all the issues I have with the church. You know, for a while they were saying, "If she can find a creative way to wear the stole..." I didn't think it would come down to a small piece of fabric, but that piece of fabric is symbolic of all the problems that women have in the Church.*

Through the alb and stolette, parishioners symbolically expressed their deeply-held convictions about equality at the Eucharistic table.

These things-the sign of peace, "Our Father", outreach ministries, and Mary's vestments-became lodged in the collective consciousness of

the group and became rallying points of identification for the community. Attacks on any of these items came to be seen in very personal terms, because of the highly symbolic weight the community attached to them. As we will see presently, it was the attack on one of these symbols, the outreach ministries, that was to have the most far-reaching effect on the development of the schismatic process.

To recap, then, the New Faith Community began to quietly build up its symbolic resources as it sought to establish itself ideologically. It grounded its own authority in Biblical and historical sources pertinent to the Catholic tradition, while at the same time belittling the Church's moral authority and spiritual leadership. Members of the congregation became convinced that they were on the cutting edge of Catholic theology, and that sooner or later the Church would come to agree with them. Finally, the abstract resources that the community came to embrace in the 1980s and 1990s took on symbolic form, as the congregation began to identify strongly with the peculiarities of their parish's service, including the sign of peace and the Our Father, and with the outreach ministries and priestly garb of pastoral assistant Mary Ramerman. These symbolic resources came to represent their religious experience to the New Faith Community.

Capital Resource Mobilization in the Schismatic Stage

In addition to the symbolic resources, the New Faith Community needed also to mobilize the necessary capital resources-the economic resources and other outside support needed to run day-to-day operations. These structural resources provided the organizational backbone of the movement. While the symbolic resources gave the movement legitimacy, moral authority, and social cohesion, the capital resources mobilized during this time gave it the ability to function and grounded the movement in such a way that it seemed capable of sustaining itself. All of the capital resources increased the New Faith Community's prospects, thereby making it a plausible option for wavering parishioners. In general, the major capital resources mobilized by the New Faith Community were the community itself; a regular schedule of events; a space in which to meet; a

means of internal organization, promotion, and revenue collection; and external support, from both individuals and organizations.

First, there was the community itself. The community was an important resource primarily because it lent an air of familiarity to the new movement. As with the continuity of Catholic ritual and symbolism, having many of the same faces in the new community doubtless gave the new services a legitimate feel. But in addition, maintaining the community meant maintaining a strong network of friends and neighbors to support one another during the time of transition.

The New Faith Community was quite successful in maintaining a large part of the congregation from Corpus Christi. From its peak of about 5,000 members just before the firing, the New Faith Community attracted over 1,000 to its alternate services. For many, these thousand formed a strong support network. It was clear that most members of the congregation knew other members well, and those that they knew they knew well. These interpersonal relationships bound the community together quite closely:

> I was raised in a small, country Methodist church in upstate New York. My parents were dairy farmers, and my grandfather was asked to build the church. All together, including children, the congregation was maybe 40 people. It was a real community thing; that's like what we have here. Everyone cares, spends time after church talking things over, helps one another out.

> It's just so real. No one's putting on airs about things. You are who you are. It's how a home should be. I see someone there, and I scream, "How are you?!"

The comparison of the community with both a small town and a family are both excellent metaphors. Not only do people know each other very well, but there is a sense of solidarity and support in such a tight-knit group of people. This sense of looking out for one another enabled many, doubtless, to go forward where those in a less supportive environment might have remained behind.

Additionally, the mere presence of familiar faces seems to have put many hesitant members of the New Faith Community more at ease with their decisions. Many mentioned discomfort at not knowing the people who were sitting around them once the congregation at Corpus Christi began to dwindle, and an equal joy at being reunited with those faces at the New Faith Community. They equated loss of personal relationships with a diminution of their faith:

> You know, it's different to come back, and be in a different place. I lost my pew pals. It wasn't as welcoming. I didn't recognize faces.

> I missed the people so much-the congregation-I missed the joy. After Jim and Mary and Enrique left, it was very sad to come. Every Sunday, I would leave in tears. I started to go Thursday nights [to the alternate services], although I wasn't comfortable because it was a different building, and not all the same people. But at least I was leaving happy. I felt more like my faith was in that atmosphere, and not in the old atmosphere.

Precisely because the members of Corpus Christi equated the community so strongly with their religious experience (manifested as well, as we have seen, in the sign of peace and the "Our Father"), it was especially important that the new movement tried to hold that group together as much as possible. In the ultimate analysis, many members were willing to give up a lot just to maintain their relationship to the rest of the community:

> Some of us have wanted to join the American Catholic Church. I would not like to do that, but I would stay if we did.

In all, members who switched to the New Faith Community found comfort in familiar friends and faces. As one woman said, "Without the New Faith Community, there's no place for us." Members found their place within the community, and thus keeping the community together was par-

ticularly important for the secessionist movement.

The New Faith Community was able to hold the community together because, fairly early on, it established a regular set of what were initially "alternative" or "support" services on Thursday evenings. Begun shortly after the firing of Mary Ramerman in late October 1998, the alternative services were directly intended as a means of keeping the community together and bonding in faith. These services represented the first move to break away from the Catholic Church, and, not coincidentally, the first time the words "Faith Community" were used to describe the community.[5]

Not only were the alternative services important as a means of separating the schismatics from the non-schismatics, but they also provided a forum for reinforcement of the symbolic resources that bound the group together. As noted above, Mary Ramerman was presented with a stole at the very first alternative service. Although initially intended as a "support" meeting, its regularity provided a place for like-minded members of the community to focus their attentions, and provided a natural springboard into the full Masses that were celebrated starting in December with the return of Father Callan. Prior to Callan's excommunication, the group, when celebrating the Eucharist, used pre-consecrated hosts. Beginning in April, Callan began consecrating the hosts in defiance of his suspension by the Catholic Church.

The alternative services also served as a means of weaning the community away from the Catholic Church. The transformation of the alternate services from support group to additional Mass to full-scale religious movement was a gradual one, and as such was a subtler means of secession. This may have assuaged some doubts or fears by some members of the group; to them, the development of religious services doubtless seemed quite organic.

The services could only be held when there was a space in which to hold them, however. The New Faith Community talked with numerous Protestant churches around the area. Callan had built quite a rapport

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[5] In one of the first issues of the New Faith Community's *Spring News*, the editors write: "By coincidence (hardly!) Mary had the opportunity, just two nights later, to grace the altar of the Downtown United Presbyterian Church, for the very first supplementary worship service of the *Corpus Christi Faith Community*. Between 500 and 600 parishioners cired and cheered as Mary came to the altar with her favorite stole: the green one presented to her by Corpus Christi parishioners six years ago. Yes, God is in charge" ("Remerman Restoled," 1998)

with several Protestant churches in the area during his tenure at Corpus Christi (Callan 1997:209-210), and the ecumenical nature of the New Faith Community (many of whose members were Protestant by upbringing and considered themselves "Christian, just like I am an American" without any further qualification) meant that renting space from a Protestant church was a logical solution to the question of space. The alternative services were held starting in the Downtown United Presbyterian Church, a church whose space continues to be used for several Masses a week. Since then, as the schedule of services has increased to eight Masses a week, the New Faith Community also has rented space in three other buildings: a Baptist church, a Church of Christ, and a recital hall of a local music school. In addition, the community has rented office space at the Church of Christ, which serves as a mailing address and business locus for the group. Father Callan, Mary Ramerman, and other staff members all have offices there, and meet and talk with visitors at that location.

These spaces were important because they provided a sense of permanence to the schismatic movement. Even though the spaces were rented, they provided a place for the community to gather and to reaffirm its sense of community and purpose. By having both a regular meeting time and a place in which to meet, the movement positioned itself to be able to break away and sustain itself without being dependent on the resources of the Catholic Church or of Corpus Christi parish.

Any successful movement also needs to be able to raise funds for itself and to distribute materials to its members. The New Faith's community primary organizational tool was the Spring Committee, which was established the day of Callan's removal. The Spring Committee was a group of volunteers whose mission included "maintaining the unity of spirit of our Corpus Christi parish family," "providing educational opportunities for the parish regarding doctrinal and social injustice issues within the Church," and "communicating, in both directions, with the parish and with the community, including other faith groups, the media, and national/international advocacy groups, such as Call to Action, whose mission also is to bring much-needed change within the Catholic Church" ("The Spring Committee," 1998).

In addition to the Spring Committee's stated organizational goals, it took on several other key roles. First, the Spring Committee began, in October, to print a news bulletin entitled *Spring News*. *Spring News* was a community forum that announced information pertinent to the Faith Community, including times and locations of alternative services, as well as updates on relations with the diocese (important to the hyper-involved parishioners of Corpus Christi), inspirational quotes, and stories pertinent to the struggle against the Church. *Spring News* was an important forum for community members to be able to voice their opinions, as well as a means of organization and communication. *Spring News* was published weekly from October 1998 on, and was eventually supplemented by the New Faith Community's own bulletin once it had established itself.

The Spring Committee also was responsible for managing money matters for the New Faith Community at the outset. The Committee solicited donations from members of Corpus Christi's congregation, both in the *Spring News* and during services, to go into a separate fund for the ministries and for their activities. They raised, between August and December, over $25,000 from the community, while at the same time, collections for the parish declined by more than half. This led, in the first week of December, to Father McMillan's public insistence that the Spring Committee cease fundraising and conducting their activities on church property (Mandelaro, 1998a). Additionally, the group applied for and was granted nonprofit status, releasing them from taxation and enabling them to maximize their fundraising (Mandelaro, 1998b).

The money raised by the Spring Committee enabled them also to wage a campaign both at the church and in the media promoting the cause and beliefs of the New Faith Community. They established a website early on (http://www.corpus-christi-friends.org) and also organized several "vigils, pickets, and an extensive video and print promotional campaign" (Mandelaro, 1998a) and a letter-writing campaign to Catholic officials protesting Callan's dismissal (Stewart, 1999). These organizational tools were aimed at garnering support from the community at large, and at organizing and increasing support within the parish itself. The Spring Committee was largely responsible for providing an organizational framework for the new movement; this explains why there was much fighting

between Spring Committee members and the old leadership once the New Faith Community had established itself, as Callan, Ramerman, and much of the old Corpus Christi staff established themselves as the church leadership.

External support was another key resource that the New Faith Community mobilized. The Spring Committee was largely responsible for garnering support from other reform-minded Catholics and other sympathetic Christians, but other groups took part in this effort as well, including, at various times, the outreach staff, and the congregation at large. The primary tactic in this regard was the press conference. Following every major diocesan action or negotiation session, the Spring Committee, the parish staff, or the congregation would release a press statement to local and state media decrying the diocese's actions, and presenting their positions. Rallies and press conferences became so common, that some began to complain of the tireless media campaign. Said one woman, "It was all over the place." The campaign was so strong that the Bishop, in an interview with a Rochester newspaper, accused the parish representatives of negotiating in bad faith:

> *I think the record is pretty clear, at just about every significant stage, it was the leadership of Corpus that put it public, and did so according to terms suitable to them (Mandelaro and Rosen, 1999:11).*

Whether negotiations were done in bad faith or not, the campaign certainly did much to grab the attention of the entire community, and many citizens wrote in to the local newspapers to voice support for or to criticize the congregation and its leaders.

In addition to publicizing their cause to gain local support, leaders sought national support by approaching pro-change Catholic groups; foremost among them was Call to Action, a national group dedicated to liberalizing the Catholic Church. Call to Action was instrumental in helping the congregation reach a national audience, with articles published in the *New York Times* and *Washington Post*, and television specials on several networks ("Priest Ousted...," 1998:2). By gaining the support of a well-

known national group, Corpus Christi was able to spread its message much farther.

Additionally, acquiring the support of national organizations doubtless helped further a sense of solidarity within the community. Debra Minkoff (1997) has noted that national social movement organizations (SMOs) are important because they "act as visible proponents of group claims, producing a kind of symbolic affiliation and social integration." She goes on to propose that "for isolated and marginalized constituencies...this sense of collective identity may literally be lifesaving" (607). Minkoff criticizes the work of Robert Putnam, who dismisses the importance of SMOs because they simply create bonds between individuals whose ties "are to common symbols, common leaders, and perhaps common ideals, but not to one another" (Putnam, 1995:71, cited in Minkoff 1997:610). However, as Minkoff argues, these bonds are indeed important. Gaining the support of national organizations is an important indicator to potential members that there is a solid network of like-minded individuals who are there to support them. As Minkoff puts it, this collective identity "provides a critical sense of integration into an abstract collectivity, which is a minimal requirement for further involvement in collective affairs" (1997:612). By gaining the support of Call to Action, the New Faith Community was able to evoke solidarity with other disgruntled Catholics, potentially paving the way for additional, stronger, action.

The New Faith Community, then, during this time, located a space for its activities, regularized meeting times to a set schedule, developed an organizational infrastructure, and gathered crucial outside support. This put it in a position to decide its fate on its own terms, and eventually be able to cut ties with the Vatican altogether.

Nonetheless, there were many members who were still wavering. How did they decide to leave the Catholic Church in favor of the New Faith Community once and for all? It took a catalytic event to synthesize all the stockpiled resources, and push the congregation over the edge into full-fledged support of the schismatic movement.

The Catalytic Event: Putting Things into Motion

On December 9, 1998, the outreach directors met with the new interim director of church operations, Tom Riley, and left the meeting feeling disempowered and threatened. They wrote an open letter to the community expressing a vote of no confidence in Mr. Riley's leadership, which they distributed at services the following weekend. The following Monday, six of them were fired for insubordination and disloyalty.

Although this may have seemed like just another event in a series of firings of staff members that had been going on since October (with the dismissal of Mary Ramerman as Assistant Pastor), the firing of the outreach directors had a profound impact on the parishioners of Corpus Christi. More than any event, the firings were the catalyst that prompted many members to break all ties with the Catholic Church, and to devote themselves entirely to the New Faith Community. In large part, this is because the firing of the outreach ministers touched on many of the symbolic resources that the community had mobilized during the preceding four months. The firings impacted them in an emotional manner, and as a result, people decided they could no longer remain in the church.

As discussed above, the outreach ministries were a symbol of community pride. By firing the outreach directors, the Diocese was attacking the community at its symbolic heart. For many, the firings confirmed their suspicions that the institution was evil, businesslike, and ruthless, and with the authority of the Church already weakened, this action annihilated any confidence they still had in the morality of the institution. One woman broke down as she recalled the day the ministers were fired:

> *The clincher was when he fired Margie and Jim, people I watched give every ounce of love and dedication... [crying] That was it. I haven't been back since. It was like they were taking my heart away. If we weren't supposed to care about people...you know, Xerox, they're in it for the bottom line. They fire people because they're worried about the bottom line. But the purpose of the church is to nurture peoples' souls. When it ignores peoples' souls, when it deliberately destroys them, it's just incomprehensible to me. It just shouldn't be.*

Many others concurred and saw the firing of the outreach directors as a "deliberate" destruction of souls by an institution callously concerned with the "bottom line." Through this action, the Church mortgaged its moral and spiritual authority to the extent that many parishioners became convinced that the only true voice of spiritual authority was that of the community in which they had come to know a loving God, and which was increasingly becoming more church-like itself.

Other members lost faith in the Church for a different reason. For these individuals, the Church lost its moral authority by not behaving in a Christ-like manner:

> The firings were just like an axe dropping. To say, "You're done, you're finished"-that's not Christ-like.

For those members of the Church for whom Christianity meant above all behaving in a Christ-like manner, the Catholic Church had nothing left to offer; the New Faith Community emerged for them as the only legitimate source of Christian ethics.

The firings were also significant because they attacked parishioners' sense of lay leadership and involvement. As discussed above, the members of Corpus Christi thought of themselves as being more equals than as subjects of the Church hierarchy. When the Church fired the outreach directors, then, the imposition of the natural episcopal structure of the Catholic Church came as a shock to the cultural system they had come to value. Members felt betrayed and led on by a leadership that was not interested in their input:

> The biggest thing was in December, when Father Dan said-I think it was December 4, in a homily-that he was committed to the outreaches, and then nine days later he fired half the outreach team. That said to me that it was a lie. I don't know why he said that. It made me realize that they don't care about us at all, as a community.

With the authority of the Church dismantled, the attack on the sense of lay involvement and congregational structure was just another blow pushing the parishioners of Corpus Christi away from the parent church.

Finally, the dismissal of the directors was seen as another attempt at dismantling the community that parishioners had grown to love. Having already lost their pastor and their associate pastor, with an administrative team "imposed" upon them by the church, the firings were seen as another attempt to sweep away the old order and disperse the community they held so dear. Particularly because the outreach ministers were universally admired and respected, their dismissal seemed to be an attack at the "heart" of the community. One woman expressed this feeling succinctly:

> *The firing of the seven outreach directors was what really did it. I was willing to stay as long as the staff and community were still together. I thought we could stay, but after that, no way. It was total disregard for seven people who had committed their lives to the poor, to justice, and they were just kicked away like dirt.*

The firing of the outreach ministers served as a catalytic event because it touched on so many aspects of symbolic importance to the community-the ministries, Christ-like behavior, lay involvement, and the community itself. Because it validated the New Faith Community's claims to authority (largely by undermining the Church's alternate proposition), because it attacked the community and its congregational mindset, in short because it attacked the symbolic resources the community had mustered in the months leading up to the firing, the community viewed it as a much more significant event than an outside observer might expect.

Symbolic resources were not the only resources affected by the firing; capital resources came into play as well. The time was ripe and the pieces were in place. The community had begun to assemble at the alternate services, and the week before, Father Callan had made his first appearance at Divine Presbyterian. The reunion of Callan and Ramerman was the reuniting of the old community's leadership, and a subtle announcement to the parish that the old way of doing things was ready

and available as an alternate, and legitimate, form of worship. With the structure and community in place at the New Faith Community, the ultimate impact of the catalytic event could be fully realized. The simultaneous attack on the community's symbolic resources, coupled with the seeming validation of the community's claims to authority, led members to be willing to renounce ties with the old Church, and throw in their lot with the schismatic movement. This event served as a catalyst for the successful establishment of the New Faith Community.

Discussion and Conclusion

The study of the schism at Corpus Christi Church offers us three interesting insights into the process of schism. The first deals with our understanding of how schism works as a process. The second deals with our understanding of the role of resources, and in particular cultural resources, in the process of schism. The third deals with our ability to predict the likelihood of success for a schismatic movement.

Revisiting and Revising the Process of Schism

For starters, this case reinforces Steed's assertion that schism must be understood as a process. Schisms are decidedly not instants in time, but rather a lengthy series of battles between the parent institution and the schismatic movement over ideas and resources. To say, simply, that a schism "occurs" is to deny the ideological maneuvering on both sides during the period of open conflict, as well as to suggest that all schismatic movements are inherently and instantaneously successful. This is clearly not the case; as I have shown, many resources must be amassed to create a successful schism, and even once they have been amassed, the success of the movement is still not guaranteed. Without this understanding, the researcher is unable to understand how a schismatic movement evolves and succeeds.

While Steed's model is an excellent one, it suffers from a rigidity that does not fully allow for or explain the complicated interactions between parent institution and the schismatic movement. Often, identi-

fying the dividing lines between the four stages is a difficult and inexact science. In particular, the Corpus Christi case shows us that the boundary between "open conflict" (stage two) and "resolution and schism" (stage three) can be very blurry. In the case at hand, it is important to note that "schism" was a very nebulous stage. Unlike many schisms, this movement does not seem to have been designed to be a schism at the outset. As a result, Steed's terms are difficult to apply to this case. The resolution of the conflict (from the eyes of the institutional church) may have occurred in August with the reassignment of Father Callan, but the conflict lingered within the congregation until the firing of the outreach ministers. Similarly, although the Catholic Church did not officially declare the New Faith Community to be in schism until February, the first vestiges of a new church (the supplementary services and formation of the Spring Committee) took shape in mid-October.

How do we resolve this confusion of terms? Just as schism is a process, the transition from stage to stage is also a process. In the case of Corpus Christi, the resolution of conflict was not a particular moment, but rather a long chain of events that took place over six months. Meanwhile, the formation of an alternate church was an extended process as well, building for six months. Schism "happened," as part of a process that overlapped with the resolution of a conflict. To account for this, I propose that Steed's model be amended as follows: (1) differences of opinion arise within a denomination/congregation; (2) open conflict arises between the parent institution and the (nascent) schismatic movement; (3) when it becomes clear that there will not be a favorable resolution to the conflict for the schismatic movement, its leadership begins amassing the necessary resources to establish a new church; (4) a catalytic event secures the formation of a secessionist congregation.

The advantage to this understanding is that it allows for an overlap between stages two and three. It does not insist upon the "termination" of conflict as a prerequisite for schism; it allows for the continuation of conflict even as the formation of an alternate congregation is underway. As schism is a gradual process, at times, so too the transition between stages two and three is gradual, as in the case of Corpus Christi. A second advantage to this understanding is that it emphasizes the impor-

tance of resources in determining to the eventual success or failure of a schismatic movement. Resource mobilization is, I believe, a key means of understanding the way in which schisms progress, and how to predict their ultimate outcomes.

The Role of Rosources in Schism

Another important lesson to be learned from the Corpus Christi case is the way that social movement analyses can and should be applied to schismatic movements. The Corpus Christi example vindicates Hannigan (1991) and Kniss and Chaves (1995) by showing that schismatic movements can and should be considered as intra-institutional social movements which can and should be studied in terms of resource mobilization.

Resource mobilization theory lends us a much sharper understanding of the processes attendant to the later stages of schism. It is clear that without both symbolic and capital resources, a schismatic movement will have a more difficult time successfully establishing itself. A clear ideological thrust must be accompanied with practical securities before a mass of people will be willing to commit to a schismatic movement. By casting, in particular, stages three and four in terms of resources, we can better understand the interplay between both sides in the struggle for authority and congregational support, giving us a descriptive and (potentially) predictive language in which to explain this interplay.

While Kniss has given us a good set of tools for discussing the resources in play during the first two stages of schism, his understanding must be reexamined in the context of the Corpus Christi case. While Kniss rightly distinguishes between abstract and concrete resources and offers them as good predictors of the likelihood of schism, I argue that that distinction is less valid as a predictor of the success of a schismatic movement. Instead, it is more useful to distinguish between symbolic resources (which incorporate both abstract and concrete resources as cultural resources with symbolic resonance) and capital resources (the "nuts and bolts" needed to launch a new sect). Irrespective of the outcome of the initial conflict, the schismatic movement must compete with the insti-

tutional church for these resources in order to achieve success. Once the schismatic process has begun, it is important to switch from the dichotomy of abstract and concrete resources to a broader dichotomy of symbolic and capital resources.

The Catalytic Event

The third important lesson Corpus Christi provides us is that the importance of a catalytic event cannot be underestimated in determining the outcome of a schism. As demonstrated above, the resources mobilized by the schismatic movement were ultimately activated through the emotional power of the catalytic event-in this case, the firing of the outreach ministers. Yet while the catalytic event is fueled by the emotional power from the symbolic resources marshaled by the schismatic movement, it is effective because it completes the process of undermining the authority of the parent institution. The Catholic Church lost its battle with the New Faith Community because after the firing of the outreach ministers, it had lost all moral authority in the eyes of the congregation. Because the Catholic Church mortgaged this authority, the New Faith Community was able to present itself as a moral alternative to the institution.

In destroying their authority, the Catholic Church also cut the ties between parishioners and the church and its tradition that Hout and Greeley (1987) showed were so important in keeping disgruntled Catholics within the Church. To the schismatics, the Catholic Church showed through the dismissal of the outreach ministers that the tradition and ties they held so dear were meaningless to the Church. The Church forfeited its authority, dissolved the traditional moral bonds with its members, and left them, in effect, with no reason to stay in the Church; they were ripe to be recruited by the New Faith Community.

James Jasper (1998; Jasper and Poulsen 1995) has developed the concept of a "moral shock" as something that occurs "when an unexpected event or piece of information raises such a sense of outrage in a person that she becomes inclined toward political action" (1998:409). Jasper indicates that the two most common emotional responses to a moral shock are dread and anger; he notes that "the former can paralyze, [while]

the latter can be the basis for mobilization" (Ibid.). In the case of the cat-
alytic event, a sense of outrage is created that raises feelings of dread and
anger. Yet it differs from a moral shock in that it is directly connected to
resources mobilized by the schismatic movement, and it is accompanied
by a parallel decrease in the moral authority of the parent institution.
Because of the decrease in moral authority, a catalytic event rarely inspires
dread; instead, it produces a white-hot anger which is expressed through
an abandonment of the parent institution in favor of the schismatic
movement.

Conclusion

This analysis of Corpus Christi provides the basis for a more pre-
dictive model of schism outcomes. In general, we can theorize that an
advanced schism is likely to be successful when the following conditions
are met:

(1) the schismatic movement has procured sufficient capital
resources to allow for regular services and support-that is to
say, an alternate church (or its developed precursor) "exists";

(2) the schismatic movement has successfully challenged the
authority of the parent institution in a public manner, and pre-
sented a plausible alternative model of moral authority to the
congregation;

(3) the schismatic movement has mobilized one or more salient
symbolic resources that give it an emotional connection with
the disputed congregation;

(4) a catalytic event occurs which directly touches upon one or
more salient symbolic resources mobilized by the schismatic
movement;

(5) this catalytic event also undermines the parent institution's
moral authority in such a way as to evoke a strong emotional
response (usually anger) from the congregation.

If all these criteria are met, it seems probable that a schismatic movement
will be able to coax members to its side with a relatively high degree of
success. It is important that all of these criteria are met; catalytic events

are successful because they are able to draw upon resources, both symbolic and capital, which the movement has mobilized and which are already in place. An event will not be catalytic unless the proper resources have been mobilized prior to the split. If, on the other hand, the resources have been successfully mobilized, the secessionist movement is more likely to be successful in harnessing the moral outrage unleashed by the catalytic event, in turn raising the odds of its establishing itself as a viable alternative.

Furthermore, this study has implications for the wider field of social movement research. The way in which the mobilization of cultural resources changes over time in schismatic movements raises the possibility that the mobilization of cultural resources changes over time in all social movements. Williams (1995) has pointed out the importance of contextuality in the study of cultural resources, drawing our attention to the resonance of different resources at different times. Williams does not specifically address the ways in which the passage of time alters contextuality. This study shows that strategies of mobilization change depending upon time and strategy. Judging from the results of this study, it seems likely that viewing other, non-religious social movements as processes might yield new insights into both the nature of cultural resources, and into the ways in which they are mobilized and used over time to advance a movement's cause.

Sectarianism is a loaded topic, and schism is a complex process. Rather than looking at schisms as moments in time, it is more useful to understand them for what they are: an extended struggle by the schismatic movement to successfully establish itself apart from its parent institution. The keys to the success or failure of this movement are found in the intense theological warfare between the two sides over symbolic and capital resources, and in the struggle to mobilize them in a bid to attract members.

Appendix: Methodology

The primary source for my research was fifteen in-depth interviews with twenty-one members of the New Faith Community, as well as with Rev. James Callan, which I conducted between July 10 and July 25, 1999. Beginning with a personal contact, I contacted other members of the community via the "snowball" method. The interviews were designed to explore the motivations that led individuals to decide to leave the Catholic Church, the perceptions of members of the community of both the New Faith Community and the community at Corpus Christi, the nature of New Faith's members' faith, and the institutional ties, if any, that schismatic members still feel with the Catholic Church.

Interviewees ranged in age from early thirties to seventies, and were fairly evenly split between men and women (9 men, 12 women). Twelve interviewees were married couples, whom I interviewed together. Over half the interviewees lived in the suburbs and had to commute more than fifteen minutes to attend the New Faith Community. Two respondents had been in holy orders at one point in their lives. I interviewed the members of the New Faith Community at friendly or neutral locales around Rochester; I performed most of the interviews in the garden of Isaiah House (hospice outreach) across the street from Corpus Christi, although some were conducted at the homes of the individuals I interviewed. Interviews typically lasted between forty and seventy-five minutes.

To supplement these interviews, I have also examined documents published by the New Faith Community and its precursor, the Spring Committee of Corpus Christi Church, for any sort of documentary evidence pertaining to the schism, as well as newspaper accounts of the schism process (which was well-documented in the *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle*. For insight into the leaders' perspectives and theological views, I have carefully read *Can't Hold Back the Spring* by Rev. James B. Callan (1997), and *A Quest for Freedom* by Rev. Enrique Cadena (1999), two leaders of the schismatic movement. This documentary evidence provided additional insight into the way the movement's leadership forged a common vocabulary and mobilized key resources in their struggle to form a new congregation.

Periodization

Because these interviews were conducted five months after the New Faith Community was officially declared to be in schism by the Catholic Church, I do not have running data on when, precisely, the members came to feel a certain way on a certain topic. In cases above when I discuss events taking place in stage one or two as opposed to stage three, to an extent I am making an educated guess as to the formulation of their opinions. This guess is "educated" to the extent that the issues that I discuss as being part of stage two (conflict) are those that appeared in literature published prior to the firing of Reverend Callan. Those resources that do not appear with regularity prior to that point, I have assigned to the third (establishment) stage. In this way, I have tried to read the past into comments made by individuals who were attempting to summarize a year's worth of emotional wringing into an hour.

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Behind the Numbers:

Why Black Women Withdraw Early from Selective Colleges and Universities?

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"It is hard to imagine a more central issue in society's allocation of opportunity than how a relatively few young people are selected for positions offering a distinctive advantage in education or influence."
- Robert Klitgaard, <u>Choosing Elites</u>

"No other group in America has had their identity so socialized out of existence as have black women."
- Bell Hooks, quoted in <u>Words of Fire</u>

  In recent discourse, selective institutions of higher education have become battlegrounds for the "politics of opportunity" in this country. However, this opportunity is only available once the degree is conferred upon the student. Many students, however, do not obtain this degree. Many graduate behind their class; a sizable proportion graduate six years or more after entering the university. Not surprisingly, the phenomenon of leaving college (also known as "taking time off", early withdrawal, dropping out, stopping out, etc.) has received a great deal of attention and dissection in academia. Graduation rates have been compared by school, sport, race, gender, religion, financial status, etc. At the same time, much work has been done to discover the reasons why students dropout. Presumably, if reasons, or a reason, could be found it could lead to the ability to predict the likelihood of another student's dropout. Looking at it another way, if it were possible to discover what factors play the largest part in why students dropout, perhaps it would be possible to temper or eliminate such factors. For example, if one of the reasons students dropout is lack of attention from faculty, institutions can institute more programs that promote more faculty involvement with students. What is important is the utility of such

findings to both students and the institutions.

However, it is worth repeating that this research takes on another level of relevance at selective colleges and universities. Since these institutions may be selective in their admissions but accept every application, they have the potential to be either facilitators or barriers to change in the current social hierarchy. Hence, the incorporation of policies like affirmative action into the admissions procedure of institutions such as Yale and Harvard have signified an affirmation of the value of a student body diversified by race, gender, socioeconomic status (SES), religion, physical abilities, etc. However, since the inception of affirmative action, people have questioned its worth and effectiveness. Is it helping those who really need it? Are the students these schools admit capable of the work involved? Should institutions be concerned by the fact that students the policies intend to include are not performing at the level of other students? Researchers, in response to these issues, have collected large amounts of data concerning the performance of the various kinds of students within these schools. Since the debate tends to center around the preparedness and, hence, end performance of these students, graduation rates are often used as a measure of how many are actually achieving what their admission to the school was to accomplish the attainment of a degree. "...[F]ew would disagree that earning a degree, obtaining a depth of knowledge within a field, getting at least rea-sonably good grades, and (though it is the most difficult to measure) liv-ing up to one's potential are the first outcomes by which the admis-sions policies of selective colleges and universities should be judged."

Looking solely at the numbers, one could quickly come to the con-clusion that if white and male were requirements for "success", then stu-dents who differ from that description don't always measure up. White women consistently score lower than white men on the SAT. Black stu-dents consistently score lower than white students. White women keep a consistently higher graduation rate than average, while black students of both genders graduate at a lower rate than average. In the debates on affirmative action and the value of diversity, information like this points

to a serious question of why some students seem to not be   performing at the same level as others and what that means for efforts to diversify admission and retention.

This essay seeks to enter the debate at precisely this area.   The research will center around early withdrawal from college, focusing primarily on black female students as a valuable yet largely ignored subject. Graduation rates continue to be used to prove or disprove the worth of admitting certain students with lower than average prospective freshman's scores and grades. This practice assumes that academic capability (or the lack thereof) will be the reason for the student's withdrawal. In addition, most researchers on the differences between race and gender have treated ethnicity and gender as mutually exclusive categories. This practice assumes that the sum of the findings can be attributed to those students who are classified both as a racial minority and female, ignoring the contradictions created by trying to apply both sets of research to the same individual. This study seeks to overturn both assumptions by exploring and exposing the range of reasons why a student might choose to leave school as well as introducing realm of research that begins with females of color--in this case, black female college students. In particular, I will examine the current literature on early withdrawal from college, the situation of black students on predominantly white campuses, and black feminist theory which begins the discourse on women of color as an ideal starting point for sociological research. The study itself involves in-depth interviews with black female students who attend or have attended Yale College in the past ten years, exploring the factors that impacted their experiences and decisions. Hopefully, the exploratory research discussed here will provide a starting point for future researchers interested in the dynamics of college persistence and methods of increased retention and performance.

A great deal of research has been done on college persistence and withdrawal. A number of explanations for the phenomenon have emerged over the years. One explanation is that students who drop out of college represent a certain type of person. By this reasoning,

A Review of the Literature

once the common characteristics of "leavers" are identified, they can then be identified in others–thereby predicting future dropouts. An example of this can be found in Alexander Astin's 1975 work. His research findings stated that students who worked to finance their education without the help of financial aid had higher rates of persistence than students who were on substantial financial aid and also worked. His explanation was that working as a student creates an atmosphere of commitment and consistency. However, students with significant aid from the institution were already more likely to be very stressed by their financial situation; working, then, actually exacerbated their stress. From this he concluded that students on significant financial aid should not work. While this is one explanation, several others exist. For example, students who receive financial aid may be significantly different demographically from students who receive no aid. Thus, there may be several other factors at work which are not being considered, such as parental education, quality of high school, race, religion, gender, etc. Each could be a factor of income, but could also impact the student in ways that have little to do with their financial situation. This is perhaps the greatest danger in attempting to discern and predict what factors increase or decrease the risk of early withdrawal: no one factor operates in isolation.

A second body of research takes a slightly different approach. Instead of focusing on the attributes of the individual, some researchers look at the attributes of the institution. Common factors examined are accessibility of faculty, lack of intellectual challenges, practical applicability of academic subjects, and availability of counseling (Seymour and Hewitt, 1997; Gambetta, 1987). This tends to be more of a sociological analysis of the phenomenon. It looks at the school as a function of creating either a welcoming or excluding environment for the student. While individual institutions are not often analyzed, the research does assert that an institution can present a certain ethos which may push away many students. These studies often end with recommendations about what the institution can do to be more welcoming, encouraging, and inclusive of its students.

Other research attempts to combine the best intentions of the former methods into a more holistic approach. Vincent Tinto is perhaps the

leader in this area, although many have come before and after him using similar tactics. Tinto acknowledges the interaction of specific attributes of the student as contributing to the phenomenon of early withdrawal. However, he refuses the notion that there exists a certain personality or even social profile of what is known as a "leaver." In the same manner, he gives some attention to the characteristics of the institution, but not outside the context of interpersonal relationships. In general, he is less interested in the elements of dropping out and more interested in the dynamics of those elements and how they work together to affect this particular outcome.

To explore this perspective, he took an interdisciplinary approach. Drawing on Durkheim's theories of suicide and Arnold Van Gennep's work on membership and rites of passage, Tinto theorizes that what he terms "student departure" is most correlated with "the absence of social and intellectual integration into or membership in community life and of the social support such integration provides." Tinto, p. 204. For him, to include intellectual integration is not to speak to the student's academic capability but instead refers to the perceived applicability of the subject matter to the student's future as well as how the student is accepted as a valuable part of the intellectual community by both her instructors and peers. Tinto also gives credence to the importance of a "match" between the student and her institution, but states that the matching process is more subjective than opponents of affirmative action would like to believe. "Whether there are objective grounds for mismatch is not necessarily of direct importance to the issue of individual departure. In most situations what matters is whether the individuals perceive themselves as being incongruent with the life of the institutions, not whether other observers would agree with that assessment." (Pervin and Rubin 1967) In general, he takes a more interpersonal stance based on some classic sociological theories, thereby pulling theory into the realm of the everyday. Diego Gambetta takes a similar approach, using the sociological theories of rational choice and structuralism to explain the forces behind the decision to leave college (1987). This research is well thought out, and the historical theories were compatible with today's situation. However, there is a tendency to stay relatively distanced from the subject, whether by giving students simple questionnaires to complete or by

theorizing about their behavior, that silences the individual voice in the majority of this research.

While the volume of this research can be overwhelming, it is lacking in the area of examining the process in terms of race and gender. These are large societal umbrellas in American society, lenses of a sort, through which we view much of our lives. However, in the literature, they were most often treated in a few paragraphs or, at most, a chapter in each book. Those works that did address the issue in a more central fashion often pit black students against white students or men against women in a statistical analysis. The differences between the two races were most frequently attributed to the presumed greater likelihood of economic or educational disadvantage among black students. Rarely did these analyses deal with the complexities of the differences that may exist within and between students of either race, such as racism, external pressures, societal pessimism, etc. In addition, these studies almost never addressed any other ethnicities. Those that did mention their glaring absence cited the oft-used reason that the size of the sample was too small to be found statistically significant. "Statistically insignificant", however, seems to be no longer appropriate for ethnic groups who are growing to be significantly larger portions of the population of higher education. As for the comparisons between men and women, these studies discounted the situation of women of color. In Tinto's work, in particular, he states that black students are more likely to leave because of academic difficulties. A few pages later, he says that women are far less likely to leave because of academic trouble and more due to emotional and psychological distress (1993). So, for black women, in this case, which is true? How can we assess the situation of the women of color in such a way that doesn't force the researcher to assess her behavior as more or less black or more or less female?

Turning to literature on race, I hoped to find a discussion of gender within the lens of race and ethnicity. I found several works dealing with black students and their experiences on predominately white campuses. A few directly addressed the issue of black student attrition in higher education. Currently, the field contains some scholars and commentators,

such as Theodore Cross and Stephan Thernstrom, who focus on whether the student was even qualified to attend the school in the first place. This theory is known as the "mismatch argument" (also known as the "bad fit" hypothesis) and is based on the idea that black students who don't do well at these selective, predominately white institutions are unsuccessful (or less successful) because their academic capabilities are below the academic standards of the school. This argument tends to end in opposition to affirmative action, pointing out how much better off students would be if they had not been admitted in the first place:

> *Mismatched students, the theory holds, are overmatched students. They have been admitted to institutions for which they would not have qualified had they been white or Asian. Unable to stand the competition, many will not make it to the end; those who do obtain a degree will be heavily over-represented at the bottom of the class and conspicuously absent from the top. They will have tended to avoid majors that are intellectually rigorous, and to have clustered in soft fields in which minimal effort will assure at least a passing grade. All of which raises a question: Do double standards do more good than harm?*

In another recent article by Stephen and Abigail Thernstrom, they go on to predict that graduation rates of black and Latino students will go up (by 19 and 17 percent, respectively) with the abolition of affirmative action. Their reasoning is that if only "qualified" minorities are admitted, then they will have a better chance of graduating with their class. However, it is questionable at best to assert that under-represented minorities leave college early because of academics. It is also lacking in the argument to address the student as the source of the problem without examining the institution and the students' interactions within it.

Within the debates in higher education, I am not alone in this critique. There is a significant contingent of scholars who question the meaning that can be extrapolated from this data. Alone, they feel, it cannot support the conclusion that black students are an academic "mismatch" for

these institutions; too many other variables exist. There are three recent studies that have made significant contributions in finding answers to this issue. The first is the College and Beyond study that was used to write William Bowen and Derek Bok's The Shape of the River. This book points out a major flaw in the previous data used in efforts to debunk the valor of affirmative action: Colleges for whom affirmative action is most relevant are those colleges who must be selective about the students they admit. "It is when there are strict limits on the number of places in an entering class and far more qualified applicants than places, that the choices become difficult and the issue of whether to give weight to race comes to the forefront." However, the data being used against affirmative action is compiled from a cross-section of schools, regardless of selectivity--unfairly comparing two different sections of the American student body. For this study, researchers re-collect the data using the actual students and schools in question. Within this new data set, they find that while some of the same trends continue, the numbers themselves tell a significantly different story. Black applicants to these schools still have an average SAT score that is lower than the average score for white applicants. However, about 74% of these black applicants scored higher on the SAT than the average score for white test-takers, and over 90% scored higher than the average score for black test-takers--marking them as "highly qualified" by any standards. In the same vein, black students at selective institutions have a graduation rate of roughly 75%, twice the average rate for black students nationwide. However, 75% is still about 10% lower than the rate for white students who entered the same year. Yale, in particular, has had an average six-year graduation rate of about 95% for the classes that entered between 1983 and 1992. In any given year in that span, black students have had rates that fell 5-15% below average.

Bowen and Bok do not deny the persistence of a black-white discrepancy; but they debunk the "question of qualification" and replace it with a challenge to look further. "Most students who fail to graduate do not drop out because they were incapable of meeting academic requirements.... Inability to do the academic work is often much less important than loss of motivation, dissatisfaction with campus life, changing career interests, family problems, financial difficulties, and poor health." They also testify to

the difficulty of establishing the causes for leaving college; their own attempts producing little data of value. "There is a need for more systematic research on the reasons why students drop out....The ordinary kinds of 'exit interviews' are unlikely to tell the full story. Some students are reluctant to give their true reasons for leaving school and may not even be entirely certain of their own motives for departing."

Other studies point to and encourage accepting this same challenge to look beyond academics. Michele Sebastian Downie in her dissertation, "The Impact of Racism and Sexism on the well-being of African-American Female College Students," asserts that major negative life events can have a severely detrimental effect on these women when combined with the presence of racism and sexism on campus. This proves a need, she says, for more support groups and programs to help black women cope with what could be "the straw that breaks the camel's back."

Not much research has been done on the "leaver of color," and even less on the female leaver of color. The aforementioned studies are characteristic of the field, in that they work to debunk negative stereotypes about why students of color drop out. However, few make their own assertion about what exactly is behind the process.

Some of the research done on students of color , however, has proven to be quite helpful in this regard. Claude Steele, for example, focuses on what he feels may be the most salient factor in the lives of black college students. From his research, he has coined the term "stereotype threat," concluding that the black-white performance gap has less to do with intelligence and more to do with black students' fear of fulfilling negative stereotypes associated with their racial group. This anxiety is most prevalent among black students who have already proven themselves to be good students and are now in selective institutions, a campus environment that reflects that achievement, which causes them to perform worse when they perceive that they're being compared to whites.

An example at how this anxiety manifests itself can be found in stan-

dardized test-taking. Black students and white students who had thus far shown similar "ability" in academic performance were given a standardized exam. All things being equal, these students should perform equally well on the test. However, when the test is presented as a measure of ability, black students score lower than the white students. When the test is instead presented as a "laboratory task that was used to study how certain problems are generally solved," then black students and white students performed equally well. Steele discovered that there is something about measuring ability that triggers a consciousness of inferiority, false or otherwise. This becomes very important when looking at schools like Yale, which can feed that feeling that one's ability is being scrutinized and tested. This view attacks the academic incapability theory directly and provides a whole new way of interpreting why the black-white gap persists in academics.

Similarly, but more in the vein of Tinto and Gambetta's work, some study and commentary on students of color consists of personal accounts of external/unseen pressures and interpersonal interactions as the source of the withdrawal. Interviews and autobiographical statements with black Yale alumni echo these sentiments. A 1961 graduate, Jonathan Bramwell speaks on his experiences at Yale in his book Courage and Crisis. In an excerpt published in the Yale Alumni Magazine, he writes: "To some extent, the difference in dropout rate between (remember 'highly qualified') black and (similarly highly qualified) white students is an indication of the nature and extent of non-academic pressures that make it intolerable for a black student to continue there." In another YAM article printed in 1969, four past and present black (male) Yale student leaders were interviewed about their experiences on campus. The article explores the issues of belonging, maintaining a black identity, feeling alone and different, being at Yale for the apparent purpose of exposing the white students to diversity and enriching their education, recruitment and retention of black students, a sense of "Black Yale" versus "White Yale," etc. They, too, address the problem of high dropout rates not as an effect of lacking academic skills, but as a function of their inclusion into the community as blacks and being allowed to associate and grow with other black students without stigmatization.

These studies represent important strides in better understanding what could be causing student attrition. However, they fail to take into account what many studies on black people neglect: a difference in gender. It is rarely assumed in each of the aforementioned studies that gender or the impact of sexism on black women could create a different campus environment than black men would experience. By failing to separate the data by gender within race not only furthers the canonical stereotype that "all the women are white and all the men are black," but that looking at black women could offer insight on the situations of black men and other women of color. There is very little data on graduation rates that is separated and analyzed by both race and gender. The NCAA Graduation-Rates Summary represented a start; they discovered that black women's rate of graduation was more affected by the students' participation in athletics than for any other group's rate—a differentiation of about 15%. Black men's variation was at approximately half their female counterparts' rate, while white male basketball and football players actually graduated at a lower rate than the average rate for white male students—showing that both race and gender need to be taken into account for a complete analysis of this issue.

Outside the NCAA statistics, articles that explore the situation of black female students and their high rate of withdrawal are glaringly absent. The next closest research and commentary deals with the broader subject of what being a black female college student is like on a predominately white campus. Articles like Downie's explain the complexities of interactions between racism, sexism, financial stress, family problems, community responsibility, identity, and feelings of isolation. Articles such as those by Emily Nelson in the New York Times and Shaheena Ahmad in the Yale Daily News reflect the potential stress of living on a campus where black women outnumber black men by as much as 3:1. Blair Golson's recent article in the Yale Daily News speaks vaguely to the difficulty in asserting your identity as a black man or woman, avoiding being labeled, and befriending those of a different gender and ethnicity.

Beyond these brief sketches, mostly broad assertions of black feminist and gender theory remain. Nevertheless, Beverly Guy-Sheftall's

anthology, Words of Fire, has proved useful in providing insight into the situation of black women in America. This collection of essays spans over one hundred years of writings by black women, among them abolitionists, activists, and professors. Frances Beale, one author, addresses the "double jeopardy" of being black and female. Deborah King adds to that analysis the discussion of class and the intersecting oppressions resulting from the combination of the three, with a reference to scholar Beverly Lindsay. Patricia Hill Collins challenges white academics to reexamine history as well as the present through the multi-sighted lenses of black women and to value that knowledge as universally useful. E. Frances White discusses gender relations within the context of being black. Together, they speak to many of the potential issues of black women on college campuses as well as what may be reasons for their high dropout rate.

Authors such as Nikki Giovanni, bell hooks, and June Jordan add to this discourse by taking on the issue of the struggles of black female faculty in higher education. They explore topics such as having to include themselves in their own curriculums, proving themselves accommodating and friendly to their white colleagues, fighting for equal pay, and sometimes actively not wanting tenure for fear of having a commitment to such a hostile working environment. Hooks speaks to the idea, mentioned earlier, of black women having a privileged (as opposed to tangential and biased) viewpoint on society specifically because of the intersection between race and gender. Jordan and Giovanni speak to the inevitable difficulty of being a black student on these campuses, but stress the importance of their persistence and their responsibility to both past and future generations. While these sentiments are meant to be encouraging, it is clear how they, as faculty, are dealing with a different group of difficulties, and how their comments (in the vein of Steele's stereotype threat) can inadvertently put more stress on the student to achieve "for the race."

Hence, the current purpose of this study has become an exploration of the reasons behind the numbers--focusing on black women and the reasons why they leave college. Then those findings will be analyzed in order to assess what insights they might offer for other student populations.

Tinto's analysis, as well as his extrapolations from Durkheim's suicide theories and Gennep's rites of passage analyses, will provide the framework for this study. His work, in particular, provides a series of potential variables and mechanisms that lead to student withdrawal. These, along with the other pertinent research, can provide a start and allow me to focus on what might be particular to black women as well as what might be applicable to other portions of the student body.

When looking at a group of students to determine why they may leave college before obtaining their degree, it is vital to look at the situation as holistically as possible. As the research mentioned before has shown, it is as important to examine the student as an individual as it is to analyze the institution, and both of those are as important as looking at the internal and external dynamics of both. Thus, we are looking not only for the salient variables in a student's decision to drop out of college but the mechanisms of how these variables come together and create the given outcome.

I agree with Tinto's assessment of the individual, the institution and the external as three important fields in which to examine the processes of withdrawal. Each contains forces which could propel the student towards or away from persistence. First, let's look at the individual. According the Tinto, the individual student is guided by two major forces: intention and commitment. Intention represents the answer to why the student came to college in the first place. To become a lawyer is a very different intention than to continue one's education for the sake of learning. Both are very different from the intention to get a degree from a prestigious school in order to attain a well-paying job. Each of these can determine how the student will see her undergraduate education and how essential the education is to achieving her goals. A student majoring in economics, for example, can more easily come to believe (if school is not working out for her) that she can start her own business and make it lucrative without the benefit of an undergraduate degree than a pre-med student is likely to successfully convince herself that she can become a doctor without a bachelor's degree.

Commitment follows the same train of thought in that it is important to what extent a student feels an undergraduate education at her particular institution is crucial to her success. If she determines that she wants an undergraduate degree but that it doesn't have to be from Yale, for example, commitment is lower than if she was intent on receiving a Yale degree in particular. In the same way, if the student wants to do missionary work in Zimbabwe and feels that having a Yale degree is only beneficial insofar as it allows her to spread the gospel and study abroad in Zimbabwe, then commitment to graduation is lower than the commitment to the larger goal of evangelizing overseas. As one can see, the two forces of commitment and intention are closely intertwined and most times inextricable.

Second, there is the institution. The major forces within the institutional setting are identified (by Tinto) as adjustment, difficulty, incongruence, and isolation. These factors seem to be most easily applicable to contemporary studies of black students. Much research now is beginning to see the effects of the institution on black students' success. Adjustment refers to the adaptability of the student to the university, whether it be intellectually or socially. Black students tend to suffer in both areas, women seem to suffer in science and math majors; it is still unclear how black women fare in this dichotomy. Is one aspect of their being more salient in this situation? Are the two issues compounded? Or do new issues arise?

Difficulty refers to both the actual and the perceived difficulty of the subject at hand. Is the institution challenging? Is it not challenging enough? Yale is the focus of our case study here, and it is perhaps least likely that students do not find it challenging enough. More probable is that the academic work expected of the students is of a high quality. Where the difference emerges is both what the standards of that quality are and how that expectation affects the students' performance. As discussed previously with stereotype threat, the expectation that comes with Yale student status is high while black and female students are expected to do less well than others. This fear of fulfilling the negative and not living up to positive expec-

tations can seriously hamper performance below the level commensurate with the student's potential.

Incongruence is measured by the degree to which the student's values are commensurate with the values of the institution. This is especially prevalent at an institution like Yale which has a liberal arts curriculum. Within this framework, students have a wealth of theoretical knowledge available to them in almost every area. However, there is no social work degree, no computer technology degree, no business major. In short, there is no course of study which would directly prepare a student for entry into the workforce upon graduation. Although some research states that   vocational training often limits women and minorities (again analyzing the two categories separately) to lower status, gender/race-"typical" jobs, many students have commented on the difficulty of imagining the "real-world"   relevance of their courses and the lack of motivation that follows. Yale is a feeder into graduate and pre-professional study (and, some would add, New York City investment banking/consulting jobs). It values degrees, wealth, and ascension into the upper levels of academia. For students who may not have these as their goals (read: intentions), incongruence is likely to be   fostered. It is possible that this can prove to be a great point of contention for women and for black students. Both are more likely to be affected by external factors (which will be discussed later) which may be completely out of line with the values of the institution (Astin, 1975). It is possible that black women may be affected in a similar way.

Isolation is the last factor to fall under the umbrella of the institution. Isolation in this situation refers to the extent to which the   university's mainstream culture is most likely to be exclusive or inclusive of black women. Isolation can be fostered by a lack of similar faces present in the senior faculty levels or even in the faculty at all. Isolation can stem from the feeling that one's interests are not being represented at the   admin-istrative level or at the level of the student body. Incongruence can foster isolation in the same way in which each of the aforementioned factors can play a role in influencing each other. Difficulty cannot be examined separately from incongruence and adjustment and isolation can certainly go hand in

hand. It is important to remember this as we examine the individual case studies of black women at Yale.

The last major player in the situation of leaving is the external forces, which Tinto isolates as obligations and finances. Obligations refer to both one's past, present, and future commitments to the outside world. As was mentioned before when discussing incongruence, external obligations have been shown to be a likely influence on black students and female students separately. A student may have a major connection with family issues at home, such as illness or discord, which may affect her ability to concentrate on what may seem, in comparison, like trite and superfluous work. In the same way, a student who is supported by her external community and encouraged to get her degree may experience the same university differently than the student who is made to feel as if she has betrayed her family by leaving, or who is pressured to be the first to "make it through" in the midst of a family pattern of not graduating from college.

In the same way, finances represent an external force which can, at times, seem to be a very internal mechanism. A student who does not have to include financial resources to her list of stressors is in a different position than a student who must work. Also a student who is being fully financed by her parents may have a higher level of obligation to them than someone who is working her own way through school. Any of these situations could have a profound effect on persistence, not to mention physical and psychological health.

In examining these categories of variables, Tinto has provided us with a very useful format by which to view persistence. In addition, he has gone on to theorize about how these variables interact with one another. For this study, his application of Durkheim's suicide theory to college persistence can be particularly illuminating. Durkheim, in his studies on suicide, felt that suicide was an indicator of not only the individual and his particular situation, but the individuals relation or inability to relate to the society in which he lived. In particular, aggregate assessments of suicide could tell a great deal about the society itself. Tinto made it clear, however,

that he was not in particular trying to say that suicide was anything like dropping out of college. What he meant was to propose a way of looking at why and how people choose to "exit" a particular situation.

Durkheim (1966) offers an analysis of suicide that delineates the phenomenon into four types: anomic, egoistic, fatalistic, altruistic. Seeing as how altruistic suicide refers to a "morally desirable" exit and anomic refers to a exit due to the normlessness created in crisis, these two types are less useful to our study in that they are generally situation-specific and time-sensitive. Anomic, however, may be loosely associated since the period of race and gender awareness we are currently in could be described as normlessness. No one is quite sure how to reverse the racism and sexism of the past toward a livable present. We may gain significant insight by looking at fatalistic suicide (born of excessively norm-restrictive conditions) if we imagine selective colleges and universities as overrun with the confining norms of the white mainstream and western canon. Nonetheless, we will focus on Tinto's assessment of egotistical suicide as being the most relevant to the study of early withdrawal. Egotistical suicide is the result of an inability of the individual to become integrated into the community. In Durkheim's own analysis, he identified two forms of integration: social and intellectual. Social integration refers to the interpersonal daily interactions with, in this case, other students and administration. Intellectual integration reflects a set of shared values around which the student and the surrounding individuals can interact. According to Tinto, if this integration is not achieved, the likelihood of persistence is drastically lowered.

Using these tools of analysis, Tinto makes an aside in his commentary to discuss how these mechanisms can affect black students and female students. He analyzes the two categories separately, however, like most of his contemporaries. Thus, these hypotheses can only be used as a starting point for research on black women and other women of color. Tinto relates the persistence of black students primarily to academic factors. He acknowledges the assumption that black students are more likely to come from disadvantaged backgrounds with poor schooling. However, he

continues by emphasizing that there may be "noncognitive" factors that can play an equal or larger role. The three forces he lists are: a positive academic self-concept, a realistic self-appraisal, and familiarity with the requirements and demands of the institutions. It may be more important, in his opinion, for black students to be assured of these things than white students. In addition, their academic performance will be not only a marker of their ability but of their interactions with faculty and other students in classroom settings.

Tinto also feels it is important that black students are integrated socially into the institution, particularly into formal organizations that represent the school or student body as a whole and have contact with administrators. It is also important that the black student feels her interests are being supported within the mainstream culture of the institution. This is apparently more important for black students than white students. Also emphasized is the importance of having a "critical mass" of black students on campus and having a critical mass that forms a supportive community. Finally, finances are a recurring theme and play a concrete part in a student's decision to withdraw from school. Overall, Tinto feels that although racism is a crucial element in integration into a college, he feels that most of what black student encounter versus white students is more a matter of intensity than qualitatively different experiences.

When speaking of female students, Tinto first admits that the knowledge of female students, especially as college leavers, is lacking. "The fact is that even with the recent surge of interest in persistence we still know relatively little about the specific attributes of attrition among females...". The little knowledge amassed on women concentrates more on their social experience as a reason for leaving. He asserts that women are much less likely than men to drop out because of academic difficulties and much more likely to leave voluntarily due to psychological or social circumstances. They tend to have a lower commitment than men to their institution because women in general are less likely to be in occupation-specific fields, according to Tinto. In general, women are more affected by external pressures than men. Again, Tinto feels the difference in pressure is more a matter of

degree than actual difference in the variables.

What my research is attempting to do is to build upon Tinto and Durkheimian theory to create hypotheses for the withdrawal of black female students. It is no longer sufficient to examine black students as a monolithic, genderless group and female students as a homogeneous uniracial group. We need to examine the situation of women of color as a distinct group in order to make accurate extrapolations and recommendations for their increased retention in higher education. We need not start from scratch, however. The literature on black students and female students can be helpful in creating a jumping off point from which to begin   theorizing.

First, the common results between studies of black students and studies of female students are the most likely (but certainly not guaranteed) to be applicable to black female students. The most salient commonality found in this literature was the impact of external forces on persistence. We have seen in the literature that there are a variety of external factors which come into play when assessing the performance and persistence of black students such as stereotype threat, racism on campus, and a tendency toward disadvantaged backgrounds. In like manner, there are several studies (Astin, 1975; Tinto, 1993) which state that external factors such as marriage, or family obligations play a much larger role in the persistence of women than men. From this, we can assume that the external forces impacting black students and female students are each applicable to black female students. Thus, their risk of having external pressures that could decrease their probability for persistence versus white, or black male students is presumably elevated.

Also important to this discussion is Tinto's assertion that even with all the multiple sources of influence in one's decision to leave college, the internal factors far superseded the external factors in importance. As far he was concerned, the internal factors and the degree to which the student could become integrated into the institution were the most dependable determinants of persistence. External factors were seen as something that

could only impact persistence insofar as the student viewed their internal experience as isolated, incongruous, or otherwise sensitive to outside events. What I argue here is that, for black women, this is precisely the case. Research shows that as black students and as female students their internal experience is likely to be made tenuous by the difficulties of integrating oneself into the institution. The research also shows that they are more susceptible to external forces because they are both black and female. Thus, black female students are subject to exactly the sort of pressure Tinto speaks of as the exception to the rule.

Viewed solely in light of the literature, however, this is still a yet untested theory. Survey results in the present literature separates the data according to race and gender, but rarely isolate the responses of black women or other women of color. Only a very few studies even perform

The Experiment

in-depth interviews to provide the reader with the voice of the student leaver herself (Seymour and Hewitt, 1997). This study seeks to provide a model for filling this gap in the literature. The primary source of information used to gather information on black female student "leavers" was the personal in-depth interview. Also, I conducted group interviews with current and past black female students. The subjects were all, at some point in the last five years, enrolled at Yale University. They majored in everything from political science to African-American Studies to the History of Medicine. Extra-curricularly, they danced, sang, tutored, sketched, wrote poetry, led organizations, performed in plays, played sports, and a variety of other things. Some were from financially frail backgrounds while others were more economically secure. Some were only children while others had several siblings as well as other live-in relatives. Some of their parents had multiple degrees, others had none, still others had a family history of not completing college. Some students who wanted to participate but could not make it to the scheduled interviews submitted written comments on their experiences at Yale.

In the interviews I had a short questionnaire of items I wanted to cover, but for the most part allowed the subjects to tell the stories in their

own way. From this I was able to discern which issues were most salient for them. In the same way, I had a few guidelines for the group interviews but for the most part allowed the conversation to take its own spin. For these exploratory purposes, these interviews served not only as a sweeping source of information for this research, but as a pilot for identifying where problems are most likely to arise as well as what questions spawn the most thorough responses.

In the interviews with black female student leavers several themes rose to the surface that support the model of internal and external factors interacting upon persistence. First was the theme of intention and commitment.   The students commonly remarked upon their entry into Yale as an event marked by uncertainty and a lack of excitement about Yale. "I was happy to be accepted, but I'm not so sure I was all that excited about going to Yale, though," was a common response. One student described it by saying, "I knew I was doing what I was supposed to do, but I didn't know what I wanted to do. I felt like I was drifting along out of my control."   All commented on deciding upon

The Interviews

Yale because it was Yale. "It's Yale; I had to go." One respondent said of her experience, "I visited Harvard and quickly decided it wasn't for me...It was well understood that Yale was the 'next best thing', so I accepted the admission." Only one of them was sure of what she wanted to do occupationally, and many were going to college because it was viewed by the student and their family/community as the next logical step. Many saw going away to school less as a function of what they would be moving towards and much more about what they would be leaving behind. "By the time it was time to go, I was ready to be free...Life has to start sometime," she said. "Might as well be now." None of them knew particularly what it was they wanted to get accomplished by going to Yale, but they were sure that as a black woman, it would be unthinkable to turn down the opportunity to at least try it out, not to mention that a degree from such a prestigious school would be a valuable asset in whatever career they decided to pursue. Several   respondents reported hearing and thinking things like, "It's such a good opportunity," and "It's not every day that Yale takes a black girl." However, all but

one of them reported having another, less nominally prestigious school as their first choice. Among their top choices were the University of Michigan, Smith, and Emory. And all but one named their mother as the largest influence in their decision to pursue Yale despite their personal preferences. In fact, many remember these initial reactions and persuasions as having made their decision for them.

When my mom saw the letter, she fell down on her knees and started praising God and crying out, "I always wanted to go to Yale, and now I am sending my child!" I was excited and proud, but not really. But I knew then that I would go to Yale [emphasis added]. I wanted to please my family. Amherst was nice; I really liked the classes. I really wanted to go there. But the name Yale was bigger.

I applied to Yale because my mother wanted me to apply. My first choice was actually the University of Michigan. I was born in Ann Arbor, my mother got both of her degrees from there; I had always felt like a 'Wolverine.' But because my mother thought I could and should go to an Ivy League school, she had me fill out the applications. [In general, their commitment hinged on the social utility and parental preference for Yale as an institution.]

This, in and of itself, however, is far from enough to merit early withdrawal. Many students who decide to come to Yale are likely to have similar experiences in the midst of making their own decisions. Turning, then, to the institution, we can begin to see how exactly their experience begins to play out in Tinto's theory on institutional forces. Although all the four factors relating to the institution were discussed in some form or fashion, the one most frequently referred to was isolation. Repeatedly, the interviewed leavers discussed feeling as though they were not creating enough meaningful relationships.

If I look back on my Yale career and think about how many people I have met here that will actually be significant in my life in the future…(long pause)…who I want to keep in touch with…that I've created friendships

with...(long pause)...I don't know. I might be able to name two. And they are maybes.

Some students felt that their deans and professors should have been like mentors and advisors. Instead, they seemed more like judges or distant idols to revere and never question. They felt as though other students' motivation for befriending them had to be questioned in light of the fact that it was supposedly socially beneficial to get to know one's classmates at Yale. False relationships were often developed that disguised networking strategies of those trying to make the "most" out of their four years at Yale.

I think a lot of us have the idea here that these people are about to become the rulers of the nation, and "I want to know them at least peripherally so that when they make their niche in the world, I can say, 'I went to school with X'." Very few people who were interested in you and many who were interested in what you could do for them. There was a confidence that people would do well when they left, so there was a desire to reach out.

Other students commented that a quiet sense of competition kept classmates from sharing their failures and difficulties with each other. Each person was presumably trying to pretend that everything was okay with them, and as a result felt as though they were the only one having problems.

There's always a certain amount of vulnerability that nobody gives up in order to present the facade of being strong and competitive and intellectual and capable...all of that. You never really let anybody get underneath that here because then that would put you in a position to be screwed by the top one percent of the nation. And who wants that?

I felt like everybody had a partner in crime. There was too much "being by myself." I wasn't asking anyone for help. ...Externally I was a lot of fun, but I was dying inside.

Some students commented on the residential college system, in particular, creating a sense of isolation. In order for Yale College to achieve

some degree of diversity within each residential college dorm, it attempts to divide its students of color somewhat evenly among the colleges. Freshman year, most of the freshman live together on a single quad, and thus have a chance to form friendships both across and within race. After the first year, however, students generally move into their residential colleges where the friends they have made are likely to be scattered among the different college dorms, especially if these friends were of the same race or ethnicity. This can decrease the potential for ethnically supportive communities within one's residential college and make it hard to identify students who are "slipping through the cracks", which some students noted. "The way it's structured," one student remarked, "you can completely lose track of people."

Incongruence, however, also played a role in students' decisions to withdraw. Many students mentioned the incongruence between the values they held (or those the school purported to hold) and those they perceived to be held by the institution. In particular, many students felt that although the assumed purpose of attending Yale was to receive a high quality education, they were learning something altogether different.

I was seeing friends' values change--having people whom you grew up with became more conservative, putting aside their heartfelt goals to pursue lofty, corporate jobs... Similar references were made to the tendency of Yale to create and value the "typical corporate profile" and to "churn out robots". There was a common complaint that Yale is mass-producing its graduates as carbon copies of each other.

It just sends us into the corporate world. This is what Yale does. This is what it's taught me. I'm getting a B.S. in white collar crime., a bullshitter's degree in how to be a white collar criminal. (making reference to students who cheat on exams and share the privileged information with other select individuals) That's what I've learned.

[I was] constantly wondering what the hell kind of place I was in...with people whose sole concern was using their degree to become wealthy and knowing that these naked, drunk, self-serving idiots would be

the next presidents, CEOs, congresspersons…

Life is so much bigger than all these little books and papers. [We act] like what we do here is so important. But it's not. It's not important. Everybody here has a family somewhere…has people…had a life before we came here. But we all go to New York [upon graduation], becoming automatons. Why is that? That would be a darn interesting study: to see how many people came from other places and then all ended up in New York doing the same thing.

Many felt they saw clear evidence of institutional racism, all felt that the situation at Yale was at least fundamentally different for black students. Many students noted that a disproportionate number of black students went before "Ex-Com" (The Executive Committee for disciplinary action) for offenses for which the procedure for many white students tended to be less severe. Several different students noted that a disproportionate number of black students were being accused of cheating and plagiarism after having done high quality work. In the case of one respondent, she was placed on a mandatory two-term leave in a case in which someone else cheated off of her exam--even though she thought the committee made it clear that they believed she was not the cheater. In punishing her as well as the cheater (who was expelled); they told her they were looking to "set precedent." In a similar case, another respondent was brought before Ex-Com because one of her suitemates owned a hot pot that set the room on fire. Although she stated that she knew nothing about the hot pot, she recounts that Ex-Com could not believe that she was so isolated from her suitemates that she didn't know about the appliance. This was despite her dean's assurance that he would "be able to handle the situation" as dean of the Law School and member of the Executive Committee. In the end she was placed on probation, ordered to pay a fine with the rest of the suite, which she could only afford by working more hours at a day care, one of her two jobs while on campus. "Quite honestly," she said, "at the hearing, I wondered if he even knew my name." This contrasts sharply with another respondent's account of a cheating episode when her suitemate, who is white and female, admitted to her freshman counselor that she had plagiarized on a term paper. Her

counselor told the dean who then passed the information along to the instructor who told the student it was "no big deal" and not to worry about it. Ex-Com was not notified, and no disciplinary action was taken. Other students reported deans who refused to take their problems seriously. One student whose mother had been ill almost six months, was required to obtain a note from her mother certifying that she was actually sick.

More specific to the classroom experience, while respondents felt their instructors were very knowledgeable in their respective fields, some students felt their instructors simply wanted them to regurgitate the information given to them in the book and lectures. Other students found that their instructors often created tests that were only marginally based on the book and lectures and required far more experience in the field than most students possessed. Other students found that some teaching assistants graded lower on papers and exams that reflected a different view-point than their own. One student was given a failing grade on the content of her paper written on the black church because, as her professor expressed to her upon returning the paper, there was no such entity.

A common complaint, especially among former science majors, was that the grading system was too harsh to be beneficial. Students who were accustomed to getting 90-100 percent on exams were suddenly scoring 20 and 30 percent~or lower. This creates a psychological dissonance that caused more than what they felt was a healthy amount of stress, as evidenced by the following conversation:

Group IV (science and math) tests are not a measure of what you know but a mirror of what you don't know. Then [once you see your grade], you're self-handi-capped. I thought I was the only one struggling; [at Yale…it was the] first time I ever got a single-digit score out of 100. And that low score is demoralizing. You figure that if you don't study, you can get the same grade. That fixes the cognitive dissonance. Then you can tell yourself you were "lazy". Because you can fix laziness; you can't fix stupidity.

These same students felt that their professors were less interested in

whether or not they grasped the material being taught, which is presumably the purpose of an exam, than they were about keeping high scores to a minimum. "It's like teachers at Yale want you to do badly in order to confirm their genius." Professors were reported to tell their classes: "I don't give A's" or "I have no problem failing every single one of you." In addition, many students reported an absence of learning something "useful", as was discussed previously in the section about incongruence. Respondents often remarked that much of the material taught is theoretical and there is little allowance for attempting to apply it to real-world examples.

Difficulty seems like it would be an issue very closely related to persistence at an institution like Yale. However, it rarely arised in conversations with students who had withdrawn from the university. (It was much more prevalent among those who stayed, which will be discussed at a later point.) When difficulty was discussed, it was most often referred to as a point of irritation rather than a reason for leaving. They acknowledged that the work was difficult and seemed to be larger in volume than was required to learn the subject at hand. Nevertheless, it seemed to fit with the ethos of Yale, which was what they emphasized being most at odds with. "Yale's purpose is to break you down," was a sentiment voiced by more than one respondent. One person described it as similar to an initiation--it would be physically and mentally trying but the end result (in this case, the degree) would signify membership and completion, meant to compensate for the student's hard work. Only, some never got up from being broken down. The barrage of papers, exams, and other expectations was too much on top of the other pressures and burdens from the other facets of the students' lives. "Most students who fail to graduate do not drop out because they were incapable of meeting academic requirements. Inability to do the academic work is often much less important than loss of motivation, dissatisfaction with campus life, changing career interests, family problems, financial difficulties, and poor health" --all of which, I will show soon, frequently appear among the stories of these black female students.

Adjustment was an issue for most of the respondents. Many expressed a lack of knowledge about what they were "in for." Others

expressed how different their classmates were from the friends and family they grew up with. More than one talked about not really being sure of who they were or in tune with what they were going through in their last year at home. They discussed "putting on a certain face" for the people at high school, usually one that portrayed a carefree, smart, black woman destined and ready for great things, when in fact they were unsure of what they wanted or deserved, who they were obligated to, and what they were supposed to do with all the "favor" resting upon them. The discomfort of their adjustment was heightened by a sense that many freshmen were themselves in the process of discovery and "putting on a face" or "pretending to be someone they're not", making getting to know people difficult.

I always felt set apart and put in a unique position. At an early age, my teachers were telling me I was special. I felt set apart from other black students. By the time senior year came, I had already started to go down. There were too many people trying to take me under their wing. I was so busy pleasing other people, I wasn't sure who I was. ...And Yale is the home of people with something to prove. Some of our first conversations on campus included: What was your SAT score? And yours?

In particular, adjusting to the university community tended to be an issue for several of the respondents. Many of the mainstream activities included mostly white students, whereas most of the activities that included primarily black students were not considered mainstream. One particular respondent auditioned for and was selected to be a member of two singing groups: one primarily white students, one primarily students of color. Upon choosing the primarily white group, she began to feel as though other black students were questioning her decision~viewing it as a decision between belonging to the black or white community on campus. This, in turn, made her feel uncomfortable around groups of other black students, and eventually joined a predominantly black group in order to relieve the pressure. Another student found that she was trying to "straddle the fence" in a sense. She attended primarily white parties and parties with predominantly black and/or Latino students. Rarely, if ever, could she get the two groups to mix and this caused her distress as she underwent the process of discovering

herself if she thought one was better than the other. Both students viewed the white community and the communities of color as being very separate on campus and felt the tension in attempting to participate in more than one group at a time, or trying to participate in a group that did not match your own ethnicity.   Some students had to adjust to this predominantly white environment from a predominantly black or Latino community. Several others had attended primarily white high schools and lived in predominantly white neighborhoods and thus tended to be harder on themselves when adjustment was difficult. These students were more likely to feel that the white and minority students at their high school did not feel such a need to be as separate from each other as Yale students seem to.

As I mentioned before, none of these internal factors exist in a vacuum. Isolation, for example, is shaped by adjustment and incongruent experiences. In the same way, external factors are working to shape the experience of each student. External obligations appear to play a large role in the lives of black students and female students according to the research, and these respondents for the most part prove the theory. Some have concrete obligations that they are called upon to attend to during the school year. One respondent's mother fell ill and consequently wanted her daughter home often, although she herself was recuperating from a lung infection from earlier in the year. Others experience traumatic events that are also outside the realm of the university. One respondent's mother was diagnosed with cancer during her time at Yale, compounding the fact that the family was already battling substance abuse and homelessness before the student went off to school. Another was in an automobile accident where she received five concussions and a broken arm that required a titanium plate and 11 screws. She was forced to stay home for a year and undergo physical therapy. The latter instance, however, turned out to fall more into the category of what most of the respondents felt was external pressure. This is not to say that most students who withdraw do so because of automobile accidents but, in her case, what happened to her after she arrived home from the hospital. Once she was healthy enough to be out of bed, relatives and friends began putting pressure on her to go back to school. "I couldn't even stand upright, much less look into a computer screen," she commented of

that time period. However, they were worried because, as she put it: "black folks have a history of leaving school and not coming back." Thus, upon her recovery and return to school, she entered with the pressure to finish and not be like "all the others." She reported developing a single-minded drive to get her diploma.

I would not like to see the look on people's faces...I wouldn't even want to mention Yale again for the rest of my life. Because people would have thought that I couldn't hack it and that's why I didn't come back. I created a stigma for myself. The college degree was the goal in the   beginning. But once I got to Yale, I had to get a Yale degree because if I don't, it's like a show of failure on my part. I didn't want to say, "Yeah, I went to Yale, but then I broke my arm and had to go to school at home." That's not what people want to hear.

This story is echoed throughout the respondents' stories. Each one reported feeling as though their acceptance here put them under an obligation to accept it and obtain the Yale degree. It bears repeating that each one listed a different school other than Yale as their first choice school. However, due to the influence of family, teachers, and/or counselors, they chose to attend Yale because of the benefits and opportunity it promised, a practice shown to be somewhat typical of black students. When troubles surfaced, they were reminded of their commitment to getting a Yale degree, their commitment to their family members and friends who never had the chance to attend Yale or any school like it, and younger brothers, sisters, and cousins who are looking up to them as an example. The list of burdens that these students carry is a mile high.

I thought about transferring, but I couldn't live down that I had passed up Yale. I want to have the finer things in life; not for me but for my family. And Yale is an investment in that. I literally have dreams about taking my mother to live in a nice house in a nice place. I mean, I do want things for myself, but when I think about how my grandmother sacrificed...(pause)...I have to [go back to Yale].

They aren't simply going to school for themselves, they are going for their mothers and fathers, grandmothers and grandfathers, brothers and sisters, and communities and churches. Many, in fact, used these same words to describe their situations. Often, they reported going home over breaks and noticing how differently they were treated: at times, like the golden child on whom so much hope for the future rested, and at other times, like the wayward child who apparently thinks they are better than those they left behind. Joseph Soares describes a similar phenomenon in his discussion of the working-class student at Oxford University in England:

"When speaking in his usual surroundings, too, he may be ridiculed, and he feels that he is despised. People use such an opportunity as an excuse to deride someone of whose success they are jealous and who represents to them the personification of the working classes' traditional enemy. As he ascends each rung of the educational ladder...he leaves behind the life he has known, feels increasingly estranged in his new surroundings, and becomes increasingly embarrassed and confused." Soares, p. 90-91. This passage was written by working-class student who decided himself eventually not to pursue further study at Oxford.

The black female respondents in this study faced a tremendous amount of these types of stressors and pressures during (and before and presumably after) their time at Yale. Their lives were impacted significantly by both internal and external factors. What was most noticeable, however, is how consistently students mismatched the gravity of their situations with their emotional reactions. There was a distinct tendency, in fact, for the students to laugh or smile or roll their eyes when telling me about experiences or situations that society could deem quite traumatic and/or painful, such as car accidents, being homeless in high school, or losing a parent to death, mental illness, or estrangement. They also expressed a sense of guilt or uncertainty about their problems. They weren't sure whether their issues were serious enough to merit the intensity of the accompanying emotions. In fear of blowing a situation "out of proportion", many of them expressed suppressing what seemed to me to be an appropriate emotional reaction in order to feel like they were "holding it together." Or they felt that many other people were going through what they were going through or worse,

and were handling it just fine. There was a distinct feeling that they had no right to complain. The assumed "privilege" associated with   admission to Yale often compounds the feeling. Compared to things people were going through at the University of Michigan, I don't have problems. I'm struggling, and I've had so many advantages.

It is difficult to say with certainty why the respondents would not allow themselves to believe that what they were going through merited anger, distress, depression, anxiety. However, many, when describing their parents, especially the mother, discuss the sacrifices made by them in order that the student might have an opportunity at something better. Others discuss how their parents endured much greater struggles, presumably without complaining. Add to this the video images of black men and women being blown against walls by the blast of fire hoses or attack dogs, stories of black men and women who faced injustice and unjust people defiantly, and it is perhaps more feasible that these students deny their right to be anxious, scared, sad, or overwhelmed in the face of college difficulties. In comparison, contemporary struggles may seem minute. This is a phenomenon that appears to plague all of the respondents, along with the depression and suicidal thoughts that isolation often produced. Because of their feelings, many of them turned to mental health services provided by the university. Each one eventually abandoned it--either because they felt their doctor was unduly pushing them toward drugs rather than offering more helpful ways of looking at the situation or because they had too many other obligations (work, school, home) to finish all of the work required at Yale and go to appointments with a psychologist.

Poring through psychological texts to find record of this phenomenon brought up very little. Some things that may be related did show up, such as non-western cultures that stress collectivism with the whole being more important than the individual and the individual, in turn, being responsible to the whole. Also possible is the coping mechanism of isolation (not to be confused with previous uses of the term "isolation"), where the individual separates the event from the feeling that accompanies it, allowing herself to remember it without having to acknowledge the pain or gravity of
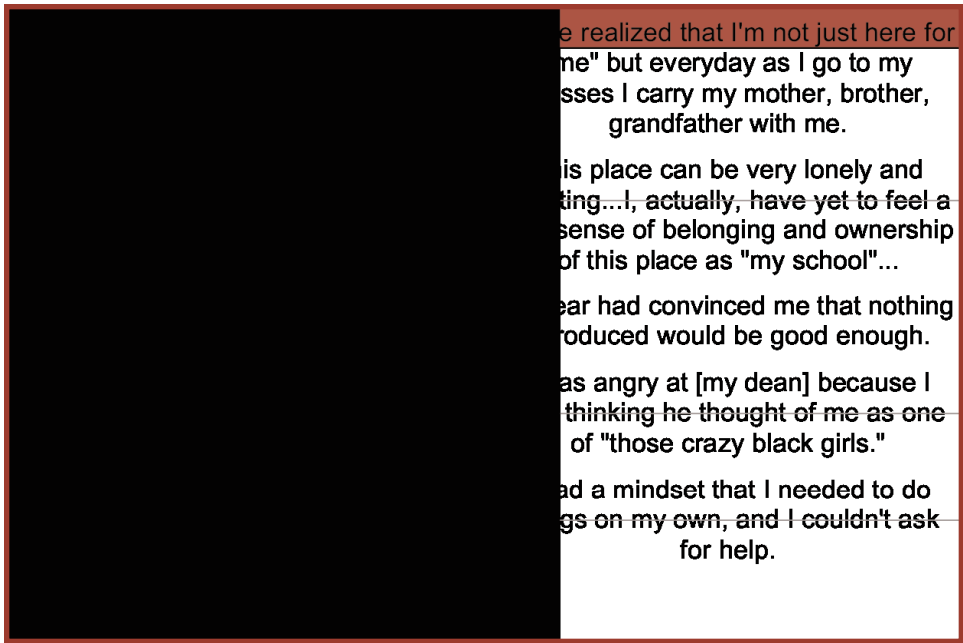
the situation. At the root, it appears to be a self-esteem issue--a feeling most respondents acknowledged within themselves, although our common understandings of self-esteem as liking or not liking oneself are insufficient to describe this phenomenon. Instead, what appears to be occurring is a nagging feeling that one can endure more than what one is currently going through while simultaneously feeling incapable of persisting. This appears to be accompanied by a belief that others have endured and are presently enduring more than the individual is and are handling it with less internal turmoil. Whether or not this is true is virtually unable to be discovered due to the aforementioned phenomenon among Yale students of being less willing to share their failures and difficulties with one another, especially in the black community. This, in turn, appears to be remotely related to a phenomenon described in Seymour and Hewitt's work, where women in science, math, or engineering majors described "giving themselves permission" to major in those fields, because of societal messages that females aren't good at hard science. The whole effect is a tightly-woven web of assumptions and overestimated coping abilities that foster repression and self-defeating behavior, which may or may not lead directly to departure but, at best, certainly plays a role in adding to an already burdened Yale experience.

If this hyper-realistic assessment of one's problems and difficulties is in fact a major contributor to departure among black female students, then it seems that this is an issue with which rectification can be reasonably attempted. It is possible to create settings in which black female students are encouraged to share their difficulties and disappointments with each other, in order to reduce the feeling of being alone in one's struggle. Also, it might be better if these settings included students who were not black and female, thus decreasing the tendency for each woman to tell the other that everything will be fine, that it will work out, instead of acknowledging their pain as pain. These students either feel obligated to encourage one another constantly (as black female students) or to compete with one another for the scarce resources on this campus. Also, the disproportionately high number of black females as compared to black males on college campuses, but Yale in particular, skews the balance of interactions, dynamics and power within

the black student community.   Other things could be factors as well:
perhaps there are more black women entering the sciences or pre-med study,
creating a keener sense of competition. Whatever the reason, this mindset
is hurting black female students and is a recurring factor in students who
decide to withdraw.

What is equally curious is the way in which those black female
students who have elected to stay at Yale or who graduated within four years
are voicing many of the same concerns and problems as those who leave.
They, too, remarked often about feeling isolated. They often felt at odds
with the values the institution put forth. Particularly, the grading and
teaching style in the sciences was especially detrimental and negative. Many
described their Yale experience in terms of a war-like event: "struggle",
"trial," "pain," "ordeal," "hell." These are uncharacteristically harsh terms
for what are stereotypically described as the best years of one's life. They also
shared the burden of the family. Many were looked upon as the single or
first hope of the family to achieve academic success that might lead to   eco-
nomic success. Some are attending school in the wake of parents or older
siblings and cousins who either dropped out of school themselves or gradu-
ated with flying colors in four years. Many reported clinical depression or
depressive episodes due to the stress of the convergence of the internal and
external. Some of their quotes mirrored each other almost exactly, as shown
in the table below:

Some differences did emerge, however. Those women who stayed
remarked upon the meaningful relationships and mentorships they built
amid the superficiality. A few had a particular connection to their residen-
tial college. Many more reported having made at least one really good friend
who has supported them for the bulk of the past four years. Others report-
ed having a faculty member who was in support of their academic success
and endeavors. Unfortunately, the only thing that kept some persisters
enrolled was a home life more dismal than their situation at Yale or the lack
of what Michele Downie called "major negative life events" that they feel
might have pushed them over the edge. However, still others found
perspective in their belief in a higher power, believing that God would take

e realized that I'm not just here for me" but everyday as I go to my sses I carry my mother, brother, grandfather with me.

is place can be very lonely and ting...I, actually, have yet to feel a sense of belonging and ownership of this place as "my school"...

ar had convinced me that nothing roduced would be good enough.

as angry at [my dean] because I thinking he thought of me as one of "those crazy black girls."

ad a mindset that I needed to do gs on my own, and I couldn't ask for help.

care of all things in their proper time and manner. Many cited their spiritual growth and connection to God as the primary retaining force in their Yale careers.

There is a certain amount of politics involved in who receives the opportunity to study at colleges and universities like Yale. There is also a

Conclusion

certain amount of politics involved in the use of graduation rates to critique the process of allocating this opportunity. In the middle of all this, however, is the issue of precisely why some students are not graduating. If the answer is primarily academics, then the preceding critique of allocation might have

some validity. In the literature, however, we have found that is not the case. Many more factors, such as finances, faculty, and the campus environment play a role. In searching for the reasons behind a student's decision to leave college, things such as race, gender, and SES are all addressed in the literature. They are addressed separately, however, as if only one category can apply to each student. The real world is not so neatly dichotomized, and this research seeks to address this gap in the literature. In addition, it seeks to

explore the notion of black women as the central subject, as Patricia Hill Collins suggests in black feminist theory.

What I found is interesting is that it directly addresses the problems of analyzing a phenomenon through the dichotomous lenses of black/white or male/female. What can be said of black students sometimes contradicts what can be said for female students, creating a problem when assessing the needs and issues of black female students--not to mention other female students of color. Thus, this research set out to uncover the experiences of black women on this campus, especially those that might lead a student towards dropping out. I found that black women are heavily affected by their integration into the college scene, but that the type of integration is important. They need to be integrated as more than simply one who can diversify a college dorm or classroom. Many complained of having to be a "teacher" of the black experience (if such a thing is possible to describe accurately) to their white friends and professors. Many also feel as though there is a strong incompatibility between their value system and that of the university. Also, many did not have Yale as their first choice and selected the college for what academic and occupational advantages it could provide. Most were heavily affected by events and situations external to the college but not the student's life. Many students, presumably because of the conglomeration of these pressures, are prone to major depression, or depressive episodes--an affliction that can seriously compromise the student's physical health, grades, and mental well-being. Finances and major life crises also play a role. What has become apparent, however, is the way in which these factors work in concert with one another. A student who feels isolated, lonely, or overwhelmed can become depressed which can lead to poor grades and poor health which can be compounded by a financial, or family emergency at home, all leading to early withdrawal. Not only that, but with black female students, in particular, there is a noticeable tendency to want to hide the severity of what one might be going through. This does-n't appear to stem from modesty. Most of the students who were themselves subject to that irony felt that their situation was not worthy of more emotion, or despair than they had allotted. This self-censoring of emotions is a form of repression that can affect both mental and physical well-being.

Overall, placing black women at the center of research has opened the doors to many ways of expanding this research. In these students, it is at once very clear and very complicated how the tomes of race, gender, SES, and sexual orientation all play into each individual's life. This is an over-whelmingly positive direction for study because it validates black studies by including gender, gender studies by including black women, and all study by filling in the gaps in previous dichotomous approaches.

Placing black women at the center of research also helps to validate black women themselves. Running through my interviews and research was a theme of invisibility--of being ignored, overlooked, and most often hypoth-esized about by extension of some other category. "Almost nothing at Yale affirms who I am and where I come from," one student remarked. "I have often felt invisible in my classes, dining halls, etc., just completely unacknowledged by my fellow classmates." Another, when asked for five words to describe her Yale experience, said, "where I don't really exist." If black women as well as other women of color are expected to succeed, they must be able to see themselves as a contributor to their learning environ-ment. Performance and persistence are depressed by this basic lack of recog-nition of one's existence. Hopefully, this research will ignite further research on women of color where their ideas and experiences and struggles are heard and seen and incorporated into this body of knowledge called higher education.

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