Abstract

HYDE, KATHERINE ANN. Holding Disillusionment at Bay: Latino/a Immigrants and Working Class North Carolinians Expose and Reinforce the American Dream's Discrepancies. (Under the direction of Jeffrey Leiter and Barbara Risman.)

This dissertation examines how a group of twenty-eight working class people in North Carolina, including African Americans, whites and Latino/a immigrants, cope with the discrepancy between the American dream's promises and premises and their own reality. I analyze interview data focusing on participants' inward and outward looking emotion management. With the former, participants cope by developing a "grin and bear it" stance regarding challenges and limited opportunities. They shift their attitude in order to shut off or dull the impact of an unpleasant thought or feeling. They also use "I can do it" pep-talks to muster up a general willingness or readiness to deal with whatever comes their way. With outward looking emotion management, participants cope by venting frustration. They "other" fellow working class people, targeting slackers and beneficiaries of preferential treatment, who fail to abide by the meritocratic principles of the dream. I argue that participants' emotion work is driven by their practical, emotional and cognitive needs and reveals ambivalence toward the American dream ideology. They neither wholeheartedly buy into the dream, nor do they actively criticize the ideology. Their emotion management is bound up in the logic of the dream; it represents a response to the dream, it takes place within the dream's logic, and, in the end reinforces the dream. I discuss the helpful and hurtful implications of participants' emotion management and suggest that the short-term gains are outweighed by such long-term costs as perpetuating inter-ethnic hostility and misunderstanding and inhibiting solidarity among oppressed people. I emphasize that participants' power-evasive emotion work deflects attention

away from the ideology itself, the economic system to which the ideology is tied, and the elite agents of this system. My findings point to a need for more research on the emotional and cognitive costs of abandoning the dream's framework and the conditions under which oppressed people may develop an alternative framework for understanding and responding to their life's difficulties.

**HOLDING DISILLUSIONMENT AT BAY:
LATINO/A IMMIGRANTS AND WORKING CLASS NORTH CAROLINIANS
EXPOSE AND REINFORCE THE AMERICAN DREAM'S DISCREPANCIES**

by
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Biography

Katherine A. Hyde was born and raised in Cleveland, Ohio. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree from Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. She earned a Masters of Science degree as well as a Doctor of Philosophy degree from the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at North Carolina State University in Raleigh, North Carolina. Since 1999, she has worked at Duke University's Center for Documentary Studies in Durham, North Carolina.

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Table of Contents

List of Tables

Chapter one: Introduction

Origin of research project

Several years ago a group of labor advocates, university professors and students and state labor department people began to discuss the upsurge of Latino/a immigration in North Carolina. The group was concerned with the vulnerability of North Carolina's new immigrants as well as the emerging relations among Latinos/as and non-Latinos/as in the state. The discussion focused on the question of whether and how Latino/a immigrants were replacing or displacing North Carolinians in the realms of jobs, housing and social services. In the summer of 1998, Jeff Leiter and Don Tomaskovic-Devey were awarded a Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation grant to study this question.

I became involved as the project's research assistant, under the direction of Jeff Leiter, with funding from this Z. Smith Reynolds grant. I was drawn to the project because of its uncommon engaged research design. The many stages of the research project, including the development of research goals, the data collection, and the dissemination of research findings, have involved the collaborative efforts of university-based researchers, community organizers, state officials, social service providers and other active community members living in the research sites. The subject matter of the research project concerns me greatly, especially questions related to the potential for racial/ethnic tension and intolerance, as well as general issues surrounding working class people's struggle and survival in North Carolina.

Furthermore, I was excited to be involved in a project with international, national and local relevance and implications.

Data collection

As the project's primary field researcher, I was actively involved in data collection for just over one year, from September 1998 to October 1999. The first stage of data collection involved my fieldwork. In September 1998 I entered the field. I made weekly visits to one of the two North Carolina counties[1] - Duplin County and Cabarrus County- in order to learn about these areas that I had previously driven through, but never known anything about. I quickly developed a field work routine; I typically left on Thursday morning, spent the night in a hotel in the respective field site and returned to Raleigh by Friday evening. The grant provided funds for my hotel stays, travel and food expenses. I wanted to know where immigrants lived, worked, and gathered. What did local North Carolinians think and feel about the newcomers? What were the issues that were especially charged for them, in a political, economic, social or emotional way? Did their perceptions seem to vary according to, for instance, their job status, gender or race? I also wanted to talk with

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[1] Duplin and Cabarrus County have experienced a recent and heavy influx of Latino/a immigration (CACI 1998). According to U.S. Census data, from 1990 to 2000, the Hispanic-origin proportion of Duplin's population rose from 2.5% to 15.1%, and that of Cabarrus from 0.5% to 5.1%. We chose Duplin and Cabarrus counties because we believed structural differences would lead to a considerably greater imbalance of elite and working class power in Duplin than Cabarrus County. Duplin has a somewhat higher unemployment rate, a labor market more dominated by a few employers, a smaller population, and historically less labor organization. We anticipated that Duplin, with conditions favoring a greater power imbalance, would provide more opportunities for elites to structure relations within the working class for more inter-ethnic competition.

immigrants themselves to learn about their daily lives, their struggles and sense of North Carolina.[2]

During these trips I met with people who worked and/or lived in the counties. I informally interviewed representatives of community agencies and organizations, including schools, social service agencies, recruiting agencies, police departments, health facilities, churches and firms. In each county I interviewed eighteen to twenty people during this stage of the fieldwork. My goal was to conduct several meetings each day of my fieldwork trips, though this wasn't always possible. Not having a "home base" where I could be reached by telephone made communication difficult. Sometimes I arranged these meetings ahead of time. Other times I found it most effective simply to stop in at a store, county agency, school, etc. with the hope of finding someone willing to speak with me.[3] I often relied on the people I was meeting one day to refer me to the contacts I would make the next day. There was a snowball sampling strategy, in other words, in this initial part of my fieldwork.

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[2] I audited a conversational Spanish class during the first semester of data collection in order to brush up on my Spanish language skills. I was able to have conversations and conduct informal interviews with Spanish speaking individuals. For instance, the majority of my conversations with Esteban, one of our primary contacts in Duplin, were in Spanish. I did not feel confident in my ability to conduct, in Spanish, the longer and structured interviews, which require careful and strategic probing. As I mention again below, these formal interviews with Latino/a working class participants were conducted by fluent Spanish speaking collaborators.

[3] I found that most of the people with whom I spoke were willing to share their time with me. No one flat out refused to speak with me, with one exception- a human resource person at a pickle factory in Faison, NC. I found a few other people hard to contact, such as a human resource person at a textile mill in Kannapolis, NC. I suspect that if I had focused more on interviewing employers, rather than on bureacratic/social service-oriented contact, it would have been more difficult to arrange meetings.

I did not use an interview guide during these meetings, though I did typically steer the conversations toward questions meant to get at such core issues as the impact of Latino/a immigration on one's agency/organization, problems related to a language barrier, and general changes associated with and sentiment regarding immigration in the community. The conversations usually lasted between a half-hour and an hour. I made handwritten notes during these conversations, with the permission of the interviewees, and then I typed up detailed field notes at the hotel on Thursday evenings and at home on the weekends. In addition to the informal interviews, I conducted several observations in field settings including Mexican restaurants and stores, adult ESL and elementary school classes, and Latino/a organizing events.

Finally, another way I became familiar with the counties was by looking, often from the vantage point of my car. Sometimes this was while I was driving, and other times while someone in the respective communities drove me on a tour. I spent a lot of time in my car, especially in Duplin, where the small towns are very spread out. It wouldn't be unusual for me to have to drive thirty miles to get from one meeting to another in Duplin. I decided to take pictures. Because I was also taking a documentary photography class at the time, I decided to integrate photography into my research fieldwork. Taking pictures was a useful way of keeping a record of the different communities, but also of challenging myself to see through the lenses of both Latino/a immigrants and long time North Carolinian residents. For example, when imagining myself as a non-immigrant, I would photograph what seemed like

4

obvious visual signs of immigrants' presence, such as Mexican stores and Spanish

church signs. As I tried to see through immigrants' eyes, I took many pictures of the

"no trespassing" signs that I was surprised to find in one particular neighborhood that

has had a large influx of Latina/o immigrants.[4]

The second stage of the research involved preparing for in-depth interviews with

working class North Carolinians and Latina/o immigrants. Here, especially, the

collaborative efforts of three community members were essential. Esteban,[5] a

Honduran grassroots community organizer in Duplin County; James, the director of a

human relations organization in Cabarrus County; and Ana, a Salvadoran parent-

volunteer at a school in Cabarrus County, all helped me a great deal. I met these

three individuals on one of my first trips to the respective counties, and subsequently

met with them regularly throughout my fieldwork. Our meetings gave me a chance to

get insider feedback regarding my fieldwork reflections. My connection to these

individuals helped me gain access as a field researcher and helped me locate potential

interviewees. For example, Ana invited me to attend one of a series of ESL classes

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[4] I was not given permission by the university's IRB to include most photography in the research design. The act of making photographs and the photographs as objects nonetheless sharpened my understanding of the two research sites.

[5] All formal and informal interviews were confidential; the name of each interviewee has been changed. I also use pseudonyms for companies when referring to an interview with a human resource employee because the number of such employees at a given company is small enough to risk exposing the employee's identity. In chapter two, I provide an overview of the two research sites and do refer, by name, to Cannon Mills, a company so closely linked to the history of Cabarrus County, that it is difficult to disguise the company's identity when I refer to the county. Because the company (now called Pillowtex) employs over four thousand workers, I did not think it would compromise participants' identities if I referred to their employment at this company.

she'd organized for Spanish speaking parents in the local school system. She

informed the large group of parents about our research project and invited people to

participate. Several people did volunteer and were subsequently interviewed.

Esteban and James, also prominent in their communities, helped encourage

community members to participate in our project; they played a crucial role in

helping me create a snow ball sample for the interview stage of the data collection.

 The substantive focus of the research was refined over the course of the data

collection, as is common and expected in qualitative research projects. Jeff and I met

regularly for debriefing sessions and often concentrated on the field visit summaries

and commentaries I had written. We also had discussions with Barbara Risman and

Don Tomaskovic-Devey, especially regarding how our initial findings should shape

the proposed content of the interview schedule. In the spring of 1999, the four of us

began to draft an interview schedule that focused on perceptions regarding ethnic

diversity and tension in the context of neighborhoods, jobs and schools; this was a

shift away from the more structural question of replacement versus displacement that

had originally defined the research project.

Later in the spring, Jeff Leiter organized a gathering at NCSU that allowed us to

update the various collaborators. I shared some of my fieldwork insights and we

talked about the direction the research project was taking. As a group we discussed

the lengthy draft of the interview guide and sampling goals. In terms of the latter,

Jeff and I proposed to the group that our samples from each county include: three

African American women, three African American men, four Latina women, four

Latino men, two white women, and two white men. The meeting was a useful

opportunity to reflect on our work thus far, and to get insightful feedback regarding

the future of the project.[6]

During the third stage of the research we carried out the interviews with working

class community members. Our intention was make several group trips to the field

sites, which would enable us to accomplish most of the interviewing in a short time.

Jeff successfully recruited volunteers to join our interviewing effort. I was primarily

responsible for arranging the logistics of the interviews, most importantly who we

would interview, at what time and where. To prepare for the next stage, Barbara and

Jeff facilitated an all-day interview orientation at the beginning of May that was

attended by all the people who subsequently conducted one or more interviews in this

stage of the research. We talked about the project's history, interviewing issues, such

interviewer probing, cultural sensitivity, informed consent and confidentiality, and

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[6] The Duplin sample includes: two white women, one Mexican-American man, five Honduran men, and four African American women. The Cabarrus sample includes: three white men, one black man from Trinidad, seven African American women, one Mexican man and three Mexican women. A weakness of this sample is that includes too few North Carolinian men, especially African American men. Although, as I detail more thoroughly in the next chapter, the interview sample includes individuals with widely ranging work and family experiences, the sample should not be taken as representative of the working class populations in the research sites. Because the sample is small and non-random, I am unable to make generalizations to these populations. My analysis is geared, instead, toward uncovering and understanding social processes that may well be generalizable.

some basic methods and guidelines used in qualitative research. In addition, everyone participated in two research exercises; we each interviewed a partner with the project's actual interview guide, and conducted a short 'field' observation and then wrote and shared fieldnotes. This last activity was meant to prepare the interviewers for the structured fieldnotes that we would ask everyone to write as a follow-up to the interviews. The structured fieldnotes guide consisted of questions about the interviewee, the interview process, and impressions and insights regarding the interview content. At the orientation, we discussed both research exercises in detail; for instance, some participants had suggestions regarding the wording of interview questions. After the orientation ended, the three Spanish-speaking interviewers stayed a while longer to reword the language on the Spanish interview guide. Tim Wallace wrote the first draft of this translated interview guide and Greg Dawes, Sofia Vargas and Sandy Smith-Nonini helped with its revision.

We made three group interview trips in May. During the first trip to Cabarrus County, I accompanied Sandy Smith-Nonini, Greg Dawes and Sofia Vargas, all fluent in Spanish, who conducted Spanish language interviews with Latina/o participants. The interviews were held in a recreation room affiliated with a Catholic Church in Concord. The following week, this same interviewing team conducted more interviews with Latino/a participants in Duplin County. This time the interviews took place in a small Presbyterian church, in Wallace, that had a Latino pastor. Unlike the others, I did not attend this group interview trip. During the third interview trip

Barbara Risman, Jackie Clark and I interviewed English speaking respondents in Cabarrus County. We were able to use office space at the Human Relations Council in Concord to conduct these interviews. Throughout the remaining summer months I made individual trips to both counties to conduct more interviews, which took place in various locations, including people's homes, workplaces, and community organizations. Finally in October 1998, Jeff and I traveled to Cabarrus County to conduct four additional worker interviews. There are twenty-nine completed interviews, including one pre-test interview that I conducted.

During the last stage of the data collection Leslie Hosfield joined the group of collaborators and carried out nine interviews with human resource personnel at companies within the counties' manufacturing sector. Leslie targeted companies that employed a substantial proportion of Latino/as. These interviews addressed several types of questions regarding the company's workforce, including: recruitment strategies and concerns over high turn-over rates; the racial/ethnic make-up of the workforce; the types of jobs carried out by white, black and Latina/o employees; employer perceptions regarding the strengths and weaknesses and general of work ethic of different groups of employees; and employers' perceptions as to whether or not immigrants were displacing local workers.

Analytic strategies

My dissertation analysis draws most heavily on my field notes and the interview

transcripts. Also important are the written materials (e.g., newspaper articles) that I have collected regarding immigration and racialized events in the two counties, my photographs, and the structured fieldnotes completed by the interviewers. These latter types of data have helped me gain a more well-rounded and contextual understanding of the research sites and the interview process, while I have systematically coded and analyzed the field notes and interview transcripts. In coding the data, I have kept in mind Glaser and Strauss' (1967) "grounded theory" approach, which emphasizes inductive theoretical development. While, unlike Glaser and Straus, I did consider my initial analysis to be informed and guided by previous research and theory, having their approach in mind helped me keep an open mind as I explored the data. I agree with Becker's (1998) argument that one problem with deductive work is that it often treats concepts as logical constructs that are too divorced from the empirical world. Becker contends that a major obstacle to proper description and analysis of social phenomena is that we think we know most of the answers already; we take a lot for granted as common sense. For example, the very names we use to describe events, behavior and practices and the thoughts they imply prevent us from seeing what's there. We need to present ourselves with data that would jar us out of the conventional categories in order to enhance our understanding of the social world. Becker suggests that concepts should be thought of as empirical generalizations-ways of summarizing data. We need to start with observation of the empirical world so that we can let the case define the concept, instead of letting the concept define the case.

My approach to managing and analyzing the data has been informed by the useful

"how to" pieces of qualitative methodologists whose work details the processes of

inductive analysis (e.g., Charmaz 1983; Emerson et al. 1995; and Lofland and

Lofland 1984). One central component of the inductive analytic process is coding.

Qualitative coding is the process of categorizing and sorting data. By systematically

tagging data with codes, researchers can begin to make sense of the data with the goal

of uncovering patterns and themes. As Charmaz (1983) explains, there are two phases

of coding: initial, then focused coding. Initial coding is open-ended and allows the

researcher to identify within the data as many ideas as possible. When it becomes

evident that certain codes have appeared again and again, the researcher can develop

a more focused substantive direction and continue with focused coding, which

involves a more analytic categorization of data. The focused coding stage involves

rereading the data and asking such questions as: What do I see going on? How do

people talk about, characterize and understand what is going on? What assumptions

are they making? What can and cannot be talked about? Does this vary by person?

What interests do people's accounts serve?

Coding strategies and evolving analytic direction

An example will help me illustrate this coding technique. In my initial coding of the

field note data I used a qualitative software package called NUD*IST to develop and

keep track of a coding scheme. This software allowed me to arrange field note codes

in a tree-like fashion, with main codes branching out into subcategories. One of the

basic codes I've created is called 'characterization of Latino/as'. Under this there are a number of subcategories including Latino/as as: 'vulnerable', 'passive', 'clueless' and 'hard workers'. Each of these was an initial code that merely described how North Carolinians talk about Latino/as. I didn't scrutinize the data to find evidence of these particular perceptions of Latino/as; rather, I became aware of emerging patterns in my process of reading and tagging the data.

The frequent appearance of the 'hard worker' description prompted me to look more closely at the depiction of Latino/as as workers with such questions as: Are there other conflicting characterizations of immigrant workers? Who, exactly, considers Latino/as hard workers? Employers? Non-immigrant working class residents? People in Duplin but not in Cabarrus County? The descriptive coding process led to a more analytic line of questioning regarding the meaning derived from and functions served by accounts about Latino/as' willingness to work in undesirable jobs. The goal was to gain insight into the situations of both North Carolinians and immigrants by considering what else was going on, what realities were uncovered by the images of immigrants. For instance, an employer who believed immigrants to have a stronger work ethic than African American or white workers could base hiring decisions on such assumptions. An employer could also decide to keep wages down, presuming that immigrant, if not also local labor would tolerate low wages. The process of focused coding helps the researcher zero in on the conditions under which people say or do certain things. Proceeding with the same example could involve an

examination of whether certain individuals or groups (e.g., black women, or middle class community members or residents of Duplin), under certain conditions (e.g., when they have Latino/a next-door neighbors or friends), believe that Latino/as are especially hardworking because they are vulnerable, not because they are aggressive, competitive people who are trying to take jobs away from local workers.

Along with initial and focused coding, I have made "note-on-notes" or "commentary notes" (Kleinman and Copp 1993) as well as analytic memos, a form of exploratory writing that allows researchers to develop and stay focused on particular themes (Lofland and Lofland 1984). Once I finished coding the field notes using NUD*IST, I began to code the interview transcripts by hand[7]. After an initial read of the interview transcripts, I was impressed by the frequent mention of the preferential treatment of immigrants. For instance, as an African American participant who works in a Duplin processing plant put it:

> You got a lot of people feel that, they actually get better benefits than
> we do….They can work and get lot of public assistance. Which, you
> know, you got a lot of people that can't get that. They can work a
> forty hour, forty hour job every week and get, you know, Medicaid for
> children or the small kids. They can go to the hospital for no charge.
> And we're here working all these years, you know...

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[7] I found the NUD*IST software package to be cumbersome with the interview transcripts, which were lengthy, often exceeding fifty pages. The transcripts had to be divided into five to ten smaller pieces, making it difficult to have a sense of each transcript as a whole. I decided I could keep a better handle on the data (and become more familiar with each interviewee's story) by reading and tagging it on paper rather than on the computer screen.

I drafted a lengthy analytic memo focusing on this image of Latino/a immigrants. This exploratory writing clued me into another pattern. In leveling complaints about immigrants receiving so-called special treatment in the form of government assistance (e.g., tax cuts and health benefits) or employers' willingness to cater to the needs of Spanish speaking employees (e.g., by providing Spanish language applications), the North Carolinians were drawing upon or exposing ideas about individualism and meritocracy. For instance, Kim implies that immigrants' special treatment is not universally available and therefore tampers with ideological notions regarding individuals' equal access to opportunities, their responsibility for their own lives, and their ability to depend on their own effort and talent to get by. These notions, taken together, comprise the American dream ideology.

In writing this analytic memo, I realized that I could learn something about how both the North Carolinian and immigrant working class participants made sense of their lives, especially in relation to these ideological assumptions regarding individualism and meritocracy. I went back to the data and re-coded all the interview transcripts. I again explored whether the interviewees' comments about others revealed something about their way of relating to the ideologies. I also explored whether they accounted for the successes and challenges of their own lives in ways that hinted at their relation to the ideologies. My focused coding involved the following set of themes and analytic questions:

> **Racism:** How do they talk about racism/discrimination? Have they experienced racism? Are they aware of it? Do they downplay or deny

14

it? Are they espousing racist ideas?

Mobility: Have they been upwardly or downwardly mobile? Have they had both ups and downs or has their situation been consistent?

Sufficiency of individual will: Do they suggest that anything is possible if you try hard enough/want something badly enough?

Opportunities: Do they talk about opportunities as limited or abundant? If opportunities are limited, what makes them so (e.g., circumstances out of their control)? Are they simply uncertain about the current and future availability of opportunities? Do they support their opportunity talk with concrete examples or is their talk more vague and rhetorical?

Grin and bear it: Do they suggest that their struggles are unchangeable and that the best thing to do is to tolerate them? Are they resigned? Do they seem to suggest in a macho way that they can tolerate whatever comes their way?

Preferential treatment complaints: Do they complain about others getting by in an unfair way? Do they imply that everyone should have the same treatment opportunities and/or that people's rewards should reflect their work?

Praising hard workers: Are certain groups praised for their strong work ethic? Do they promote unrealistic expectations re: what a good worker is/should be?

Condemning slackers: Do they suggest that certain groups of people are lazy? Do they criticize people for receiving public assistance?

In this dissertation I examine how the working class participants make sense of their lives. In Chapter two I present a detailed overview of the study's participants, describing their opportunities and responsibilities and their paid and unpaid work lives. I elaborate on the meaning of the American dream ideology in Chapter three. After discussing other research on the complexities within people's relationship to the ideology, I provide further context regarding participants' relationship to the dream's premises and promises by first describing reasons as to why the participants themselves may embrace the ideology and then considering how the experiences common to their working class lives may invoke skepticism regarding the dream.

Discrepancies between the dream's ideals and the participants' own economic and social realities provide the backdrop for my analysis. For the most part, participants' lives are far from those glorified in familiar "rags to riches" stories offered as evidence supporting the dream ideology. Yet, I argue that the dream ideology remains a relevant to participants as a framework with which they account for the circumstances of their lives. I look at inconsistencies between participants' circumstances and their ideas as well as inconsistencies among individuals' various beliefs. These inconsistencies or discrepancies provide a lens through which to examine how participants make sense of and cope with the circumstances of their lives.

In Chapter four I continue to examine how the working class participants relate to the American dream by analyzing their spontaneous talk to determine whether, within the context of the interviews, they explicitly refer to the ideas of opportunity and individualism, so central to the dream ideology. While neither their experiences nor their talk lends much support to the dream ideology, Chapters five and six reveal that the dream ideology is nonetheless relevant to the way they understand their lives and respond emotionally to their circumstances. Specifically, I show how participants use emotion management strategies to relate to the discrepancy between the dream's promises and their own lives. A complicated picture emerges, in which participants simultaneously hint at the dream's inapplicability to their own lives, while also remaining under the spell of the dream. I explore the implications of the participants'

emotion management, suggesting that participants' dream-related talk ultimately reinforces the dream ideology and perpetuates social inequalities. Finally, in Chapter seven I discuss the social change implications of my study.

Chapter two: Participant overview

In this chapter I provide an overview of the interviewees from Cabarrus and Duplin Counties. I describe each group's family and home life as well as their employment experiences. The purpose of the chapter is to introduce the interviewees and provide a detailed consideration of the circumstances of their lives.

Cabarrus County family and home life

In Cabarrus, we interviewed sixteen people. Among the women were seven African Americans, one white and three Latinas. Among the men were two Latinos, three whites and one black man from Trinidad. The participants ranged in age from approximately twenty-five to seventy years.

Almost all of the African American women (with Rebecca the one exception) were single caretakers. These women cared for their children, grandchildren and/or their aging parents. The importance of their caretaking work emerged at several points during their interviews. Many of these women described their future goals in terms of their hopes for their children or grandchildren. Sharon, for instance, listed finishing college and becoming computer literate among her goals, so that she could "help her [fourteen month-old] son a little better."[1] One of her dreams was "just to be the ideal

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[1] Throughout the dissertation I include excerpts from the interview transcripts. As much as possible, I've tried to let the participants' own words speak for themselves. Sometimes it has been necessary to

mother." Other women like Sharon envisioned their own role within their children's

path to a good life. Shelia believed it was necessary for parents to be involved in

schools, in order to know what's going on and to help kids get a better education. One

of her stated goals was to see her kids grow up and have success in life. She was

happy that one of her daughters had already achieved this kind of success- she'd

graduated from high school, was working in a mill, and had a family.

Each of the three Latina women interviewed was married and had several young

children. These women also expressed great concern for their children's wellbeing.

Teresa was committed to living in the States, although she lived in constant fear of

the possible consequences of not having legal papers. She'd already lost two jobs

because she was undocumented; in one instance she barely escaped an "ugly" INS

raid. She was determined to stay because of the better medical facilities available to

her son, who needed regular medical attention because of a problem related to an

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alter excerpts to improve the flow for the reader. I have not changed the content, however, with these changes. Sometimes both the interviewee and the interviewers spoke with false starts, wandered away from the topic and then back again, and/or redundantly used "um" and "I know" or "you know". If I were conducting discourse analysis, it would have been important to include and pay attention to these patterns. In my case I have edited to make the excerpts more readable. I have tried to include only that information that most clearly illustrates a given point or idea. In the example at hand, I provide additional information in brackets. In some cases bracketed words are added as clarification, rather than elaboration, if it is unclear to whom or to what a participant refers. More often than adding words, I have condensed excerpts. I have used ellipses to indicate where I've removed words or sentences. For the most part I have not altered the participants' grammar, unless it seemed necessary to the sentence's coherence and readability. I decided not to use abbreviated versions of verbs such as talkin' and invented conjunctions such as "gotta". The meaning remains the same, whatever the spelling and I thought it would be better to standardize the spelling since it can be difficult to hear the sometimes subtle distinction between, for example "kind of," and "kinda."

excess of fluid in his brain. Teresa regretted losing a previous job with benefits that

covered all of her son's medical bills. She had been making a "good salary,"

$8.00/hour, and had been there three years when she was fired, supposedly because

immigration had come to check workers' papers. Teresa was still hopeful that her

current employer, Wendy's, might eventually offer her a decent benefit package. She

believed that if she learned English, she would be promoted and would then receive

health insurance. Both Estela and Dolores hoped that their children would study, and

in Dolores' words, "be someone."

Judy, the one white woman interviewed in Cabarrus, was recently widowed and

didn't have any dependents. Neither did three of the five men interviewed in

Cabarrus. Both Victor and Bob were young, single and child-free. Sonny, a seventy-

year-old white man, lived with his wife. Their adult children lived on their own, but

close by.

The other two men in the Cabarrus group had children living with them. Trenton was

married with a nine-year-old daughter. Jim was divorced and had sole custody of his

two teenage children. He acknowledged that his divorce was a major financial

setback and that saving for his children's college education was difficult. But, he

said, he "wouldn't have it any other way." Trenton also described his family and

especially his daughter as the most important part of his life. He said he would do

whatever he had to "just to make sure she's smiling... As long as I got food, clothing

20

and shelter and my kid is happy, that's all that matters to me. I don't have to be rich."

Whether single with children, divorced, married or widowed, the majority of the immigrants and locals alike considered family an important part of their lives. One way that the immigrants' lives differed from the locals' lives was their relative impermanence within the community. None of the immigrants had legal papers and few spoke English. None of the immigrants owned his or her home and none had lived in the same home in North Carolina for more than two years. By contrast, many of the North Carolinian interviewees had roots and strong family ties in the area. Gracie was born sixty-eight years before in her aunt's house in Cabarrus County. Her grandmother had been a midwife, who delivered several generations of babies within her family and neighbors' families. Also, the majority (7/12) of the Cabarrus locals lived in homes owned by themselves or their families. Furthermore, they had lived in these homes for many years- some for over fifteen years. Tonya, for instance, had lived in her home for twenty-two years, and was also born and raised nearby. Judy had only recently moved from the home she shared with her husband for thirty years. After her husband's death and with the increasing changes in her old neighborhood, she began to feel unsafe and moved to a new home, where she was still getting settled. An exception among the homeowners with a long history in their houses was Shelia, who recently became a first-time homeowner after living in public housing for ten years. A thirty-eight year old single African American woman, she cared for five children ranging from six-to fifteen-years old, in addition to working full-time outside the home. Three of the children were her own and two her sister's kids. Shelia was

21

also a grandmother; one of her daughters recently graduated from high school and was living on her own with her two young children. Shelia "thanked God" that the people at a local community housing development organization had "shown her that she deserved better than what she had." She wondered "Why should I take less when I can have this?"

Gloria, a sixty-year-old black woman, was the only Cabarrus interviewee who lived in public housing at the time of the interview. She explained that she moved to public housing seven years ago after her old home was condemned. When Gloria's mother became ill, she and her siblings were unable to maintain the old home. Gloria shared her "government's apartment" with her teenage granddaughter.

Eight of the Cabarrus participants lived in rented houses- including the two single whites (Jim and Bob) as well as the entire group of immigrant participants (Victor and the three Latina women and their families). All of the immigrant participants had within the past two years moved into more spacious living arrangements. Victor had been in North Carolina for only five months and had already moved once- from a trailer to a house. Trenton and his wife were in the process of buying their home. By contrast, Claire used to own the home that she and her kids shared at the time of the interview. Following her divorce, she lost ownership of the house, but she mentioned that she would have the option to repurchase it in six months.

Most (6/8) of the African American participants lived in Logan, a historically black

neighborhood in Concord. Logan was named after Logan High School, which the city

closed as a result of school desegregation in the late 1960's. Logan was home to poor

and working poor people who lived in one of the area's two public housing units. It

was also historically the home of black professionals, such as teachers, doctors and

dentists, who owned single-family homes in the area. Many working class people

lived in the area, too. Numerous black-owned businesses including barbershops,

laundries, convenience stores and a rental agency had thrived in Logan and some still

do. On every block there seemed to be at least one black church and throughout the

area there were several community organizations. Residents described the

community as having an upper end, associated with professionals and a lower or

"bottom" end, where they said the number of Hispanic newcomers had exploded in

the last five to ten years. According to some, Latinos were taking over certain areas

of the neighborhood. These observers named particular sites they associated with

Hispanics including specific streets and apartment complexes, a neighborhood park

with a new soccer field, and a community family health center, where they'd come to

expect a long line of Latina women with their children.

Two of the long-time African American residents explicitly complained about their

new neighbors. For instance, Tonya, who'd lived in Logan for twenty-two years said

"the neighborhood's gone down" since they moved in. She mentioned feeling unsafe

walking around the streets since more immigrants have moved into the area. Sharon

didn't hold back either, claiming that some of the Hispanics "were just nasty... They get drunk. They don't care if their kids are in the street." Others' complaints were less severe, but also reflected an image of immigrants as loud, disrespectful and dirty. On the other hand, some Logan area interviewees expressed tolerance and sympathy for their immigrant neighbors. For example, Gloria said she's defended Hispanic neighbors to the point of alienating herself among her African American neighbors. She'd scolded her black neighbors whom she had seen throwing stones at cars with immigrant drivers and passengers. Gracie, who lived near Logan, thought the time had come for locals to reach out to Hispanic neighbors by learning Spanish and inviting them to local churches.

Along with the shifting demographics, another change within Logan's recent history was a grassroots neighborhood improvement movement. During the early 1990's Logan's crime rate increased dramatically, with drugs and street violence. In the eyes of one community member "there were drugs being openly traded on the streets. The police would just turn the other way. There were drive-by shootings and people were sleeping on the ground because they were afraid of stray bullets. The things going on were the kind of stuff you hear about in larger cities."

In response, a group of residents formed an active neighborhood association and worked with city officials to clean up the area. They led marches, demonstrations and candlelight vigils. Although the criminal activity had not entirely disappeared, several

of the interviewees with roots in Logan, said that things had recently improved.

Another notable neighborhood in Concord was Tower Circle, a trailer park many locals associated with newly arrived immigrants. The area's Spanish language signs, asking residents to "keep yards clean," were taken as one visible symbol of the presence of Latino/a residents. Another clue, for local residents, was the crowded conditions of the trailer park. People described the area in a negative light- calling it a place to avoid, a crime-ridden dirty area, or a dumping ground for recent arrivals with nowhere else to go. A Salvadoran immigrant who'd lived in the States for many years spoke bluntly about the area, which was home to many of the ESL students with whom she worked: "When I finally did go there I was so surprised ... because it was a dirty place. There are old, old trailers. They smell. There's one right next to another. The kids go outside to play. There are poor conditions. You can see a lot of old cars and everything is just old, the worst things, things that someone gives away, things that no one wants. That's how they live."

The three white men in the Cabarrus group all lived within the same neighborhood in Kannapolis. Jim had recently found his friend Bob a place to rent next door to his own rented home. Bob described the area as a "pretty quiet and decent neighborhood" but he was disturbed by the increasing amount of crime and violence that he thought to be happening in neighboring parts of town. He associated black neighborhoods with drugs and violence and was unhappy about the increasing presence of Latino/as.

He said they were "literally nasty" and laughed as he admitted that most of his friends "hate them", meaning immigrants and black people. Despite his apparent concern about violence, he advocated violent solutions to clean (i.e.: whiten) up his part of town. He said, "as far as those people selling drugs, I think someone should just fly over them and drop a bomb." He also wished that immigrants' homes and yards would be "condemned or bulldozed- houses and all." While Jim was neutral about the apparent increase in Latino/as in the area, Sonny, too, resented the junky look of the trailers nearby that were inhabited by "all kinds of people- drug addicts, Mexicans and blacks." He feared that blacks were poised to take over the neighborhood he'd called his home for over twenty years.

Cabarrus County employment

Almost all of the Cabarrus interviewees were employed at the time of the interview, except for three people who'd already retired and one Latina interviewee, Dolores, who wasn't currently working outside the home. The unemployment rate for the county had dropped in recent years; for example, only 2.6 percent of the population was unemployed in 2000.

Among the white and black interviewees, most (8/12) had at some point been employed by Cannon Mills. Many North Carolinians described work at Cannon Mills as one of the most common jobs around; for some it was also one of the best jobs around. Most of the interviewees who'd worked there had done so for more than ten

years, some for nearly thirty years.

The Cannon family established Cannon Mills in 1887 and owned and controlled the company for nearly one hundred years.[2] During much of that century, workers lived in mill housing that encircled the mill in the unincorporated town of Kannapolis. Shelia now lived in an old mill home. Although she didn't work at the mill, she described mill jobs as good jobs, since employees were able to walk to work. But in the first half of the twentieth century, the mill houses' close proximity to the mill also benefited the company by allowing them to supervise their employees closely. The development of the company and town were closely linked; the mill's original owner, James Cannon, financed the building of the mills and mill houses, as well as the town's churches, schools, stores and business places. He also contributed to the development of the town's police department, railway station, post office, theater and highway that ran between Kannapolis and Concord, which was the county seat and home of the mill owners and managers.

In recent years the company has been bought and sold and gone through corporate mergers. Once Cannon Mills, then Fieldcrest-Cannon, and at the time of the interviews, Pillowtex, most of the interviewees still referred to the company as Cannon Mills, if not simply, "the mill." Although the textile industry has greatly

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[2] My discussion of the history of Cannon Mills and Cabarrus County draws on Kearns (1995), Rankin (1987) and Schulman and Anderson (1999).

declined, the mill's presence within Cabarrus was still felt. There remain many plants around Concord and Kannapolis, some standing abandoned, but many are alive with people pouring in and out at the shift changes. The company also remains the largest employer in the county, with approximately 4000 employees (and a 25 percent turnover rate). New workers can join its labor force at entry level in laborer or operative positions without experience and any particular educational background. New hires earn $7.50/hour and join the other workers in making towels from raw cotton and in finishing sheets. The type of work the interviewees had done at the mill ranged from line work, to quality control, to maintenance crew work.

Once an employment opportunity for whites only (as the textile industry emerged, new opportunities for poor white tenant farmers appeared), the company was required to open its doors to minorities in the late 1960's. Gracie and Gloria were among the first black women who worked at the mills during that historical moment. Gracie remembered receiving her first paycheck from the plant. She said she counted her money over and over, as it was much more than she was accustomed to making as a domestic. It was hard earned money, too. The spooling production work was demanding, especially since Gracie had recently suffered a heart attack. The racist work environment was also challenging. Although passing a test at the employment office ensured that she technically belonged at the mill (her hands worked fast enough), it didn't protect her from white workers' hostility. Sonny, one of the white men interviewed, could have been one of her hostile co-workers; he remembered his

plant's racial integration as a downward spiraling turning point. Furthermore, he insisted that his plant had gone "plum bad" when black people were promoted to the management level. The racial makeup of the Pillowtex workforce remains predominantly white. Sixty percent of the employees are white, thirty percent are black and ten percent are Latino/a.

The interviewees connected to Cannon Mills/Pillowtex resembled other workers within the county. The largest proportion (23%) of the Cabarrus workforce was employed within the manufacturing sector. According to the county's Economic Development Commission, almost all of the non-farming labor force is comprised of people who have a history of manufacturing employment dating back three generations. Although none of the immigrant interviewees worked at Cannon Mills, all three of the Latinas had worked in a textile plant. Other companies in the area employed greater proportions of immigrant workers. At a t-shirt manufacturing plant, for instance, Latino/as make up 35 percent of the workforce. This firm also has plants in Mexico and El Salvador. Latina women are directed toward work in the Concord plant's distribution center, where they are paid by the piece. Dolores had worked at a sewing factory for two years until her boss came in one day and said, simply, "good bye." The plant's 250 workers were laid off and the work was sent to Mexico. Dolores regretted losing the job, as she was making decent money with a base salary of $6.25 plus additional money according to production. The job was also desirable because Dolores could walk to work, which was essential since she didn't have a car.

She refused to apply at the other plants within walking distance because the pay was too low- for instance a nearby sock factory paid only $5.25/hour.

If Cannon Mills was considered a good or at least a decent place to work, Perdue Farms was at the other end of the employment spectrum. The North Carolinian participants consistently described the chicken processing or packing work as "dirty," "nasty" or "stinking." They also often said it was a place you'd be sure to see Hispanic workers, and rarely see white and African American workers. As Jim, a white construction subcontractor put it, "I couldn't do it myself, I know some people have to, but I couldn't do it." Gloria, an older African American, who worked at Cannon Mills for twenty-eight years, said she didn't like the idea of Hispanic women working at the plant, wearing those heavy boots and doing "a man's job."

According to the North Carolina Department of Commerce, after manufacturing, retail trade (21%), service (18%) and government (16.9%) comprised the next largest proportions of the 2000 labor force in Cabarrus County. Although the construction industry only comprises 7.2 percent of the formal economy, Jim insisted that the industry was booming. He'd been working in the field for about ten years, having worked his way up from a helper to a subcontractor with a five-person crew. He said there was so much business that his crew was consistently about ten jobs behind.

Two women among the Cabarrus interviewees had college degrees and would more

appropriately be identified as middle class participants. Judy, the only white woman in the group, had worked at the Department of Social Services for thirty-four years, working her way up to become head of her division. She'd recently taken time off because of health problems, but intended to go back to work for another year before retiring. Rebecca was much younger and within the last few years had worked her way through college- at the area's Historically Black College- Barbara Scotia. Although she'd majored and trained in primary education, she decided to leave the field because the pay was too low. She was currently working in a high stress job at an insurance company in Charlotte. She commented that black women in Cabarrus had to commute out of the county to find good jobs- ones that suited their education. Her two career aspirations were to start a day care center and to own a nightclub.

Duplin County family and home life

In Duplin County we interviewed twelve people including two white women and four African American women. We interviewed five Latino immigrants and one Mexican American man. The interviewees' ages ranged from approximately 30 years old to mid-fifties.

Half of the women we interviewed in Duplin (3/6) were single caretakers. Maryann, a white woman in her late thirties, was divorced from her Latino husband and had custody of their twelve year-old daughter. Kim, a single thirty year-old African American woman, had two young sons. Her caretaking responsibilities extended to

eldercare. Kim tried to figure out a way to do everything. When her mother suffered a stroke, Kim looked for a new job that would have been closer to home, but didn't get hired after putting in some applications. Dietra also had substantial caretaking responsibilities, which seemed to have a burdensome quality. She lived with and cared for her ill, aged mother, who was diabetic and recently had to have both her legs amputated below her knees. Dietra's caregiving responsibilities drained her financially as well as socially and physically. Her mother had trouble moving and because she was heavy it was hard to lift her up in her chair, into the bathroom, and into bed. Dietra couldn't go anywhere except to work. She usually went to and from work directly since she didn't have a car and took a cab. Dietra's biggest concern was that her whole life has been "put on hold" due to her mother's illness.

These women resembled the single caretakers in Cabarrus, in that their lives were organized around the daily demands of caregiving. For eleven years Kim worked the night shift so that she could spend the day-time hours with her children, often at her older son's elementary school. After her eight-hour shift, Kim would head straight to the school, without any sleep. Reminiscent of Sharon's comment regarding her hopes for her baby's future, Kim expressed a desire for her kids to have a chance to "be somebody." She hoped to return to school to continue her pursuit of a nursing degree. Her coursework had been interrupted by her mother's illness.

As they wished that things could be different, these women pointed to difficulties

common to many women who attempt to balance paid work and family responsibilities, with less support than desirable or necessary. Maryann wished it were possible for her to be involved with her daughter's school, for instance. Dietra was clearly exasperated by the work involved with caring for her mother, while struggling to get by financially; she pointed to the unwillingness of the Department of Social Services to help out as part of the problem.

Renee was the only non-immigrant participant without dependents. An African American woman in her fifties, she was divorced and living with her brother at the time of the interview. The remaining non-immigrant interviewees were married with children. Tricia and her Latino husband had an infant. Two other interviewees in Duplin, Luis, a Mexican American in his late thirties/early forties, and Deborah, a fifty-something African American, lived with their spouses and their teenage children. Deborah looked after several teenagers some of whom were her extended family members' kids. Luis and his wife (a white woman) had an eighteen-year-old daughter. Luis also had four adult stepchildren (from his wife's first marriage) who lived close-by. Luis was one of the only interviewees who described his life goals in terms of work. He spent many hours on the job and commuted an hour to and from work every day. He confessed that his kids complained about him not being home; they'd insist that they saw him then as much as they did when he was in the military and was gone. Still, Luis did seem to care about his family; for instance, he willingly made his long commute to work to honor his wife's desire to remain in their home,

close to the rest of her family.

Each of the five Latino men we interviewed in Duplin was Honduran. All of them had at least three children, with Francisco having the most, six children. Their children all lived in Honduras, apart from their fathers. As in Cabarrus, a key difference between the immigrant and North Carolinian interviewees was their differing degree of permanence within their communities. The Duplin Latinos had been in the States for less time than their Cabarrus counterparts. Except for Antonio, who had been living in the States for four years, these men have been in the U.S. for two years or less. They also expressed a greater sense of uncertainty about their futures, compared to the Cabarrus immigrant interviewees. Omero, for instance, said he had "no idea how long" he'd stay in the area or in the U.S. Most of the Latinos expressed a desire as well as an intention to return to Honduras within the next few years. All of the Honduran men made frequent moves from one living situation to another because of such problems as unfriendly landlords, substandard housing conditions and an inadequate amount of living space. At the time of their interviews, all of the Latinos lived in trailers with at least two and as many as six other adults.

Among the North Carolinians, three women lived in rented homes. Maryann and her daughter had lived in their home for one year. She mentioned that Tricia and her family had recently moved in because they didn't have a place to stay. Maryann recognized that they'd stay there until Tricia's husband could find a permanent job.

Maryann had first hand experience navigating the limited housing options in Duplin. Maryann had been discouraged when she had to leave the home she had been renting from her employer. This old arrangement was both affordable and convenient because of its proximity to her workplace. She "frantically searched" to find another affordable home and ultimately had to move to a neighboring town. Maryann said she'd looked into the possibility of buying a home, but discovered that she couldn't obtain an adequate loan due to her credit history. For Dietra, who was also living in a rented home (a trailer) the dream of homeownership was becoming a reality. She had only about ten more payments to make before she owned her trailer home. Having previously lived in public housing, Dietra's enthusiasm and sense of accomplishment were understandable. She said when she first looked at trailers she'd "just go crazy... All of them looked good and all of them were fixed up real nice. But you just have to break down and get the one you can afford, not go over your head. And that's what I did."

The remaining Duplin interviewees all lived in homes that they owned (e.g., Luis and Deborah) or that their families owned. Renee lived in a house that had been owned for years by her parents and Kim lived in a trailer owned by her mother, on land also owned by her mother.

Duplin County employment

All of the interviewees in Duplin were employed. Although the economy in Carbarrus

as a whole was stronger (for instance the unemployment rate was half that of Duplin County: 2.6 percent versus 5.2 percent) and more diverse than in Duplin, the interviewees in Duplin had more varied employment experiences, compared to their Cabarrus counterparts. The Duplin North Carolinians' work dealt with community organizing, meal preparation, translation service provision, factory manual labor, farm supervision and human resource employment. Each of the Latinos interviewed had worked in several jobs. All of them had done construction work and most had also worked in a chicken factory. Their other jobs included field labor and work on a hog farm.

Duplin locals had a clear image of Latino/as' presence and importance within the economy. Several workers, bureaucrats and employers in Duplin insisted that certain jobs wouldn't get done if it weren't for the Latino/as in the area. Farmers, for instance, have relied on immigrant labor for at least a decade. As put by the owner of a labor recruiting company that supplies major Duplin companies with workers, "we'd starve if it wasn't for them." Her services were apparently in high demand, whether or not her explanation – "people [locals] don't want to work"-- was accurate. During our conversation we were interrupted by a call from a poultry processing plant requesting six workers for the next morning- three men and three women. Sometimes, she said, companies would want twenty workers for the next morning. She seemed to take pride in her nickname "Reina Trabaja", Spanish for "Queen of Work."

Like Reina Trabaja, both Maryann and Tricia had connections to the Latino

community through marriage, and both also capitalized on these connections.

Maryann had been working informally as a translator for nearly twenty years and

finally had begun a small business providing translating services. Again like the

Reina Trabaja, she fancied herself well liked and very important within the Latino

community. Her business had grown enough to allow her to hire her friend Tricia to

work in her home office, while Maryann was at her daytime job. She was well aware

that in addition to numerous seasonal workers who live temporarily in one of the

dozens of labor camps in Duplin, many Latina/os have settled out of migrant farm

labor and made their homes in Duplin County. The Latino/a population has increased

dramatically in recent years. Latino/as made up fifteen percent of Duplin's

population, according to the 2000 Census, which is generally understood to

underestimate the number of Latino/as.[3] Maryann said that the word of her

translation services had "spread like wildfire." She said "everyone" approached her

because there are so few interpreters in the area and the immigrants "need someone

who's trustworthy." Maryann's dream was to one day turn her business into a full-

time endeavor.

As in Cabarrus, the largest proportion of Duplin workers (33%) was employed within

the manufacturing sector in 2000, according to the North Carolina Department of

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[3] The Latino/a population in Cabarrus County was much smaller, only five percent. The white and black populations also differed in the two counties. The Cabarrus population in 2000 was eighty-three percent white and twelve percent black. In Duplin those figures were sixty-two percent white and twenty-nine percent black.

Commerce. (Agriculture followed manufacturing, with seventeen percent of the labor

force employed within this industry. Government (15.7%) and service (12%) made up

the next two largest sectors of the economy). While there was variation in terms of

the interviewees' employment, a majority of the participants had been employed

within the manufacturing sector. Furthermore, a majority of the interviewees (8/12)

had at some point worked within Duplin's poultry and hog industry, which

increasingly employed immigrant labor, but in general also still employed a

substantial proportion of long time residents.

The largest employer in Duplin County was Duplin Poultry.[4] A slaughterhouse

employing 2500 people, Duplin Poultry was in some ways reminiscent of the early

20th century Cannon Mills, in terms of its powerful presence within the surrounding

community. Deborah, one of the two local interviewees with ties to the company,

recalled being questioned by the town's police for years during a movement to

organize Duplin Poultry workers. She said she could hardly get around Duplin

without being stopped: "They had my license number and they knew when [I was

there]. They'd watch."[5] Deborah commented that within the plant Duplin Poultry's

management used fear tactics to silence workers' concerns about pay and work

conditions and their complaints regarding safety (e.g., in response to co-workers'

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[4] I have changed the name of this company. I will refer to this company throughout the dissertation, using this pseudonym.

[5] In Cabarrus County, political leaders, backed by military force, have put an end to workers' movements at Cannon Mills over the years, reflecting both the power of the company within the community as well as North Carolina's right to work status.

injuries on the job). As one tactic, management held immigrant workers accountable by reminding them of their lack of papers.

Duplin Poultry provides its employees with the opportunity to live in trailer homes on company property, not unlike the option historically available to Cannon workers to live in company-owned mill homes. The Mexican American housing manager at Duplin Poultry reflected, in a patronizing tone, that they have a "great program because it gives people the opportunity to establish themselves in the community and buy their own property. Every year there are about ten people who leave to find their own place. They remain employees and become part of the county." Another parallel involves the gimmicks used by the companies' management apparently to improve their image among workers. Founder, Charles Cannon, was said to walk around Cannon Mills and shake hands with workers, whom he called his "extended family," and who called him "Mr. Charlie." According to Kim, a line supervisor at Duplin Poultry, in recent years management had begun making appearances on the factory floor. This impressed Kim. She said "I feel like if [management] will hold a conversation with a line person [they] don't mind being out here among the people.... And that means a lot to the worker because it shows them that ... [they] care about what we're doing out here."

As with Cannon Mills, Duplin Poultry's job applicants were not required to have any special skills, experience or educational background. The conditions at both plants

were similar, involving relatively monotonous and potentially alienating work and health hazards related to repetitive motion and exposure to chemicals found in dyes and cleaning agents. At Duplin Poultry, the conditions were also very cold (the work environment was forty degrees in many parts of the plant) and particularly dirty due to the nature of animal processing work. Kim had worked in the cutting department at Duplin Poultry for thirteen years. For two years she'd worked the line as a weigher and was then promoted to a group leader. She was currently a line supervisor with fifty-two workers under her, most of them Hispanics, followed in number by blacks and a few whites. She had watched newcomers' reactions to their work at the processing plant. Kim explained that many workers didn't make it through the first few days. For instance, she mentioned that she's had two new hires already that week; one worked until lunchtime on the first day and the other never came back from a bathroom break. Kim said that the company had instituted an on-the-job training program designed to (mentally) prepare new employees for their work and in turn to reduce the one hundred percent worker turnover rate.

Compared to Kim, Maryann took a more critical stance toward Duplin Poultry and other animal processing plants. Maryann argued that her employer offered better work to immigrants and locals. She said that compared to the processing plants, the jobs on the hog farms at her company were "more pleasurable." She said that workers "can be involved with team work, in a climate controlled environment, doing work that involves their mind. They're thinking, for example, about why they have to do

something like castrate a hog when it's a particular age." She said the pay was better too -- $6.90 versus a $6.00-$6.25 range at Duplin Poultry. Maryann remembered at one time being disgusted by the smell of the hog farm workers who came into the grocery store where she worked as a cashier. But, she said, "you just have to get past that image." As a human resource person, she "tries to show people that there are benefits and advancement opportunities." She considers her job the best one she could get working for someone else. After working for many years doing farm work (by the piece) in Florida, she relied on welfare for another eight years to help her and her daughter to get by. With the encouragement of someone at the Employment Security Commission, Maryann was able to find her current job using her bilingual language abilities.

In the eyes of many community members, Duplin Poultry employs nearly all Hispanic immigrants. While the actual rate of immigrant workers was closer to fifty percent, other companies in the area do have a near majority of immigrant workers. All but one of the Honduran men interviewed in Duplin had worked in one of these immigrant ghettos that made it relatively easy for new immigrants to join their workforce. These companies often had a bilingual human resource person and at least some had little regard for the legal status of their workers. Many recent immigrants have found employment through a recruiting agency and/or through their family members and friends who know where it's safe to apply. Antonio was aware that his boss knew he didn't have his papers, and trusted that the boss "didn't care." Latino

organizers and workers in the area believed that almost all of the Mexican and Central American immigrants living and working in the area were undocumented workers.

Along with poultry and hog processing plants, other manufacturing jobs in Duplin County included textile factory work. In Duplin, as in Cabarrus, the textile industry was not what it used to be, as Dietra and Renee could attest having lost their jobs within the industry. Renee had lost two jobs and Dietra one due to plant closure. Dietra recounted that one of the managers came in and told the workers, without explanation, to pack up their belongings and leave the premises. She reflected that "everybody was surprised ... I mean, people had bills and stuff. And they walked in one day. We thought everything was going fine.... That's a slap in the face." Both Renee and Dietra had found new work in meal preparation. Dietra helped prepare and serve food at a buffet-style barbecue restaurant, and Renee worked in a group home, preparing meals and providing transportation. Neither woman was unemployed for long after losing her factory job. In fact, on the very same day that Dietra saw the "help wanted" sign at the barbecue place, she inquired, applied and started working. Dietra was satisfied with her new job in that her boss understood if she needed to take time off to care for her mother. She had lost one of her factory jobs due to her occasional absences related to her caretaking responsibilities. Renee, on the other hand, regretted the pay cut and loss of benefits she'd experienced in losing her old jobs. She was concerned about being underpaid in her current job; the hours she'd put

in and her paycheck didn't match up properly. In addition, she was worried about not having health insurance: "I've got to find me a [different] job, get me some benefits.... Because I'm at the age now that my bones and stuff are hurting. And I need to go to the doctor."

The immigrant Latinos had each changed jobs even more frequently than Dietra and Renee had been forced to do. Despite their short amount of time in the area, all of the Honduran men had worked in several different jobs. For instance, in his first two years in the States, Francisco had already worked in two construction jobs, a chicken plant and in farm labor, all before his current work as a driver. These Latinos had faced a number of obstacles in their short time in the States. All of the men grappled with the uncertainty and fear accompanying their lack of papers, two of them had suffered work-related health problems (such as pesticide poisoning), three had experienced troubles with exploitative landlords, and two had been cheated out of pay for a construction job they'd completed. How these Latinos and the other working class interviewees made sense of the challenges in their lives will be the subject matter of subsequent chapters.

Table one: Cabarrus County participant overview

Name	Race/ ethnicity	Apprx age	Home life	Current job	Other recent employment
Gloria	African American	60	7 years in Logan public housing with teenage granddaughter years.	Retired. Volunteer driver for older neighbors.	Worked 28 years at Cannon Mills.
Shelia	African American	38	This year bought home in Logan after 10 yrs in public housing. Cares for 5 kids (ages 6-15).	Has worked 11 years at Cannon Mills.	
Tonya	African American	40	22 years lives in her house in Logan – Lives w/ her daughter and grandchild.	Has worked at Cannon Mill 22 years.	Housekeeping at a community college.
Sharon	African American	25	Lives in Logan with her parents, sister and 14 month-old son. For 15 years they've lived next to their uncle, who owns their house.	Has worked at Wachovia 1.5 years.	Worked for Perdue Farms in human resources; also worked at Sears.
Gracie	African American	65	Has lived near Logan w/ her adult retarded daughter for 25 years.	Retired	Domestic work in whites' homes – 15 years; worked at Cannon Mills 3 years; hotel laundry room- 5 years.
Claire	African American	40	Has lived near Cannon Mills w/three children for 15 years. She used to own the house until her divorce, now rents.	Works as an Elementary school teaching aide	Works part time as an office helper and concession stand server.
Rebecca	African American	30	Lives in a home in Logan that her family has owned for 20 years. She's lived there by herself for 6 years.	Has worked at Signa Health Care 2 years.	Worked at Bojangles, Cannon Mills, a day care center and group home (during college).
Trenton	Trinidadian American	40	Has lived in Charlotte for 11 years. They're buying their home. Lives w/wife and 9 year-old daughter.	Has worked for a paper company 5-6 years.	Works part time as a musician.

Table one, continued: Cabarrus County participant overview

Name	Race/ ethnicity	Apprx age	Description of family/home	Current job	Other recent employment
Judy	White	60	This year her husband died and she moved from their 30-yr home. Lives in a house that she owns.	Has worked 34 at Dept of Social Services.	
Jim	White	38	Has lived for a year in a rented home in Kannapolis with two teenage kids.	Construction sub-Contractor.	Worked part-time in machine maintenance at Cannon Mills, was in army for 10 years.
Bob	White	30	Has lived alone for 6 months in a rented house in Kannapolis.	Has worked 1 yr in machine maintenance at Cannon Mills.	Worked in a warehouse 14 years. Sporadic wk in construction/insulation.
Teresa	Mexican	25	5 years in NC with husband and 3 kids, after living in CA for 1 year. 1.5 years in their current home- a rented house.	Currently works at Wendy's restaurant.	Has also worked at Perdue, a greenhouse, and a textile factory in NC.
Dolores	Mexican	Late 30s/ early 40s	2 years in NC with husband and 4 kids, after living in CA for 8 years. Family lives in rented home.	Not currently employed.	Worked in a sewing factory, lost job when plant's operation moved to Mexico.
Victor	Mexican	20-22	5 months in NC after living in AZ for 2 months. He is single and recently moved form a trailer to a rented house.	Works in a nursery- found the job 2 weeks after coming to NC.	

Table two: Duplin County participant overview

Name	Race/ ethnicity	Apprx age	Home life	Current job	Other recent employment
Luis	Mexican American	38	Lives in a house with his wife and 18 year-old daughter. They own and are adding on.	Farm manager at Murphy Family Farms- 8 years.	20 year Marine Corps service.
Renee	African American	50's	Lives w/her brother in a house owned by their parents.	Works at a group home- meal preparation and transportation.	Has worked at two sewing plants- both shut down, one of them shut down unexpectedly.
Kim	African American	30	Lives w/ her mother and 2 young kids in a doublewide trailer. Mother owns the land.	Carolina Turkeys line supervisor. Has worked there 13 years, the first 11 on the night shift.	Recently looked for another job closer to home but wasn't hired.
Dietra	African American	50's	Lives in a trailer with her very ill mother. She's almost paid off the trailer. Used to live in public housing.	Cook at Blands Barbeque.	Worked at two sewing plants. Lost job b/c of time off helping sick mother. Lost other when plant shut down unexpectedly.
Deborah	African American	50's	Lives with family in a house that they own.	Community organizer w/ Student Rural Health Coalition.	
Tricia	White	30's	Recently moved into her friend's home (Maryanne) with her husband and baby.	Works for a translation service owned by Maryanne.	Has worked in the fields as a crewleader.
Maryann	White	30's	Rents a house & runs pt bus there. Lives w/ 12 year-old daughter. Tricia and her family just moved in.	Works in human resource office at Murphy Family Farms. Also owns a translation service.	Has worked in farm labor in Florida. Was on and off public assistance for 8 years. Clerical wk in NC.

Table two, continued: Duplin County participant overview

Name	Race/ethnicity	Apprx age	Home life	Current job	Other recent employment
Omero	Honduras	25	Less than 1 year in NC. Lives in a trailer with 5 other people. Has 3 kids in Honduras.	Works in construction, doing clear cutting.	Has another construction job, digging ditches. Also worked at a chicken plant.
Edgar	Honduras		1 year in NC. Lives in a trailer with 2 family members. Has 5 kids in Honduras.	Works at a chicken factory.	Worked at a different chicken factory; left when injured on the job. Before that worked in construction, digging ditches. Has also done farm work in NC.
Antonio	Honduras	45	4 years in US, just moved to NC from WV. Has lived less than one week in a trailer with 4 people. Has 4 kids in Honduras.	Works in construction.	Has also worked on a hog farm and has done farm work in NC.
Jorge	**Honduras**	mid 20s	2 years in US. Now lives in a trailer with several other men, including two brothers. Has a wife and 4 kids in Honduras.	Currently works as a chicken factory.	Left same chicken factory to work in tobacco fields for more money, but became ill from pesticide poisoning. Returned to chicken factory.
Francisco	**Honduras**	Late 30's/Early 40s	2 years in US. Now lives in a trailer with 6 people. Has 6 kids in Honduras.	Works as a driver.	Has worked in construction-doing clear cutting and digging ditches. Also has worked at a chicken plant and in farm labor.

Chapter three: The American dream and its unlikely believers

In this chapter I elaborate on the premises and meaning of the American dream ideology. After alluding to the historical underpinnings and failed promises of the dream, I go on to refer to research that documents widespread support for the ideology of the American dream and uncovers the complexity of people's dream-related ideas. I then consider the appeal of the American dream in light of the lives of the participants, themselves. I describe one set of experiences that might encourage participants to support the dream ideology and another that would seem to prompt workers' skepticism regarding the dream. I end by emphasizing the likelihood that participants are both drawn to and skeptical about the American dream ideology.

The American dream ideology

The American dream encompasses deeply held ideas about opportunity, meritocracy and individualism. It is the promise that anyone may pursue and reasonably anticipate success and the assumption that success results from individual will and talent (Hochschild 1995). The dream also has a moral dimension such that success and virtue are interwoven.

The dream's premises, which are part of the contemporary American social fabric, resonate with the republican ideals upon which the nation was founded. Thomas Jefferson understood independence as the "ability to maintain a minimally dignified living standard, or competency, by one's own efforts through means of production

under one's control" (Schwarz 1997:173, fn 5). The founders believed that citizens deserved the opportunity to obtain independence through their own skill and effort. That such opportunities were abundant, the founders took for granted. For instance, John Adams claimed that in America 'the means and opportunities for luxury are so easy and so plenty' (quoted in Manley 1990:100). Furthermore, the founders believed that the survival of the republic depended on certain material as well as moral foundations. Specifically, they thought survival required the presence of economic conditions that would provide ample opportunity for citizens to earn a living and would lift citizens above both poverty and dependence on others. Some republicans further maintained that the presence of prosperous economic conditions was necessary to provide the incentive and ability of already independent citizens to advance their well-being.

From the beginning, there were huge discrepancies between the ideals of individualism and the notion of abundant opportunities on the one hand and the realities of the majority of people (including people of color, women and landless white men) within the new republic on the other (see e.g., Mrydal 1944). Ringer (1983) argued that within the Constitution there was an ideology of duality, a sanctifying of two models of society. He maintained that "[o]n the 'visible' level of the Constitution is the society built on the concept of the sovereignty of the people and on the rights of the governed. And on the 'invisible' level of the Constitution is the society built on the concept of 'unequal rights' and on the enslavement of subjugated 'other persons' (Ringer 1983:103).

The American dream as a dominant ideology

Discrepancies linger on despite social movements that have challenged, often with a degree of success, the gap between ideals and the social, political and economic realities of many. Indeed, many researchers have clearly demonstrated how the distribution of opportunities and social and material rewards is shaped by the overlapping systems of class, gender and race/ethnicity.[1] Still, Americans by and large embrace the American dream (Hochschild 1995).[2] Several well-known studies (e.g., Huber and Form 1973, Feagin 1975, Kluegel and Smith 1986) examine public opinion about inequalities and in turn shed light on the appeal of the American dream ideology. In looking at a wide array of explanations regarding the sources of poverty and wealth, these studies reveal a widespread adherence to a "dominant stratification ideology" that envelops ideas of open opportunities, individualism and meritocracy (Smith and Stone 1989). First, in general Americans strongly believe in individualism: the presumption that individuals are ultimately responsible for their status in systems of social inequality. Further, they embrace the optimistic notion that opportunities are readily available to all who are willing to work hard. Finally, they trust that the rewards are distributed fairly, along meritocratic lines. That is,

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[1] For class dynamics see, for example, Wright 1997; for racial/ethnicity based inequality processes see Massey and Denton 1993, Oliver and Shapiro 1995, Tomaskovic-Devey 1996, Feagin 1991, Thomas 1993. For gender-based inequality processes see Lorber 1993, Risman 1998, Reskin and Padavic 1993. For arguments regarding the interlocking nature of different axes and systems of oppression see Collins 1991, 1993.

[2] The victories achieved by social movements may ironically quell complaints and fuel people's belief in the dream. Also, the emphasis on enhancing opportunities within the civil rights and women's movements reflects rather than rejects the premises of the ideology. As more radical activists (e.g. socialist feminists and Black Panthers) have argued, the potential for fundamental change is limited by efforts to create change within a given system, rather than challenging its very premises. In fighting for the right to equal participation in the dream, activists do not necessarily question the viability or logic of the dream itself.

Americans tend to believe that mobility depends on the possession and application of certain skills, motives and drives and that given the opportunity for all to pursue success, those who do are justly rewarded with wealth and status, while those who don't are penalized with poverty. Support for these ideals, also referred to as legitimation, represents an important element in the perpetuation of U.S. systems of stratification (Della Fave 1980).[3]

Variations among the consensus

While keeping in mind a general adherence to the tenets of the American dream, it is also illuminating to consider exceptions to the norm and complexities within the general pattern. For instance, the level of support for the various components of the dream varies among groups. Ideas about opportunity are related to privilege and advantage; Kluegel and Smith (1986) found that men, whites and the class privileged were more likely, compared to women, blacks and lower class people respectively, to believe that opportunities were prevalent. Although a majority among the latter groups did support the idea of open opportunities, they were less convinced compared to their more privileged counterparts. Also, men, whites and middle/upper class respondents were more likely to be optimistic about their present and future chances for economic advancement, and less likely to see themselves as facing barriers to opportunity. Kluegel and Smith (1986) also found that the level of support for the

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[3] My rationale for looking at ideologies is tied up in this last point. In theory, the notions of meritocracy and individualism are unproblematic. However, given the blatant discrepancies between the ideology and material reality, the ideology itself is dangerous since it can obscure and justify unjust discrepancies and inequalities.

individualistic claims of the American dream varies among groups. Members of advantaged groups believe more strongly in individualistic explanations for poverty, such as lack of proper money management skills or lack of effort, and less strongly in structural ones, such as failure of private industry to provide enough jobs or prejudice and discrimination against blacks.

Not only does support for the various premises of the dream vary among different groups, level of support within particular groups also shifts over time. For instance, Hochschild (1995) describes a shift in well-off African Americans' support for the dream. She found that although the best-off one-third of African Americans became dramatically better off from the 1960's to the 1990's, during the same period they lowered their expectations regarding a more promising future. They also became more cognizant of discrimination, more pessimistic about the decline in discrimination, and more likely to report having experienced racism. Hochschild refers to this longitudinal shift as the paradox of "succeeding more and enjoying it less."

Also by way of illustration, Schuman and Krysan's (1999) longitudinal analysis of whites' beliefs about the source of responsibility for black disadvantage showed their beliefs to be subject to dramatic change in ways that apparently reflected the historical context. More specifically, they found that during the height of the civil rights movement, whites tended to blame whites and blacks equally for racial disadvantage, but that this trend changed sharply in the late sixties when whites put

the blame on blacks themselves. Schuman and Krysan suspected that this shift among whites toward blaming blacks for racial disadvantage resulted from the enactment of civil rights legislation as well as the emergence of riots in several US cities. They also suggested that the trend represented a return to whites' pre-civil rights explanatory attitudes, although no earlier surveys addressed the question to allow confirmation of their hypothesis. The key point here, again, is that beliefs are dynamic, with trends in beliefs sometimes even reversing direction.

Another point that complicates the picture of a general adherence to the dream has to do with the interplay between class ideology (ideas about the sources of economic inequalities) and racial attitudes. The three ways that Hochschild (1995) considers support for the premises of the dream shed light on this point. Hochschild first examines support for the premises of the dream as general prescriptions and finds nearly universal support among both blacks and whites. For instance, people widely endorsed the importance of self-sufficiency and supported the notion of fair treatment for all, with a particularly strong emphasis on opportunities, as compared to outcomes. Hochschild then examines beliefs regarding the applicability of the dream to people's own lives and reveals that a majority of whites and blacks believed their own life course solely reflects their abilities. She also points out a widespread optimism in terms of people's anticipation of success from the 1940's to the mid-1980's. Blacks were even more likely than whites to anticipate success for themselves, even when they recognized their comparatively worse circumstances. Hochschild's examination of people's beliefs about the applicability of the dream to

other people's lives reveals substantial differences across racial lines. Whereas whites believe that blacks' chances to achieve their dreams mirrors their own chances, blacks disagree. Hochschild calls this the paradox of "what's all the fuss about?" In terms of ideas about opportunity, blacks see more racial discrimination than whites and believe more strongly that discrimination affects their life chances. Whites believe that discrimination is slight and that blacks' aspirations are likely to be fulfilled. In terms of individualistic claims, blacks are about as likely as whites to attribute their own success or failure to their own abilities. However, blacks are less likely to attribute the success of others to ability rather than to fate or birth. Whites are more likely to attribute racial inequality to individual flaws within blacks or the black community. Whites' inflated sense of blacks' opportunities and whites' failure to acknowledge structural obstacles appear to be tied to their class ideology as well as their racial attitudes.

Schuman et al. (1997) also reveal this striking racial difference in beliefs about the causes of blacks' economic disadvantage. Whereas whites stressed blacks' lack of motivation, blacks most often cite discrimination as the cause of black disadvantage and in turn are much more supportive of affirmative action. In addition, blacks emphasize present discrimination even more than past discrimination. Whites, by contrast, are more likely to admit past discrimination, while downplaying or denying present discrimination.

A final revealing exception to the more general adherence to the dream is that among individuals, there are varying degrees of support for and resistance to the ideas (Kluegel and Smith 1986). In his ethnography about working class and working poor young men, MacLeod (1995) observed a wavering back and forth between support and nonsupport for the dream's ideas. Eight years after MacLeod had documented the high aspirations of the Brothers, a group of black teenage males living in a housing project, he found that the men had been unable to secure decent jobs despite some promising credentials and positive attitudes. In examining the men's explanations for the gap between the high aspirations of their youth and their current situations he found that some retained their faith in the American dream. They still insisted that there were plenty of opportunities available and that it was up to the individual to go for them. Others, by contrast, had less faith in the dream. They found fault within themselves, while also blaming the larger socioeconomic world. To illustrate, Mokey criticized himself for failing to study hard enough, being lazy and switching jobs too often, but he also remarked on the lack of opportunity. Mokey, like the other Brothers, also discounted racism as an obstacle in their careers. He reflected that he'd never been bothered by what he called "the racial thing." (MacLeod 1995:222).

As these examples reveal, understanding individuals' ideas pertaining to the tenets of the American dream is a complex undertaking. First, ideological beliefs are not necessarily static, but instead can be sensitive to experiences and broader historical context. Furthermore, ideas are shaped by social location, such that, for instance, faith in the dream accompanies privilege. Class ideologies are tied up with ideas about race

as well. Finally, as MacLeod's research illustrates well, individuals may hold discrepant beliefs.

Discrepancies among the dream's ideals and economic, social and political realities as well as the inconsistencies among individual's various beliefs are the core subject of this dissertation. I proceed by describing one set of experiences that might encourage the participants to support the dream ideology and another that would seem to invoke skepticism regarding the dream.

In Agreement with the dream

There are two principal considerations as to why the participants in this study are likely to support the dream ideology. First, most of the participants (20/28), immigrants and locals alike, had experienced some type of mobility. While there are no extreme "rags to riches" stories, the experience of any degree of mobility might be taken as evidence of the openness of American society. Especially dramatic was Maryann's mobility track. Only in the few years immediately before Maryann's interview did she have a steady and decent income. During her teens and through her mid-twenties, Maryann worked in farm labor, picking tomatoes at $.25 per bucket. She opted to get paid by the piece rather than by the hour, which allowed her to work as hard as she could in the early part of the day before she'd "burn to a crisp in the [Florida] sun." When Maryann came to North Carolina she was thrilled by the possibility of working at Duplin Poultry for $6.00 an hour because she'd never made more than $5.00 an hour. However, her application was rejected due to health

problems (she had arthritis in her knees). After her daughter was born, Maryann managed to get by with government assistance, but still struggled with the vulnerability of poverty. For instance, when Hurricane Fran dropped a tree on her kitchen, her landlord refused to remove it, making her living space a dangerous place. Instead the landlord only reduced the rent by fifty percent. It was only when Maryann landed her full-time job as a human resource employee at a hog production company that she gained some stability. Someone at the Employment Security Commission had encouraged Maryann to apply for the position. She said she was very nervous about her interview because she'd never had an interview before. She "almost fell out of her chair when they offered her the job." As mentioned earlier Maryann also devoted much of her time to launching her part time business providing translation services.

Like Maryann, several other participants had experienced mobility at work. After his military years, Jim worked his way up in the construction business from a helper to a sub-contractor. Jim said "I can't handle a real job… a real job meaning somewhere that I have a boss. I was told what to do for ten and a half years of my life [in the military]… That was enough of that. So, I've worked for myself since. And, I just like the freedom."

Judy also saw a clear mobility path over her thirty-four year career at the Department of Social Services. She started out in a position that she felt was lower than her qualifications, but worked her way up to her position as the head of the child welfare department. Judy had high expectations for herself and other employees and

expressed pride in her sense of obligation: "I have a very strong work ethic. And I believe that once you are there at eight o'clock, you work. And you work constantly until five.… [Y]ou follow the rules. [I believe] that you definitely earn your salary. And you contribute to improvement." By the time Rebecca graduated from college she had worked in the retail, service and textile industries. After graduating, Rebecca obtained a position as a customer service representative in the health insurance field. I asked Rebecca whether she liked her current job, which she considered to be a middle class position that suited her college degree, better than the previous ones. Her enthusiastic response was convincing: "Yes. [Laughs.] Yes, yes, yes, yes."

Shelia's experience of mobility was also impressive. She had recently become a homeowner after living in public housing for ten years. As noted earlier, Shelia experienced a personal transformation upon becoming a homeowner; the process "gave her more self-esteem about herself." She also associated homeownership with new citizenship rights: "Nowadays people are not keeping their eyes closed to what's going on [i.e., crime in the Logan neighborhood]. They're realizing, 'We are homeowners, we don't have to take a whole lot of stuff that's going on. That's why the police are there. We don't have to go out and argue with people, we can just call the police.'"

As with Shelia, a few other North Carolinians in the study had experienced housing mobility, including Dietra who was buying her trailer home and Trenton who announced that he and his family were "upscaling" in their process of buying a home.

In addition, almost all of the immigrant participants from both counties had experienced housing mobility. Teresa's family, for instance, had moved from a two-bedroom home to one with three bedrooms that was located in a quieter neighborhood. Similarly, the trailer where Edgar made his home at the time of the interview was more spacious than another one in which he lived with three men in a small room with one bed.

A second contextual consideration that might influence participants' faith in the dream ideology is their immersion within a world where counter-ideologies are relatively absent. Interviews with employers in Duplin and Cabarrus Counties shed light on the individualistic workplace culture within which they spend their working days. One example that surfaced in several interviews was employers' inclination to emphasize individual choices. Some employers insisted with fervor that immigrants were not displacing local workers. They declared that local labor force members were simply opting out of certain employment opportunities. While this argument appears to hold weight,[4] it is telling how the employers take for granted the undesirable conditions that locals leave behind. Rather than acknowledging up-front the undesirable nature and poor conditions of the work or their potential to improve wages and conditions, the employers account for the shifting racial/ethnic workplace composition in terms of individual workers' choices, talents and preferences. The

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4. Leiter, Robinson and Skaggs (2002) examined the shifting racial/ethnic composition of North Carolina industries and concluded that for the most part immigrants are replacing rather than displacing "native" workers.

following excerpt comes from an interview with a human resource employee within

Duplin's manufacturing sector:

> **Leslie:** With the labor force, do you get a sense that Hispanic workers are displacing any workers or-
>
> **Mr. Holt:** No, no, we just can't find the workers. I mean there is nobody out there. Now, years ago, five years ago, I was at a plant where the INS raided a plant.… You know the dogs and the helicopters and all of that and their argument was that we are doing this because these people are taking away jobs from Americans. Well, even then, we couldn't find enough people to fill the jobs and that is the way it is today. I mean if I can find any displaced worker, I would say come and talk to me. Come and see me and we will place you back because nobody is being displaced, nobody. And I can guarantee you that industry wide in this area, people are hurting for employees. We need employees, you know.
>
> **Leslie:** Do you think that is the whole Duplin County or do you think that is regional like southeastern North Carolina?
>
> **Mr. Holt:** I think it is nationally. I think is a national trend. I came from Vlasic Pickles in Ohio and I worked at Boras Foods in Oklahoma and Arkansas and it is all the same. We cannot find enough workers to fill our plants. Now let me give you an example, we had a lady that came in looking for a job and we explained to her what we do and her response was that I don't want to be around animals. Well, then obviously we can't use you. Now, that is a choice that she made, it is not because we don't have work. She chose not to work–she didn't want to work with animals. Well, we still need somebody, but we can't have somebody who doesn't like to work around animals, you know. If there is anybody that is displaced it is because they have chosen to be displaced because of the nature of the job order.

The emphasis on individual preference within the last paragraph is especially

noteworthy. An excerpt from another human resource employee in a manufacturing

plant in Duplin also reveals the individualistic culture of the workplace. She

emphasizes personal choice in reference to the company's disciplinary and promotion

policies (emphasis added):

Ms. Jacobs: [When an employee misses work] we don't just let it go either. We have regulations, you know…. They are given an **opportunity** to call in. [If] after three days they don't call in, we assume they are no longer interested. [We explain this policy] at the orientation.

Leslie: So after three days there are some repercussions … do you see that a lot?

Ms. Jacobs: Not necessarily. Some will come in with a logical explanation. And you can either write them up or say 'okay … this is a verbal warning. Next time could be suspension for three days or up to termination.' So we give them the benefit of the doubt and an **opportunity** to work at it.

Leslie: Okay. So within the organization, you see a lot of movement up. Is it difficult to move up on the scales of pay?

Ms. Jacobs: No, it's not difficult. Again, we offer the **opportunity**. Again, say there is a machine operator position becoming available because the one that is there is going to go on maternity leave or medical leave. Well, we let the inner office know, there are **opportunities** here if you know anybody that would like [a chance at the position]. I'll go down, I'll say, I have somebody in mind. I'll go to that person and we also have notice on the board in the hall in the break room and the supervisors also let them know at their weekly safety meetings. This position is coming up **if you're willing** to learn, we are willing to train. You know, it's a little bit more money also. So, the **opportunity** is there.… All the help is given.… So to advance up is just your **willingness** to want to.

Just as Ms. Jacobs stresses the openness of opportunities at the company, she makes

visible the company's hand in mentioning that managers will target certain employees

on whom they have their eye for promotion.

In Disagreement with the dream

There are other considerations that lead me to suspect that the workers, as opposed to

human resource staff, might take a different, more skeptical stance in relating to the

American dream ideology. First, several interviewees had taken part in political actions promoting workers' rights, which could mean they're skeptical about their own and other workers' chances to participate in the dream. Of interest is that all of these workers were from Duplin County. Several Honduran interviewees mentioned their acquaintance with a Latino organizer to whom they had expressed their grievances regarding lost pay or unsafe working conditions. Also, three African American women, Renee, Dietra and Deborah, had all collaborated with the Workers' Fairness Coalition. Deborah worked full-time as a community organizer. Dietra, whose disposition was otherwise one of deep discouragement during her interview as she described work and family challenges, finally smiled when she recounted a victorious moment of worker solidarity and collective action. Along with some co-workers, Dietra protested the unexpected closing of a factory where she'd worked. She remembered: "Yeah. We was on television. We picketed right in front of the plant. And [they] had a television station out there. You know, I enjoyed that. I like stuff like that. I was into it. Really, I was into it. I was into it full-blast." Dietra and her collaborators won money for the insurance they lost due to the plant's closing.

Furthermore, another reason to expect that some of the participants might be skeptical about the dream ideology has to do with North Carolina's particularly poor treatment of workers. A recent study by the North Carolina Occupational Safety and Health Project (November 26th, 1999) on the abuse of immigrant workers reported that wage and hour violations are common, with the most frequent violation observed being the simple failure on the part of employers to pay for work performed. Within the

construction industry immigrant workers are seldom paid the required time-and-a-half

for overtime work and within the restaurant industry there are rampant violations of

minimum wage and overtime pay laws. Furthermore, this NCOSH report revealed

that many immigrant workers never file complaints because they lack sufficient

information to document their claims.

Even managers and supervisors admit to the undesirable conditions of employment

available to unskilled workers. In describing the employee screening process, a

human resource employee alluded to the unpleasant nature of the work on the hog

farms. Lisa said that at first she'd thought that experience would have been most

important in determining who would make a good employee. But she then realized

that you can "teach [about] pigs, but not about responsibility, dependability and

reliability." The combination of Lisa's eagerness to promote the company and the

patronizing tone with which she referred to workers made me wonder whether these

intangible qualifications may have been euphemisms for desperation and

vulnerability. She went on to stress the importance of the second interview, which

takes place on a hog farm. By watching the applicants they "can sometimes tell that it

grosses some of them out to see a pig being born, or to scrape manure, or the smell is

intolerable. They can watch people's reactions. The applicants watch a video about

what they'll be doing day-to-day before they go to the farms. The [company] wants to

get their reactions before they spend the money to do a drug test and physical." She

suggests that workers who are not sufficiently desperate are too expensive. As a hog

production as opposed to a hog processing company, perhaps it can afford to be more

choosy. Their turnover rate is about forty-five percent, much lower than the one

hundred percent turn-over rate at processing plants. As described by a *New York

Time's* reporter "Slaughtering swine is repetitive, brutish work, so grueling that three

weeks on the factory floor leave no doubt in your mind about why the turnover is one

hundred percent. Five thousand quit and five thousand are hired every year [at a plant

in a North Carolina county that borders Duplin County]. You hear people say, 'They

don't kill pigs in the plant, they kill people.'" (June 16th, 2000).

In its recent report on *The State of the Worker in North Carolina*, the Common Sense

Foundation awarded North Carolina a C- grade for the conditions and wages of

workers in the state. To determine this grade the researchers ranked North Carolina

from best to worst among the fifty states, along the lines of eight statistical indicators.

By way of example, for occupational safety, North Carolina earned a C because of the

state's relatively high worker fatality rate. For quality of life, North Carolina earned a

D+, a grade that took into account, for instance, the state's relatively low per capita

expenditure for welfare programs and its relatively high population percentage

without access to primary health care. In terms of wages and benefits, manufacturing

workers in North Carolina earn less than their counterparts in all but ten other states.

North Carolina earned a D+ on its income and poverty ranking due to its relatively

low per capita income and high rate of income inequality. In terms of workers'

organizing rights, North Carolina, a right to work state, at the bottom of the ladder for

percent unionized, earned an F. According to the Common Sense Foundation report,

only 3.5 percent of workers are unionized and neither state nor local government

employees enjoy the right to collective bargaining. Taken together, these descriptive snapshots do not portray North Carolina as a place with abundant opportunities where anyone with the will and talent to do so can pursue and achieve success.

A final and key reason to anticipate skepticism regarding the dream is that most of the participants described personal experiences that contradicted the notion of abundant opportunities and/or the assumption that individual will suffices in bringing about success. Making ends meet was not easy for some participants. A few had to work two or three jobs in order to get by. For instance, in addition to her eight-hour day at Cannon Mills, Tonya had been working four hours a day as a housekeeper at a local community college. She had to quit when her job was relocated to another campus that was too far away for her to get home in time to care for her infant grandchild. Another African American participant in Cabarrus worked three jobs at the time of the interview; she was an elementary school teaching aide and worked part-time as an office helper and as a concession stand server. Other participants were frustrated by the setbacks they'd encountered at work. Tonya was among a few African American participants in Cabarrus who had been passed up for promotion. She recounted how her company gave the position she bid on to a white man with less seniority. Gloria lost the job she'd had for nearly thirty years: "They shut my job down and sent it to South Carolina. Sent it somewhere. Cause they shipped the jobs down there. There was over a thousand of them ... And they never did open up the place, never did open it back up." A construction contractor had cheated several of the Honduran participants in Duplin. These men were unsure whether they'd ever see the thousands

of dollars they were owed. Some participants' setbacks had to do with the difficulty of balancing caretaking and paid work responsibilities. Dietra, for example, was fired from a textile job when she took off too much time to help her ill mother. Kim had to postpone her coursework toward a nursing degree when her mother suffered a stroke and Gloria associated her move to public housing with her mother's illness. She and her family couldn't afford to take care of their home, on top of the financial drain brought upon by the illness.

Also representing a direct experiential challenge to the presumption that success results from individual traits and talents were the instances of prejudice or discrimination witnessed or experienced first hand by several of the interviewees. Trenton referred to the environment of his workplace, a paper company. He'd come to the conclusion that his white supervisors and co-workers felt threatened by him because of his intelligence and competence. Trenton explained, "They don't want you to be smart. They want a dumb guy, a yes man. 'Yes sir, yes sir.' They don't want you to challenge them." He'd observed such questionable practices as supervisors bringing their best friends and giving them a better paying job than Trenton's, or requiring Trenton to train someone who was making more than him. In addition, Trenton believed he was punished with demotion for making the statement "If I was white I'd be making more money" at a meeting. In another instance, Gloria recalled the $2.00 gap between men's and women's pay at Cannon Mills. She insisted, "it wasn't fair," and remembered men telling her that "she had no place there; it wasn't a woman's job." Her complaints, like Trenton's, appeared to have little effect. Victor,

a recent immigrant working in a Cabarrus nursery, was too intimidated to complain in the first place. He mentioned that all the managers were white, and that only whites were promoted. He said "you have to be quiet and not provoke anyone because people are racist, even if you've done nothing wrong." Francisco reflected on his observations within the construction field; he'd seen white men channeled into the lighter jobs, which came with more breaks. In some cases Latinos were told to do precarious projects that white workers refused to do.

Gracie referred to the everyday experience of racism. She remembered how a white acquaintance (a classmate at a Senior Center exercise class) complained about being treated poorly by other white people. Gracie reflected on the interaction:

> She said, "They treat me just like dirt…." She forgot who she was talking to. She forgot I was a black lady…. She said, "They treat me just like I'm a [pause]." And she caught herself…. And [she] almost said that she is treated just like us…. Yeah, she was saying the white people treated her that way down there where we would take exercises. At the Senior Center. And, she was saying she had missed me [during the classes I missed.] And, a couple more blacks.… She said she had missed us. Because she would mostly talk to us… I think she got the impression that they [the white folks] didn't want her there. Didn't want to talk to her. But, uh, and this is what we deal with every day of our lives."

Finally, nearly all the participants described a race/ethnicity-based opportunity structure with whites (often men) on top and Latino/a immigrants at the bottom. Some of the interviewees commented on the processes that reproduced this hierarchy. Trenton, for example, noted that in seventy years his company had never promoted a black supervisor and also tended to place only whites in "helper" positions from

which workers generally advance to higher positions. Minorities were more often found in dead-end jobs.

Tonya had worked at Cannon Mills for over twenty years, nearly all of them in the same position. She had a theory that Cannon Mills didn't want a lot of blacks in any one department; she said "they want to keep them scattered … the managers aren't going to come out and say it, but we can see it." Renee recalled the way the white supervisors mistreated a black supervisor at one of her previous textile jobs. She explained, "they'd get down on her, like she didn't know what to do. They'd walk over her."

There is evidence both within the literature described at the beginning of this chapter as well as within the participants' own experiences that suggests participants will neither agree nor disagree straightforwardly with the dream ideology. It is more likely that they will waver in support and skepticism, especially those participants who have experienced mobility, but remain familiar with the struggle to make ends meet and/or those who must continue to navigate race-or-gender-based setbacks.

The circumstances of the immigrant interviewees are interesting in a special way. On the one hand, immigrants are the most likely believers because, by definition, they have sought better opportunities and have made sacrifices to arrive where they are. Their willingness to take risks and make sacrifices presumably rests in part on their faith that things would be better in the United States. On the other hand, they have an

outsider perspective, which could lessen their faith in the dream or allow them to escape the taken-for-grantedness of the dream. The immigrants are marginalized in the sense that each of them lacked papers and most lacked English-speaking skills. Also, the Duplin immigrants' existence was clearly transitory. None were migrant workers at the time of their interviews, but all had young children in Honduras, possibly allowing their Central American home as opposed to their North American one to remain their point of reference. Furthermore, although the lure of the dream seeps beyond the U.S. border, the immigrants don't have the same history of exposure to North American cultural notions of success that the North Carolinian participants have. Finally, the uncertainty and vulnerability of the immigrants' daily life may also temper their dreaming by lowering their expectations.

Not just the immigrants, but all the participants have a complex relationship to the dream ideology, given that their lives both support and challenge the ideology. I now turn to my analysis of the ways participants explicitly and implicitly draw on the dream ideology. In chapter four I examine whether participants' spontaneous talk within the context of the interviews expressly refers to the ideas of opportunity and individualism, so central to the dream ideology. While chapter four reveals that in general the participants do not talk about their lives in ways that support the ideology, chapters five and six show that participants, nonetheless, apply or draw upon the ideology as they talk about their own challenges and complain about the absence of such challenges in other people's lives. I focus not on whether participants are aware of the discrepancy between the dream and their lives, but how they relate to this

discrepancy with emotion management. That is, I take the discrepancy between the dream's premises and promises and the participants' lives as a starting point. I suggest that their emotion management is bound up within the dream; it takes places within the logic of the dream, represents a response to the dream, and ultimately reinforces the dream.

Chapter four: Participants' talk about opportunity and individualism

By taking into account relevant research on the American dream and considering the nature of participants' experiences and observations, the last chapter set the stage for an examination of how participants relate to the American dream ideology. In this chapter I begin to look explicitly at whether participants' talk lends support to the premises of the dream. I examine how participants talk about opportunity (as limited or abundant) and whether they espouse individualistic ideology.

As shown in Table three, the majority of the participants were neither optimistic about opportunity nor likely to offer individualistic comments spontaneously. In this chapter I first describe the participants' skepticism regarding opportunity. Then I draw attention to participants who offer exceptional comments, ones that reflect their faith in the dream. I conclude this chapter by reflecting on the inconsistent nature of participants' talk.

Opportunity

Most participants did not support the dream ideology as they assessed opportunities. Nearly all the participants (24/28) talked about opportunity as limited at some point during their interviews, often in response to open-ended questions regarding the best and worst types of jobs around, their sense of whether things were getting better or worse, and/or their account of the challenges keeping their hopes and goals at bay.

Dietra mentioned that "jobs were winding down," a comment that echoed other

participants' observations regarding the closing of mills, the layoff of workers and/or

the relocation of manufacturing plants. Luis elaborated on this phenomenon in the

following excerpt, a response to my question about the availability of good jobs:

> Yeah. Good jobs are hard to come by, especially like right now with
> the textile industry. They're losing a lot of business…. Of course, a lot
> of textile mills are shutting down. [X] Company in Wallace was shut
> down last year. Yeah. And that put a lot of people out of work. Some
> people had been there for over thirty years…. Mostly African-
> Americans. Some white people. And, the other textile mills, they're
> in about the same position. My sister-in-law worked in one and she'll
> maybe work three days out of [a] week one time and two days out of
> another one [and then] maybe for a week or two without any work….
> [L]ike I said, the textile industry is not in a very good position right
> now in North Carolina. Of course, last year it was Congress voted to
> allow a lot of textile [to relocate] outside the United States … overseas
> to be done cheaper.

Some interviewees talked about losing decent jobs and having to settle for less

desirable ones. For instance, Renee said "I like my job, what I do now, but I don't

like my pay. I feel like I am doing too much for the pay I get." What she especially

missed about her old job was the benefit package, which included health insurance.

Other participants remained in their current situation, with the knowledge that

alternatives were neither plentiful nor more attractive. Tonya, for instance, would

have liked to leave her textile position that she'd held for seventeen years, but

reckoned that "I know right now I can't quit my job and go to work making what I'm

making. You know. That's what I always look at, too." Tonya couldn't afford a pay

cut; as it was, Tonya already worked another job in housekeeping to make ends meet.

Commuting was necessary in order to find more attractive jobs, according to other

interviewees. Bob said, "It's hard to find a good paying job, right here in

Kannapolis…. I mean, if you're going to make any decent money, you have to go to

Charlotte or somewhere, a bigger town, somewhere like that and make decent money.

It isn't really a long way to drive. You know, I'd do it, in fact, if I had to." Heather's

analysis of the job market adds a layer of complexity by drawing attention to the

subject of race: "it's hard to find a job that's something you want to do. Middle class

African American women have to commute [to Charlotte] to find appropriate work…

White women have connections to local jobs." Sharon also commented that white

women tend to have better (in her words, "corporate type") jobs either because they

have college degrees or in "a lot of instances, [they] know somebody that may be in

an upper position." She said white women might have someone looking out for them.

Renee talked about the different jobs available to men and women in Duplin County

when I asked her about the best jobs available to African American women:

> Well, in this area we got [X textile] Company; a lot of women work
> there. 'Cause dealing with yarn is nothing heavy and hard. That's the
> only factory right here that's close, that I know a lady could work in.
> But, [Y Company's] got some things down there for women to do too.
> But I don't know what it consists of … unless they just stocking or
> something like that or shipping. 'Cause they say it's cold down there.
> ... But there's a few women working down there. But, they don't hire
> too many women neither. If you get a job there, most of them that gets
> jobs down there, you don't hardly hear them talking about it cause
> they're gonna stay there. 'Cause their benefits and pay is good.

Renee also admitted that there "ain't nothing wrong with the salary" at the female-

dominated textile plant to which she refers. Still, her commentary uncovered a taken

for granted sex-based division of labor within companies and gender segregation across industries, which tends to result in substantial gender-based pay inequities.

While there is consensus among the interviewees as a whole regarding the limited nature of opportunities, it is worth noting that all nine of the immigrant participants described the opportunities in their area as limited. While some remained hopeful, each nonetheless alluded to the uncertainty in his or her life and none hinted that he or she took for granted the present and future availability of opportunities. For instance, Omero, who had been in North Carolina for about one year after a three-month border crossing journey, said that "one comes here to look for opportunity." For Omero, this search for opportunity had clear-cut stakes:

> **Omero:** The most important thing is to be healthy and to earn good money. As you know when one comes here [it] is to do something, so if they at least pay well.
>
> **Greg:** Do you think that it is difficult to find that type of work?
>
> **Omero:** Yes, it is difficult. One always earns very little.
>
> **Greg:** What would be a good job?
>
> **Omero:** Well, one that pays at least $10 per hour. If one earns any less then [it] is only enough to pay the rent, electricity and water. So that is why sometimes people decide to leave. That is the way.

Omero's comments suggest that it's not what immigrants will accept that makes their labor cheap, but rather, what employers want to pay. Suggestive of Heather's race-cognizant commentary, some immigrants described their opportunities as categorically constrained. That is, they understood that their status as undocumented

immigrants compromised their opportunities and shaped their daily life. Jorge, a Honduran immigrant living in Duplin County, said "we [immigrants] do not have papers and are afraid here. The American has all the rights." When asked why immigrants were coming to Duplin County, Jorge responded that "… one prefers [this place] because one notices that there are jobs in factories, fields, construction, everything. From other people we know that they pay better than in other places.… [B]ut if one looks very closely this is not true. In the fields, it is a hard work and pays very little. The bosses abuse the worker." At the time of the interview, Jorge worked in a factory alongside Latina/o co-workers for "very little" pay: only $5.60 an hour. He explained that this pay rate was lower than the earnings he could expect working in fields, though he still reasoned, **"**For me the factory is better. The work in the fields is dangerous. I told my boss to take me to the hospital and he did not want to take me. From 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m., I was sick. I was almost dead."

While most of the participants claim that opportunities are limited, some of these same interviewees, as the next section reveals, also claim that opportunities are abundant. A considerable number of the participants do lend support to the dream ideology not only through their optimistic comments about opportunities, but also their contentions that individual will is sufficient.

Over one-fourth of the interviewees (8/28) suggested that opportunities were abundant. In sharp contrast to the above commentary on the diminishing availability of jobs, Tricia, for instance, insisted that "there are plenty of jobs in the areas and

help wanted signs everywhere. There is something like 23,000 unfilled jobs in the

country. There are plenty of jobs, just not enough people." As Shelia declared, "it's

easy to get a job. Because it's [an] open market to jobs.… Because temp [agencies]

hire … everyday. You know, if you want to go over there [to the temp agencies, you

can] get paid everyday…." Jim, also quite certain about the strength of the economy,

responded to my questions as follows:

> **Katie:** Would you say it's getting easier to find a job nowadays
> because of the economy?
>
> **Jim:** Oh yes.
>
> **Katie:** Okay. And so … that means for like Hispanic people, white
> people, and African-American people? I mean, … across the board
> there's jobs?
>
> **Jim:** Right. Most definitely. The only way you could not get a job in
> these …counties … is if you just don't wanna get out of the bed and
> go to work. Because there's opportunity there.… There's work, more
> work going on now. We're trying to put a [construction] crew
> together because there's just so much going on … And there are just a
> lot of jobs.

A few participants talked at turns about the abundant and limited nature of

opportunities. For instance, despite Tricia's enthusiastic claim regarding plentiful

opportunities, she also talked about constraints that she, herself, had encountered:

> **Tricia:** I believe in being me with people and not just changing my
> attitude because of what the person has done or what the person is
> doing. You know? I mean I don't judge anybody. To each his own.
> … You know what I'm saying? And I don't want to be judged….
> 'Cause over here in South Carolina, it's really hard to get a job if
> you've ever been married to a Spanish person.
>
> **Katie:** Really? How do they know that?
>
> **Tricia:** Because of your name.

Kim commented, on the one hand, that it was getting harder to find decent work. She had searched unsuccessfully for a new job. On the other hand, Kim mentioned more than once that the older employees where she worked were leaving for "better opportunities." When I asked her what she meant, she said they were leaving for jobs with better pay, but didn't say where they could find such jobs. In another example, Gloria wavered back and forth in her comments about opportunity. She finishes her story about how easy kids have it today with a reminder that she herself is out of work.

> So, really, the children nowadays has it easy. They never had to pick cotton. They never had to pick old beans… coming up, yeah. They never had to--they never had to tie a goat to the tree and then break its neck and get a whipping.… Never had to milk a cow.… They never had to get out of bed and hoe beans and stuff like that. I mean, they have it easy. And they do not appreciate it. I mean, there's so much opportunity.… I mean, it's there. You don't ask --it's in the palm, what more can you do? Yeah, I really miss my job."

Times have changed, but still, Gloria acknowledged that there were not many jobs in Cabarrus County and that a lot of the mills were closing down.

Individualism

The interviewees occasionally offered unprompted comments that exposed their faith in the individualistic tenets of the American dream. As Victor, an immigrant participant, put it, "all have the potential to be successful … everyone should try to better themselves … for themselves and their family. That's why I'm here, one has to keep working and not lose hope." Although, a majority of the participants did not espouse individualistic comments, it is again worthwhile to consider the exceptions.

About one-third (11/28) of the participants made comments reflecting the notion that success results from individual talent and effort. More precisely, they emphasized that hard work and/or education would guarantee success.

Kim was among those interviewees stressing the inevitable payoff of hard work. She felt confident that she could eventually secure a better job, one that was closer to home and in an environment more comfortable than her forty-degree workplace. She remarked, "all I need to do is to get a foot in the door somewhere because I'm a hard worker and just need the opportunity to show it."

Both Jim and Judy also characterize themselves as hard workers. They accounted for their achievements and current well-being by emphasizing their work and talent. When asked what she cared most about in a job, Judy jumped at the opportunity for self-promotion: "I have a very strong work ethic. And I believe that once you are there at 8:00, you work. And you work constantly until five. Um, that you follow the rules. That you definitely earn your salary. And you contribute to improvement." When Jim described his mobility track within the construction field, he acknowledged the good fortune of his timing, but also stressed his own skills:

> I started out as a helper. I did a lot of replacement windows and we
> built sunrooms and vinyl siding, of course … I started as a helper in
> '88. [I was] right out of the military. Started helping a guy. And I
> learned it real quick. I pick up on things quick, so I was able to learn it
> in about six months. And then a year later I started on my own. So
> actually I started out as a helper.… You know I just happened to be
> learning the trade when it [vinyl siding was] in its booming stage.…
> So that helped me out a lot too.… At that time, there wasn't a lot of us

doing it. So it, it was a big demand for it.… Of course, there still is. Uh, we're ten jobs behind right now.

Several participants promoted education, along with hard work, as a mobility track. For example, Gloria insisted seven times during her interview that she truly believes in education and expects that it will be the route for her grandchildren out of the projects. In her mind, determination is the only possible obstacle. Gloria described the way she advises young people: "I tell them, 'You gotta get a education. Don't go behind those bars.'" In her eyes education is not simply one successful pathway, but *the* pathway and cause for hope. Gracie, another African American woman in Cabarrus County, also affirms the importance of education. When I asked her to give an example of a good job, one with decent pay, she answered by commenting on how one goes about getting a good job:

> Well, you know, everybody learned that you have to get you a good education. And … then you can apply for those jobs.… Because, see … I look at my grandchildren and they all went to college. And, uh, they got good jobs.… Like my oldest granddaughter works at the post office in Charlotte. I got a daughter working in Charlotte Medical Center. So you see they got good jobs … because they finished college.… And, uh, naturally, you're gonna get turned down on some of those good jobs. Because, simply because you're black. But then somebody's gonna hire you too. On some of those good jobs, somebody's gonna hire you. You just have to hang with it and keep trying.

Two of the Latina immigrants also stressed the importance of education in describing their hopes for the children. However, I did not count these women among those who promote individualistic ideas, as their comments lacked the conviction of Gracie and Gloria's insistence that education would provide. Estela hoped that each of her children would study and "be somebody." Dolores dreamed about her children going

to school "to study something, even if it's a two-year professional school." Their

relatively restrained hope most likely reflects their uncertainty regarding their

children's ability to pursue an education. Dolores, for instance, feared that it would be

hard for her children because they hadn't begun taking steps to obtain legal papers.

While Jorge alone clearly exposed and articulated the illusion of opportunities, the

unanimous reference to the limited nature of opportunity among immigrants

challenges the widespread assumption about immigrants' eagerness to jump into the

job opportunities that local workers were leaving behind. This presumptuous

commentary surfaced during interviews with employers as well as working class

residents. La Reina, the labor recruiter mentioned earlier, argued that immigrants are

"more dedicated to their jobs. They're more appreciative of their jobs because of the

conditions they lived in before." She remarked on the substantial difference between

$10 per week and $200 per week, as if to imply that these recent immigrants are

fortunate to have a $10,000 a year earning potential. Tricia suggested that employers,

like Duplin Poultry, prefer to hire immigrants "Because a Spanish person will work

harder than an American person …[T]hey pay a Spanish person six dollars an hour …

to him, he's making money.… I mean a hundred pesos is ten dollars. That's how

much more our money is than theirs…" Both of these white women offer somewhat

obscure monetary calculations as evidence of immigrants' appreciation. Their

convenient commentary regarding immigrants' willingness to work in relatively

unsafe and underpaid jobs reinforces the illusion of opportunities and ignores the

conditions under which immigrants struggle to survive. The Latino/a participants'

relatively strong skepticism most likely reflects the conditions of their lives. Compared to their North American counterparts, they experience more vulnerability in their daily lives often as a result of their lack of documentation and limited English language skills.

Inconsistency

An important insight emerging from this consideration of how participants talk about opportunities and individualism is the commonplace appearance of inconsistencies. One type of inconsistency that surfaced is related to the disparity between participants' dream-related talk and their experiences. Some participants' optimistic comments pertaining to the dream reflected their experiences. For example, Shelia's observation that "It might take some time, but if you want something bad enough, you work at it" directly referred to her recent accomplishment of becoming a homeowner, after living in public housing for ten years. By contrast, Maryann's cautious and discouraged comments were at odds with her dramatic mobility in recent years. Maryann did not hesitate to describe opportunities as limited and stressed her willingness to work in any job she could physically do, were she to lose her current job. Maryann didn't share Shelia's sense of anything being possible. Although she'd once entertained the thought of going to law school, finding out about the cost "blew her little dream away."

Yet another type of inconsistency corresponds to discrepancies among participants' multiple references to the dream's premises. While some participants made optimistic

as well as pessimistic assessments of opportunity, others insisted that individual will was sufficient, while also claiming that opportunities were limited. For example, Trenton stressed the importance of effort, claiming that "if you really, really want a job, you can go and get one [at a temporary service]. It might be low pay, but it's a job, a legitimate job and a chance at a full time job." The simplicity of this claim belied the complexity of his own struggle with racial discrimination in his job, which evolved from a temporary position into a full-time job. Trenton referred to experiences that challenge the logic of the dream and describes them with a critical eye. His occasional nod to the dream seemed out of place.

My subsequent analysis will continue to explore the contour of participants' dream-related talk, again focusing on inconsistencies. The next two chapters reveal another inconsistency: despite most interviewees' skepticism about opportunity, most hold themselves and others accountable for living by the dream's rules in a way that presumes the abundance of opportunity and the viability of meritocracy. I examine how participants account for the challenges in their own lives as well as the way they assess other people's efforts in a manner that is often critical and occasionally praising, but that consistently resonates with the dream's ideas about individualism and meritocracy.

Table three: Participants' talk about opportunity and individualism

Name of participant	Nature of opportunity	Individualistic explanations
Cabarrus County		
Gracie	Limited and abundant	No
Gloria	Limited and abundant	No
Shelia	Abundant	Yes
Tonya	Limited and abundant	No
Sharon	Limited	No
Claire	Limited	Yes
Rebecca	Limited and abundant	Yes
Trenton	Limited and abundant	Yes
Jim	Abundant	Yes
Bob	Limited	No
Sonny	Limited	No
Judy	Abundant	Yes
Estela	Limited	No
Teresa	Limited	No
Dolores	Limited	No
Victor	Limited	No
Duplin County		
Kim	Limited and abundant	Yes
Renee	Limited	No
Dietra	Limited	No
Deborah	Limited	No
Luis	Limited	No
Maryann	Limited	No
Tricia	Limited and abundant	No
Omero	Limited	No
Edgar	Limited	No
Antonio	Limited	Yes
Francisco	Limited	No
Jorge	Limited	No

Chapter five: Grin and bear it emotion management

As working class people, as women, and/or as people of color, the participants

encounter circumstances that compromise the promises and premises of the American

dream. I argue in this chapter and the next that participants cope with the

circumstances of their lives and, perhaps, at some level reconcile the disparate

realities of the dream and their own lives, through emotion management. In this

chapter, I examine how the participants account for and in turn endure challenges that

limit their potential to achieve success as it's heralded by the dream. I highlight the

process of emotion management that is revealed in their references to challenges in

order to suggest that the participants' emotion management is bound up in the logic of

the dream. It takes place within the dream's logic, represents a response to the dream

and, in the end, reinforces the dream. I explore whether, when participants latch onto

the individualistic tenets of the dream in alluding to their challenges, they simply

resign themselves to their circumstances. I also consider the conditions that foster or

shape participants' emotion management and conclude by reflecting on the

detrimental consequences of emotion management.

Coping strategies

Before considering the participants' accounts, I first highlight insights from other

literature regarding the coping strategies relevant to the experience of class

oppression. Research investigating women's experiences has emphasized the

practical survival strategies employed by single mothers in their struggle for material

survival. These strategies include the development of elaborate exchange systems and networks, reliance on assistance from private charities and cash contributions from friends and family members, and the earning of supplemental cash/income through unreported work (among women receiving public assistance), underground economic endeavors or second jobs (Stack 1974; Edin and Lein 1997). In contrast to this focus on resourceful strategies for material survival, much of the research on working class and working poor men has emphasized the social-psychological toll of men's class position. Sennett and Cobb (1972) argue that the "hidden injuries of class" include men's sense of uneasiness, illegitimacy, powerlessness, personal inadequacy, as well as a lack of freedom, inner control, independence and dignity. Rubin's (1994) more recent analysis of men facing joblessness in the aftermath of the post-1970's sweeping economic shifts confirms that they too are plagued by personal blame and shame, a fear of being on the street, a perception that they've lost part of themselves, and in some cases, depression. Economic insecurity represents an affront to their conventional masculinity. Working class men struggle, then, to muster up and preserve their self-respect and dignity, in light of their own and other people's gendered expectations concerning men's role as providers and patriarchs. Men's search for respect is a common theme in popular culture, as well; so while the respect struggle isn't class specific, it is cast as a gendered issue. Women's class related struggles have not typically been defined in a parallel, gendered fashion.

Previous research, much of it focusing on men's experiences, has revealed at least three forms of psychological defenses against threatened dignity or three modes

85

through which individuals redefine their self-understanding in relation to their compromising class position.

Respositioning selves

First, individuals may reposition themselves as members of a group that affirms their worth. For example, Liebow (1967), in his classic ethnography of urban African Americans, described the streetcorner men's use of friendship as a resource and buffer, which shielded their dignity and allowed them, when necessary, to rationalize and hide their failure. The men tended to romanticize their relationships because of the importance of these relationships to their self-esteem, as well as the relationships' commonly ephemeral nature. Uncertain psychological, economic and social factors shaped and sometimes uprooted their friendships, just as uncertainty characterized the men's lives in general.

In some cases group membership takes the form of a counter-culture that exists outside of, and at times in opposition to, mainstream culture. For instance, in his study of Puerto Rican young men living in East Harlem, Bourgeois (1995) demonstrated how inner city street culture, involving a complex web of beliefs, values, symbols and modes of interaction, provided alternative means for defining personal dignity. Bourgeois contends that the young men experience a "crisis in patriarchy" due to economic, structural transformations that have undermined their ability to "be a man" as defined by their cultural heritage. Seeing their prospects in the "legit" work world as limited, the young men turn to street dealership and inner

city street culture. Through their street culture they try to recover pieces of their threatened masculinity; they both reject the feminized culture of 'legit' service work and glorify the hyper-masculine, dangerous and violent world of selling crack on the street.

Newman (1999) examines workers' efforts to manage the stigma and denigration associated with fast food jobs or "McJobs." Their efforts are made within the context of workplace culture that reinforces the value of a work ethic and stresses and upholds the distinguished status of worker as opposed to non-worker or "lazy sloth." This culture diminishes the humiliating blow associated with the deference employees must, at any cost, display toward the public. An example reveals how managers and veteran workers cultivate this culture:

> Kids come in here ... they don't have enough money. I'll be like, "You don't have enough money; you can't get [the food you ordered]." One night this little boy came in there and cursed me out. He [said], "That's why you working at [Burger Barn]. You can't get a better job...." I was upset and everything. I started crying. [My manager] was like, "Kim, don't bother with him. I'm saying, you got a job. You know. It is a job. (Newman 1999:102)

Self-fragmentation

Furthermore, "self-fragmentation" provides an avenue to reconfigure one's self-understanding. Sennett and Cobb (1972) use this term in reference to the profound conflict between fraternity and individual ability experienced by working class men. They argue that men cope with this dilemma by alienating two spheres of being within themselves; they separate their active performing self, which seeks recognition

from others as a distinctive individual, from their passive self that wants to enjoy and love friends and family. One tactic in men's self-fragmentation is their refusal to actively credit themselves for their workplace accomplishments. Instead of claiming "I" did this or that, the men allow themselves as people to disappear. For instance, Frank Rissarro said he had "been lucky enough to hold a demanding white-collar job for several years" (Sennett and Cobb 1972:193).

Boundary work or othering

Finally, the literature reveals a process by which working class individuals mark boundaries between themselves and others to buoy themselves up symbolically and beat others down. For instance, Lamont (2000) analyzes the process of "boundary work" performed by male workers in the United States and France. She found the US workers to be very aware of their distinctively disadvantaged position, yet still able to empower themselves through their use of alternative measuring sticks that disassociate worth and respect from social status. Men draw on moral standards, which provide a reference point from which they single out offenders of these standards and see themselves as superior. White US workers, for instance, evaluate "people above" or managers and professionals, to lack personal integrity and sincerity, and to have poor interpersonal skills. They disassociate economic status from moral status and judge themselves to be superior to their middle class counterparts. The white men also evaluate black and poor workers along moral lines; in this case, they regard "people below" as lacking a work ethic and sense of

responsibility. In the next chapter, I will further explore this boundary marking

process --also referred to as "othering."

Coping with challenges, fueling the American dream

Common to all three processes –repositioning selves, self-fragmentation and

boundary work-- are efforts to rearrange one's emotional and/or cognitive experience

of a specific event or broad reaching situation. As Sennett and Cobb put it, "[p]eople

never lose consciousness of society. What human consciousness can do is create new

patterns out of the information society feeds to it, patterns which deaden or distance

the emotional impact of the information" (Sennett and Cobb 1972:192). In this

chapter I examine participants' accounts regarding challenges in their working lives.

Their descriptions cast doubt on the viability of the American dream, as did their

previously mentioned skepticism regarding the availability of opportunities. In spite

of this implicit skepticism, the participants draw upon the dream ideology as they talk

about challenges in their work lives. Over two-thirds (20/28) of the participants

embraced their challenges with a "pull yourself up by the bootstraps," a "grin and

bear it" sort of attitude that is clearly in agreement with the individualistic tenets of

the dream. I explore what it means for them to latch onto the individualistic tenets of

the dream in alluding to their challenges.[1]

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[1] This exploration is guided by the assumption that the participants' used of the dream's language is
relevant whether or not they actually buy into the dream. As research examining the sociology of
language has revealed, language reflects and shapes ideological, material reality and social inequalities
(see e.g., Hendricks and Oliver 1999; Hoffman and Freedman 1995; Murphy 2001; Santa Ana 2002).
As Kleinman (2002) argues in advocating the use of non-sexist language, words are tools of thought.
Words reflect the way we think and the way we relate to the world. The processes of rethinking and

First, I suggest that the participants' "grin and bear it" attitude represents and results from their efforts to manage their emotions. Further, I explore the question of whether by managing their emotions the participants simply resign themselves to their situation. I also consider the conditions that foster or shape participants' emotion management. Finally, I discuss how their emotion management and attachment to the individualistic premise of the dream in essence furthers elite interests and ultimately perpetuates the compromising circumstances in which the participants find themselves. I suggest that, in effect, the participants diminish the punch of their implicit critiques, as they hold themselves accountable for living by the rules of the dream.

Emotion management, shifting attitudes and understanding

Similar to Sennett and Cobb's interpretation, my analysis reveals two avenues for arriving at a "grin and bear it" stance regarding challenges. One way participants manage their emotions to this effect is by attempting to shift their attitude in order to shut off or out, move beyond or dull the impact of an unpleasant feeling. Another method of emotion management entails "I can do it" pep-talks in which participants muster up a general willingness or readiness, come what may.

Dietra's comments exemplify the first kind of emotion management involving an attitude shift. She complains about being ignored by the two white brothers who

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revising the way we use language can shape the development of new ways of thinking and organizing the social world.

manage the family-owned barbecue buffet where she works. What troubles Dietra is the way they seem to ignore her. They don't speak to her, don't say "hi, how you doing" or even just "good morning" after a two week absence. She feels like this is "their job;" in other words, Dietra seems to think it is their responsibility to initiate employer-employee communication. Dietra's comments regarding what's most important to her in a job reflect her reasonable sensitivity regarding this interpersonal dynamic at work. Dietra explains that what's important is that her employer is "paying me what, what I'm working for. Give me the same rights and let me know that I am grown just as well as you is. Another thing, you going to talk to me, talk to me face to face. Not behind my back.... I can get along fine with anybody. But just treat me like I'm a human being ..." Dietra reflects on the owners' habit of ignoring her by saying, "some people don't speak to you, but, you know, life goes on.... So that's probably just their ways."

By emphasizing the men's personality, she excused their behavior as idiosyncratic, despite its resonance with the patterned ways in which white employers have treated their employees as invisible non-persons (e.g., Rollins 1984; Romero 1992). Although it caused her discomfort, Dietra hesitated to name the brothers' behavior as racist and was, in fact, reluctant to dwell on it at all. Her complaint segued into a dismissive comment revealing her willingness to put up with her current situation: "But they, you know, I reckon everybody got their own ways. I don't bother about that no more.... So that's probably just their ways.... So, I can't let that stop me from working."

In suggesting that she no longer bothers with "their ways," Dietra allowed that she once did-possibly so much that her feelings risked interfering with her work. Dietra's words imply that she's subsequently been able to do what's necessary, keep working, by managing her emotions or by not allowing herself to bother with troubling feelings. She responds to her feeling as something separate from her-- an object, something that she can manipulate.

According to Hochschild (1983:27), emotions are something we do "by attending to inner sensations in a given way, by defining situations in a given way and by managing them in a given way." Emotion management enables us to change or manipulate our emotions. Feelings give us clues as to the personal relevance of what we see, experience, remember. Dietra's feelings in response to the owners' behavior apparently signaled trouble. The feeling may have been troubling as an unpleasant reminder of the conditions of her job or more generally of her life as a woman of color. To bother with or partially display the feeling (anger, frustration, sadness, etc.) within her own head or heart could make her situation even more taxing. Furthermore, to display her feeling publicly, for instance, by putting her foot down, may have been unwise, if not impossible for Dietra. Hochschild (1983:18) explains that feeling rules are the standards we use "to determine what is rightly owed and owing in the currency of feeling. Through them, we tell what is 'due' in each relation, each role." Dietra's bosses may have reminded her that a certain response would have been unwarranted. What's more, bumping up against explicit warnings may have

been unnecessary if Dietra had internalized feeling rules pertaining to anger. As Schwalbe et al. (2000) argue, feeling rules and, in turn, emotion management, reflect the unequal distribution of power and authority in the wider culture and social structure. Women, children, people of color, individuals in subordinate social positions, encounter a set of explicit and implicit rules regarding the public display of anger and other insolent emotions.

Renee's interview reveals the second kind of emotion work, which involves the expression of a general willingness to take what comes. Renee questioned the meager pay and benefits of her current job and exposed her skepticism regarding workers' ability to get by. For a moment, she even pointed her finger at the government. Nonetheless, her commentary concluded with Renee attesting to her own responsibility to make the best out of her situation:

> Why the government just can't give us a minimum wage and a decent,
> a decent pay check to come home….What I call a decent pay check.
> At least bring 350 home or something like that. Something that you
> can, ain't got to spend your whole check in bills and have a little left
> over... I'm sick of it. You know. [It's] like I was going back in time
> ... five, ten years ago in New York I was making the same money I'm
> making now…. It seems like I'm going behind…. I just don't
> understand it. That's what I'm saying. And they need more jobs
> anyway down here. And they is more jobs. But, it's just you got to go
> out there and get them. But they don't, like you said, they don't pay
> nothing. Like a lot of them [fellow workers] said, "I just can't work
> for that price for just five dollars." I tell them, "I'll work for five
> dollars and twenty-five, if it comes down to that, I'll work for it." I
> said, "because it's a little bit better than nothing…." I said "'cause if
> you didn't make that little bit, you wouldn't have that." And I said,
> "you'd be surprised how that little bit'll carry you along."

In asserting "I'm sick of it," Renee implied that she couldn't take it any longer.

However, a few moments later, she implied that not only could she take it, she could also settle for even worse and get by on even less if she had to. She put forth a grin and bear it attitude by shifting her understanding of the circumstances. She talked herself into seeing things differently.

The relevance of emotion management should not be understated. It represents an interactional process whereby inequalities are created and reproduced (Schwalbe et al. 2000). Patterns of feeling, Schwalbe et al. (2000) reason, are essential to the maintenance of social arrangements. The status quo rests on feelings of satisfaction or at least complacency or resignation as well as a fear of change itself or of being punished for protest. In addition, the reproduction of unequal social arrangements requires that there be little sympathy for the oppressed and little anger toward elites. They contend, then, "sustaining a system of inequality, one that generates destabilizing feelings of anger, resentment, sympathy, and despair, requires that emotions be managed" (Schwalbe et al. 2000:434). Emotion management can become an almost automatic, self-perpetuating process. Hochschild explains that when hearts become over-managed we become less aware of the need for and act of managing emotions. Over-managed hearts arise from the process of deep acting, which Hochschild distinguishes from surface acting. In the latter style of acting, "we deceive others about what we really feel, but we do not deceive ourselves. Diplomats and actors do this best, and very small children do it worst..."(Hochschild 1983:33). Deep acting, by contrast, involves deceiving ourselves as well; feigning becomes easy because it becomes unnecessary. In deep acting, then, we alter not only our feelings,

but also ourselves. I now turn to a consideration of conditions that compel participants to manage their hearts or to act, for instance, as though something doesn't bother them or to talk as if they believe it's possible to get by on $5.25 an hour, less than $11,000 a year on a full-time basis.

Whether participants' emotion management entails deep or surface acting is one question; whether they passively surrender to their situation is another. While the use of such words and phrases as "accept," "deal with," "tolerate," "don't bother with" implies a sense of resignation, I argue that this interpretation is too simplistic. I propose that participants engage in a more proactive negotiation or grappling with challenges. This negotiation is shaped by practical matters and apparently involves an awareness of the "problems" at hand, an understanding of the relative absence of attractive alternatives, and process of conscious decision making in light of the above. This decision making may involve a one-time, global decision to shift one's attitude or muster up a general willingness to take what comes or it may entail a daily negotiation with struggles; in any case, it represents participants' efforts to maintain their own agency within the constraints of their workplace and their lives as working class people. To the extent that participants' self-assurance seems surprising, or even ignorant, it could then be considered a strategic ignorance.[2] I would argue that their emotion management reflects participants' keen sense that perseverance demands that they resist entering dangerous emotional territory and that they instead conserve their energy for the daily work of making ends meet. The emotional territory of doubt can

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[2] Rick Della Fave suggested this term during a conversation about the participants in this study.

be dangerous given that, as the next section will reveal, public expressions of skepticism are frowned upon, and sometimes punishable.[3]

Participants' consciousness may encompass contradictions. Their comments about and understanding of their lives may be simultaneously characterized by awareness as well as denial, blindness and/or distortion. An adequate approach emphasizes the complexity of individuals' ideological beliefs and departs from an oversimplified view of disadvantaged groups as falsely conscious or passively duped. Such an approach allows disadvantaged groups to be seen as active participants in the construction of a dynamic reality that suits their cognitive and emotional needs (if not, what would seem to be their long-term political interests). I now turn to a discussion of several conditions that shape participants' emotion management.

Conditions that shape emotion management

Restricted choices and material need

In the following excerpt, Shelia promotes a "just do it" attitude for herself and other workers:

> **Barbara:** And how long have you been in this job?

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[3] Grappling with doubt in private can be risky as well, since it may disrupt what Lerner (1981) considers a fundamental need for a belief in a just world. Consistent with my approach, this theory posits that in order to buffer themselves from the suffering that comes along with an awareness of disturbing or painful realities, people create or select ways of seeing. Among other tactics, they twist, deny or neutralize evidence that might threaten their sense of what a just world should be like. Whereas Lerner explores how people develop ways not to see the suffering of victims, I'm exploring how participants relate to their own circumstances with creative, self-protective strategies. In the next chapter I will look more closely at the link between emotion management and the cognitive processes. I will suggest that what propels their emotion management is a cognitive need to make sense of their world in a way that suits their needs.

Shelia: Oh, going on eleven years.

Barbara: Eleven years? And they treat you fairly?

Shelia: Yes. Umhmm. On average.... You may get mad with some things. Maybe say, you don't like, for instance [that] ... the insurance is going up. You may get mad, but you can get over it.... Either you ... gonna do the job [or] they gonna replace you with somebody else who will do the job.... So when you go to work, you need to have a positive attitude. I'm gonna do this job. It's gonna take me eight hours. And I need to give them my best. And that's all. It's eight hours dealing with the work day.

Barbara: Do you think it's easy or hard to find other jobs these days? If you didn't work here would it be easy or hard to find another one?

Shelia: It's jobs all the time. You know, it may not be the job you want. But you can find a job.

Shelia teased out that which lay within and outside of her control. She boiled

everything down to attitude, which unlike most aspects of her workday, was

something within her power to manipulate. As a formula for getting by, Shelia

offered the following: "you need to have a positive attitude. I'm gonna do this job.

It's gonna take me eight hours. And I need to give them my best. And that's all."

By punctuating her prescriptive pep-talk with the seemingly dismissive comment

"and that's all," Shelia emphasized, rather than downplayed the complexity of her

situation. She understood the disposable, replaceable nature of her position and in

turn, the consequences of not doing her job. In acknowledging her expendability,

Shelia weighed the power-imbalanced circumstances at hand. Her fear of losing her

job was certainly conditioned by the enormous responsibility of caring for five

children as a single parent. Her desire to keep her job also likely reflected the general

sense among Cabarrus participants and other residents with whom I spoke that the

mill was a relatively decent place to work. Shelia's reluctance to dwell on problems

may have stemmed from her knowledge regarding the absence of informal avenues

for expressing grievances and the company's formal anti-union stance and long

history of squelching union activity. She portrayed her situation in simple either-or

terms, suggesting that in recognizing that she has little choice, she'd chosen to

exercise the kind of control available to her, shifting her attitude and tolerating her

situation. She's decided to do the work, including the emotion work, necessary to

survive. What facilitated her attitude shift was her apparent ability to

compartmentalize her life. Shelia emphasized time, suggesting that for a clear-cut

piece of each day, for only eight hours, she would 'do time' and deal with her work

by not questioning it or at least by temporarily detaching herself from questioning.

Just as Shelia alluded to the stakes at hand, which shaped her willingness or perhaps

compulsion to grin and bear it, Claire underscored her "make the best of it" talk with

references to her material reality. She mentions "need" four times within a few

sentences:

> **Jackie:** Do think that it's easier or harder for people to find good work around here?
>
> **Claire:** Define good work.
>
> **Jackie**: Uhmm. [pause] Work that they would find enjoyable. And that would pay a fair wage.
>
> **Claire:** [Laughs] Whewwww. I think it would be difficult. I think it depends upon your frame of mind. Where are your priorities? Do you want to work? Or do you enjoy it? Now, if you want to enjoy working, then you just wait for that job to come along. If you need the work and the income then you need to grab what comes along. And

make the best of it. So, what I do, is I grab what comes along.... [I'm] not extremely selective I don't feel like I can be.... But, it's just my personality. I can do almost anything.... So, I just have a need to take care of my children.

Jackie: So, just a willingness....

Claire: All you have to do is be willing--exactly right. Cause even with my kids --my son's home from college, and he's doing a job that he didn't really want to do. He's working for a temporary service. And he's gone out on a couple of jobs and he hated it. But he did it. He made the commitment. And he thought well, since I made a commitment, I'll finish my commitment. But he also has a need to have some money --for [supplies] at school ...

The bottom line for Claire was that she could not afford to be selective, as a single mother who was already working three jobs in order to make ends meet. Like Shelia, she suggested that she had weighed the circumstances at hand and responded in a pro-active way, "grabbing" any opportunity, knowing that her priority was caring for her three children. The way she put it, the choice between surviving and finding enjoyable work was an obvious and easy one. Claire's words also implied that she has forged a self-affirming way to see her circumstances. She apparently felt good about her own as well as her son's persistence and perseverance. In a subsequent section of this chapter I will elaborate on the significance of celebrating perseverance.

In talking about their circumstances, these participants exposed the limited reach of the dream's promises. For instance, although the American dream promises an abundance of opportunities, Shelia found the notion of attractive opportunities

laughable.[4] Renee spoke plainly about the absence of a living wage for workers. Not

only is the dream's promise of mobility out of reach, but the bare minimum promised

by the dream, the ability to simply get by, presents a struggle as well. Shelia and

Claire didn't expect that grinning and bearing it or "giving them their best" would be

rewarded with more pay, authority or advancement of any kind; rather, they saw their

tolerance as essential for the chance simply to stay put. Renee admitted that she

would be willing to work for even less than the amount she was making. These

women took for granted the real-world shortage of attractive alternative opportunities

and the limited mobility potential within many working-class jobs. They exposed an

incongruity between the dream and their lives; but in holding themselves accountable

for enduring the status quo, their exposure of the dream then poses little or no threat

to the ideology. Furthermore, their stated willingness to accept, as is, their situation is

just what employers want and need and gives them permission to perpetuate the poor

conditions and measly rewards that characterize working class employment.[5]

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[4] An economist might point out the low unemployment rate in the study's research sites and question the assumption that I make (and that these women make) about the limited nature of opportunities. He or she might refer, as an example, to Dietra who saw a "help wanted" sign, put in an application and was hired at the barbecue buffet all in one afternoon. What is important to note, and what economists often overlook, is that the labor force is not made up of disembodied workers. Dietra, like almost every participant, has substantial unpaid family work responsibilities. The financial demands of these responsibilities can make finding a job an urgent affair, especially when one is laid off unexpectedly, as Dietra was. Caring for an elderly mother, who is ill and physically disabled, takes up all of Dietra's "free" time. As she put it, her life was "on hold." She had little time to search for the "best" job out there. Not having a car also complicated Dietra's job search.
[5] The following excerpt illustrates how employers benefit from the immigrant workers' 'tolerance.' It also points to the way that employers can emphasize choice and the possibility of future mobility as further rationale for their exploitation of immigrants.
Ms. Moore: … We cannot find enough workers to fill our plants. Now let me give you an example. We had a lady that came in looking for a job and we explained to her what we do and her response was that 'I don't want to be around animals.' Well, then obviously we can't use you. Now, that is a choice she made, it is not because we don't have work. She chose not to work; she didn't want to work with animals. Well, we still need somebody, but we can't have somebody who doesn't like to work around

Renee's example points to what is missing from the others' commentaries -- a naming of ways that communities, corporations and governments could better accommodate the needs of all families, especially ones headed by single parents. Most obviously, as Renee points out, the government and employers could ensure that workers received a living wage, given that offering "one's best" does not ensure even survival-level subsistence. By holding themselves (rather than their employers) accountable for making their work lives more tolerable, these participants may feel better in the short run, but will inevitably fail to change their work conditions. As I will further discuss at the end of this chapter, the participants appeared to be coping with their relative powerlessness in a way that reinforces imbalanced power relations.

Gender, race and class

That Shelia and Renee find themselves with limited choices and in a compromised relationship to the American dream's promises is undoubtedly related to their gender and race. Race and gender also most likely contextualize the appeal of and necessity for emotion management among these two women. Wideman (1984:221) describes

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animals, you know.

Leslie: Is this a hard job, what they do?

Ms. Moore: Yeah, it is hard and in the summer when it is hot, then it is hot, and when it is cold, it is cold. Yeah, it is tough.

Leslie: So the Hispanic worker is maybe the preferred worker because-

Ms. Moore: They tolerate it…. Your children and my children and you and I probably would not put up with what our parents and grandparents put up with in the workplace. Does that make sense? So, if you think that thought, the Hispanics will put up with it, anything. Because their work ethic is just that way for right now but their kids will probably expect better conditions … they will be less tolerant…. And the blacks are probably less tolerant than anybody. They won't take anything and it will cause them to leave. It may be legitimate things, don't get me wrong. If they perceive unfairness, they will leave just like that. And I'm not saying I blame them; whereas a Hispanic, they will bite the bullet and take it. They will put up with a poor manager for a long, long time.

the tempting lure of emotion management among black people, especially "brutal

compartmentalization," which he describes as a:

> trick he learned early on. A survival mechanism as old as slavery. If
> you're born black in America you must quickly teach yourself to
> recognize the invisible barriers disciplining the space in which you
> may move. This seventh sense you must activate is imperative for
> survival and sanity. Nothing is what it seems. You must always take
> second readings, decode appearances, pick out the obstructions erected
> to keep you in your place. Then work around them. What begins as a
> pragmatic reaction to race prejudice gradually acquires the force of an
> instinctive response. A special way of seeing becomes second nature.
> You ignore the landscape. It has nothing to do with you; it will never
> change, so you learn a kind of systematic skepticism, a stoicism, and,
> if you're lucky, ironic detachment. I can't get to the mountain and the
> mountain ain't hardly coming to me no matter how long I sit here and
> holler, so mize well do what I got to do right here on level ground and
> leave the mountain to them folks think they own it. You chop your life
> into manageable segments. You segregate yourself within the safety
> zones white people have not littered with barricades and landmines.
> Comparmentalization begins with your black skin, with your
> acknowledgement of racial identity, and then becomes both a way of
> seeing and being seen.

Consistent with Wideman's suggestion that compartmentalization is a "trick" not just

appealing but imperative to black people, I found that, compared to white

participants, more participants of color make references to emotion management.

Acknowledging the limits to inferences from this small and non-random sample, it is

still worth noting that the popularity, among the black participants, of engaging in

emotion management may signal the current and historical disadvantaged social

position of blacks. Some of these participants may have been socialized at an early

age to manage their emotions, so that by the time they were older, by the time of their

interviews, the process of acting seemed natural or at least unremarkable.

Emotion management is also shaped by gender. The expression of certain emotions by women is not generally well received. For instance, as Frye (1983:84) explains "men (and sometimes women) ignore [women's anger], see it as our 'being upset' or 'hysterical,' or see it as craziness. Attention is turned not to what we are angry about but to the project of calming us down and to the topic of our 'mental stability.'" When Shelia advocated a positive attitude as a trick that gets her through the eight hours of her work day, her comment also most likely reflected her understanding of the rules that govern the expression of feelings. Her insistence that "you may get mad, but you can get over it" seems to speak to a sense that the expression of anger, and possibly dissent in any form, within the workplace among employees who are female and/or people of color, is frowned upon and even punishable.

Compared to the women, the men in this study refer less often to the need for or the practice of emotion management. Keeping in mind, again, that apparent patterns should be interpreted with caution, the possibility of a gender difference is interesting to consider. It is possible that, within the context of the interviews, the men as a group are more reluctant to talk about their emotions and to allude to emotional battles. Although Sonny, for instance, does not refer to emotion management during the interview, he may have, in his private life, relied on attitude shifts as much as the Shelia or Claire. It's interesting to note that none of the female participants framed their attitude shift as an issue of respect, which is often considered central to the psychological toll of class disadvantage, particularly for men (see e.g., Sennett and Cobb1972). The women's grin and bear attitude seems to arise from an understanding

of their own and their children's needs. By contrast, as will become clear in the next section, Trenton's "cringe and tolerate it" attitude reflected his sense that his respect was at stake.

This consideration of gender and emotion management also raises the issue of whether emotion management is more common among and necessary to people who find themselves in more compromised situations. The absence of references to emotion management among some of the men may reflect their relative privilege. This seems more to be the case for the white men in the study, none of whom engage in or allude to emotion management during their interviews.[6]

Workplace culture

The next examples will show how workplace culture can reinforce, even demand employees' individualistic orientation. As Hochschild (1983), Leidner (1990) and Newman (1999) have shown, employers train workers to respond emotionally to

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[6] While this study's disproportionate emphasis on women's experiences is advantageous given the singular focus on men in many of the classic and newer studies of working class and poor people's ideology (e.g., Sennett and Cobb 1971; Willis 1977; Lamont 2000), the small number of men in the sample, nonetheless, represents a weakness. Future research should more carefully examine men's emotion management strategies-whether and in what form they employ emotion work strategies. One question that warrants further exploration is the extent to which and under what conditions men make traditional masculine displays as a way of managing their emotions. It's worth noting that more often than the white men, it is the black women and Latino men in the sample who seem to take pride in their toughness and durability, similar to the expressions of the "lads", who were white, in Willis' study. Some of the white men in this study expressed hostility during their interviews, perhaps as a way of managing their emotions. The next chapter includes an excerpt in which Sonny expresses hostility toward me as the interviewer and toward people of color. Along with another white male participant, Sonny proposed violent solutions to immigration problems. The work involved in presenting himself as someone to be reckoned with, including, perhaps, leaving his rifle by his side during the interview, may have been a form of emotion work rooted in the daily frustrations he experienced as a older, working class man who feels cast off by his country.

people and situations in ways that allow business to get done. If we take as a starting

point the relative absence of viable alternatives outside of the participants' current

jobs, it's helpful to consider the conditions within participants' current workplaces

that also foster inertia, the factors that lead workers' analyses of their situation back

to themselves, away from structural, power-cognizant considerations.

Trenton provided a scathing critique of the various types of transgressions he'd

witnessed in his job, such as racist attitudes on the part of the all-white supervisory

staff or white co-workers directed against black and Latino workers, discriminatory

hiring and promotion methods, and a general culture where the respect and

recognition he duly expected were absent. He described how he managed the

humiliation he'd experienced as a result of this lack of respect:

> **Trenton:** And the person evaluating [me] ... is somebody from the
> fifth grade. "Trenton is a good worker." [Spoken deliberately slowly.]
> "Trenton is ..." [Starts laughing.] I'm like, come on huh? That is
> embarrassing huh?
>
> **Katie:** Umhmmm.
>
> **Trenton:** Huh? [Laughs again.]
>
> **Katie:** [Laughs.] So, do you want to, you know, find another job? Or
> are you going to stay there for a while, do you think?
>
> **Trenton:** Man. I don't know. I mean like, I'm always looking for
> something better. I will find nothing better. I've had other job offers,
> but [with the wrong] kind of hours. You see, I'm still in
> entertainment, kind of part-time. I'm in a play right now. It's
> supposed to open in Greensboro.... And, so I, I like to have my
> weekends free. Like this job I'm on right now, I'm off Friday,
> Saturday, and Sunday.... I work Monday through Thursday. So ... I
> weigh that against getting another job, [where I would] have to go to

work on Friday, for the same money, or maybe a little less to start off with, it's kind of disturbing, no matter what I've got to go through up there [at my current job].... [I] can already come up here and work ...my four days [and] cringe and tolerate it. And then go home Friday, Saturday, and Sunday in exultation. You know what I'm saying? [Laughs.] So, I can do that. Huh? I've been doing it for a long time. You know what I'm saying? But, I'm always looking for something better. I mean, they afflict me and oppress me, but, you know, it seems like the harder you work, the more nourishing your food is. You know what I'm saying? [Laughs.] For some reason ... it doesn't bother me. I deal with that.

Katie: Umhmmm. Okay. Well, so, better might mean, like more money, or um, maybe working in another environment with people that recognize you and who--

Trenton: Right. Right. Better meaning, somewhere I could get recognition. Maybe, I would work for less money. For something like that. You know, where I get respect.

Like Shelia, one way that Trenton managed his emotions was by drawing a clear line between his paid work time and the rest of his life. Trenton understood himself not simply as an under-appreciated worker, but as a musician and family man as well. He took satisfaction, furthermore, in his sense of moral superiority over the white men at his workplace. Trenton remarked:

All I know ... [is that they are] not happy huh? They are not as happy as I am. I know that. I'm sure of it.... I mean ...You might not understand what I'm talking about. I know, man, inside, what they feeling, what they thinking, when they lay at home in the bed at night. Could never be right huh? Because I've done something wrong before and I was so depressed and couldn't sleep. And I don't think if somebody could do that everyday and be comfortable.... I don't think so. Unless, man. Unless [they're] a special breed, that I don't know about.

Trenton didn't simply resign himself, but weighed the circumstances of his life in deciding what he could tolerate and negotiated a way to proceed. In other instances,

Trenton's interview provides evidence of a workplace culture in which resistance was

quashed and workers' self-regulation and tolerance was nurtured. For example,

Trenton suggested that there was no workable or genuine means for voicing

complaints within his company. Trenton remarked on the fruitlessness of some

resistance attempts by alluding to the civil rights movement's march on Washington

DC, suggesting that some complaints are decades old and fall on deaf ears:

> And then they're gonna have a meeting, for you to come and complain
> about what the supervisor do ... but it's he [the supervisor] you got to
> complain to.... It's so hypocritical. Right? You know what I'm saying
> huh? The ... first time they had a meeting, I said, "Man, I don't think I
> want to go in that meeting. I thought we already had that meeting in
> 1962. I mean, on the steps of the Capitol, with 250,000 of us." You
> know what I'm saying? It's like, the same meeting over and over.
> You know what I'm saying? We already had that meeting. And you
> want to treat us right, treat us right now. Why we have to have a
> meeting for you, for you to treat people fair?

In the following excerpt, Trenton described a culture of fear within his workplace:

> **Trenton:** And the people up there don't talk.... I know a guy working
> [who's been] working there 15 years as a helper [without being
> promoted]. You know what I'm saying? He won't even –he's scared.
> He won't even say "well that's not right." Or "that ain't right." You
> know. People are being held hostage. Literally. You know what I'm
> saying?
>
> **Katie:** Because they're afraid to lose their jobs.
>
> **Trenton:** Right! You know. They say, if they talk, they get fired.

Trenton's account of workplace dynamics also exemplified the potential for worker

resistance to backfire. He was demoted to and kept for over a year within a much

lower position. His crime: being verbally assertive, or perhaps, simply an intelligent

and talented black man, and not, as Trenton put it, the "yes sir" man his company

desired. That Trenton felt demeaned by this punishment was evidenced by his description of his temporary position as "one that was all the way down to, to a job, just like a fool, helping doing odds and ends." Despite Trenton's insightful attention to the warped power relations at his company, he apparently had little option but to respond in a way that served the company's interests well. In Trenton's eyes, he refused to play the company's game, but his careful behavior ironically benefited the company just the same. In the following excerpt Trenton reveals his defiant obedience:

> They cannot say that I don't, that I don't respect everyone. I respect everyone. I mean, I talk good to people. And, I communicate with everyone. I mean, I –I'm good at my job. You know, I'm punctual. I'm there everyday. You know, I never miss one day. [They would have to say] that I didn't have a lot of time for, like, vacation or sick time, in five years. You know what I'm saying so? [The company] has nothing [on me]. They're just waiting for me to make one mistake. So, but they have nothing on me [so] that they can say, "Well, he didn't do this." You know what I'm saying? ... And I guess that's why I'm still here.

The next example also reveals how conscious attempts at resistance may be met with counter-resistance, thereby reinforcing the lure of individualistic coping strategies. Tonya commented that her company "kind of likes to keep us [blacks] scattered out" and then segued into an account of discriminatory promotion practices at her mill. When I asked if there was discrimination, she replied "well, they're not gonna come out and say it- but we can see it, you know." She went on to explain that employees are supposed to have the option to pre-bid on positions, so they may take advantage of their seniority: "if you're the next one in line, they've got to give it to you." However, Tonya was passed up for a new position that should have been hers; it was

108

given to a white man with less seniority. Tonya reflected, "it wasn't fair. [It] caused

some hard feelings, but I want to be treated right." The following exchange ensued:

> **Katie:** Right. So, that's really important. So you feel like the managers or the supervisors would rather hire white people?
>
> **Tonya:** Yeah. [Answered immediately.] Cause my supervisor, she needed an assistant right? ... She didn't even really look, consider hiring a black person....
>
> **Katie:** What about for promoting? Do you think the same kind of --
>
> **Tonya:** Oh no. They don't promote blacks.... And you can see it going on.... If they don't want you in a position then they're not going to put you there.
> ...
>
> **Katie:** Hmmm. Wow. That's, and do people ever complain about that?
>
> **Tonya:** Oh yeah.
>
> **Katie:** What happens when you complain?
>
> **Tonya:** ... they'll tell you a bunch of lies really. You get tired of hearing the lies.... Some stuff, you learn to accept it. Cause they don't want to have to deal with it....They're gonna put who they want to put [into higher positions]. So, I'm not gonna make a big issue out of it.
>
> **Katie:** So do [people] get angry? Or they just sort of blow it off? Or?
>
> **Tonya:** Yeah. Yeah. They get angry at first. But, you know, eventually it'll blow over....You know and they get to tell you a bunch of lies.... They only make up excuses.... But [if] they don't want you in there, they're not going to put you up in there.... So I'm just going to do my eight hours. And I'm just praying to God that he lead me in the direction, he would lead for me. And where he would lead. And wherever that's fine. [Laughs.] I got to say if God would lead me out of there, I'd be up out of there! [Laughs.] I be up out of there.[7]

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[7] While other research has posited a link between continued faith in the dream and religious faith (see e.g., Hochschild 1995), there were few references to God or religious faith in this study. Like Tonya, the few other participants who referred to God are black women.

By drawing attention to workplace culture, my point is to emphasize the constraints on workers' agency that complicate the meaning of what, on the surface, appears to be statements of resignation. These examples reveal strategies whereby employers manage emotions and dissent. By putting troublemakers in their place and/or wearing down workers' nerves with counter-resistance so that complaining becomes a battle that workers are less eager or unwilling to choose, employers can create a culture in which workers condition their own emotions and respond to "problems" in an appropriate way.

The examples also reveal that the participants move in and out of power cognizant talk. At turns they are critical and accepting. Resignation, then, is not the same as a lack of awareness. What's more, awareness is not the same as abandoning a hope about (or some other form of attachment to) the dream's promises. Both Trenton and Tonya were aware of racism, discrimination and twisted power relations within their workplace, yet after being symbolically beaten down, they called upon themselves to find a way out (of their anger and frustration) while staying put.

The next example hints at multiple layers of emotion management involving the upper level management, supervisors and line workers at Duplin Poultry. This example clarifies how convenient it is for the company to craft a positive image through a little schmoozing and bone-throwing and in turn temper the frustration of its supervisors, like Kim, and in turn the workers she supervises. Her own frustration

notwithstanding, Kim seems prepared to manage her line workers' emotions; that is, she seemed ready to convince them (and herself) that Duplin Poultry isn't a bad place to work. Kim wavers back and forth between admitting and downplaying the undesirability of her work. In the end she seemed to be at least defensive about her work, if not also proud.

> **Katie:** Is there anything that you think of as real important [in a job]?
>
> **Kim:** Well, it's like as far as that goes, most important to me, wherever I go to work, [is] being comfortable. Because what good is you going to a job and you're not happy. You know, [you have to] at least halfway want to go there and everything.... But, like I said, thirteen years I've been at Duplin Poultry. When I first started, I used to dread going everyday.... But then, you know, the more I've been around the people, and like you said, the benefits have gotten better.... They offer more now. It's, it's, it's better than what it used to be.... And, you know, and management, itself ... it's better. Because before, they would never come out [on the plant floor]. And now, they'll come out and hold conversations with line people. That's
>
> what's important. Maybe because I feel like if you'll hold a conversation with a line person you don't mind being out here among the people.... They'll come out. The president of the company ... he'll come out and he'll talk. And that means a lot to the worker....'Cause that shows them that ... if he'll come out ... and see what we're doing, he cares about what we're doing out here.... And that means a whole lot.
>
> **Katie:** So they are aware of like the working conditions then?
>
> **Kim:** Umhmmm. Well, Duplin Poultry's not a bad place to work. It's, they tell you first of all, it's cold in there. 'Cause ... you're chilling turkeys. It's cold. But ... [the line workers] learn that when they come in.... [A] lot of the Hispanic women ... never worked before. Getting adjusted to the cold, using utensils in their hands and stuff…. But normally what they'll do is, what we, what I do is when I get new people in, I tell them they must keep your hands exercised. And they can go to the nurse.... [W]e have our own company doctor, and ... [he has] them doing some kind of exercises and put some stuff on their hands. And it really helps out.

Of interest is the way Kim stumbled over her choice of words -- they, we, I—as if she
and the company were interchangeable. She may be unsure as to whether she
identifies with company policy and behavior or she may have effectively internalized
the company's rhetoric and interests.

The next excerpt also suggests how Duplin Poultry deals with its workers' emotions
through preventative measures. They weed out, during a three-day training process,
the workers who most likely won't withstand the job. In this example Kim again
defended the company (and her position within it) by comparing it to other companies
and by insinuating that workers are content and appreciative of their supervisors.

> **Katie:**   So it's kind of hard again to find a good job.
>
> **Kim:**   Yeah.
>
> **Katie:**   What are, what would you think are bad jobs? You know,
> like the bottom level jobs that people, you know, that just absolutely
> need work right away....
>
> **Kim:**   Well, there's, there's a lot of plants that will hire any, hire you.
> Let's see, I'm trying to... remember the place that's up there. [A
> poultry company in Rosehill is] hiring ... it's basically like Duplin
> Poultry. And National Spinning is hiring.... But anybody realizes ...
> [that] fresh starting a job, it's not gonna be easy [for the] new people
> coming in.... I don't know why a lot of plants do this, but they'll try to
> work that new person harder than they do the people that's been there
> awhile.
>
> **Katie:**   Oh really? Why do you think--
>
> **Kim:**   But at Duplin Poultry we don't. 'Cause the way, I'm over the
> new [hires] at Duplin Poultry. And what we do is, when we bring new
> hires in, we ... take them to the three-day program. For the first day,
> they basically go out and kind of watch people in different jobs that we
> all hire. Okay? They got any questions or comments, anything, we're
> all there to talk, except the day we let them go out there and try a few

different jobs. And then we go back in the office and kind of discuss what they have done and what they would might like to do.... Okay. And then the third day, then we actually let them get out there and start out there all day long. Stay in the cold. And, you know, just move around, doing and trying different jobs. And, and it seems to work for the training.... It really does. That's why I say our turnover is not like it used to be. Because we taking that extra time, you know, with the associates [workers]. And they really appreciate it, you know, you just taking that little extra time.

Katie: Umhmmm. So they can know what's sort of lying ahead. I mean--

Kim: Yeah.

Katie: --they're not shocked. How would they, if at these other companies they're over-working the new employees, what do they do? ...

 Kim: ... I think they bring them in and expect them to do the same thing as someone that's been there maybe six months or a year.

Group meetings are another way the company evokes the impression that it's concerned about its workers. Kim explains that Duplin Poultry has instituted regular meetings among line workers and their supervisors:

My line itself, they have their problems. And mostly it is because they feel like somebody's not doing their share of the work.... But what we do is, we normally have monthly team meetings for them to get together and express their concerns with what's gonna on, on the line.... It gives them an hour, an hour and a half to get some of their steam off, anger off. Be, to be able to talk to one another, instead of fuss back and forth. And that's basically what we have them do. You know, somebody's having trouble with somebody on this side, you know, they'll talk and find out, it really wasn't a problem. So, it really helps. It really helps.

It may be true that these meetings allow workers a chance to vent and bond; however, it's also like that the extent to which they can openly complain is limited due to the

presence of their supervisor. As Trenton wondered, what good is it to have a meeting when the meeting is run by the manager who's creating the problems.

Implications of attitude shifting emotion management

 To flesh out the implications of participants' attitude shifting emotion management, I hone in the example of immigrants' "grin and bear it" attitude. A consideration of the costs of emotion management for immigrants is especially illuminating since, compared to other participants, immigrants have more to gain from their ability to persevere. For one thing, immigrants have left behind so much --their familiar lives and in some cases their families in Mexico and Central America—in order to pursue the American dream. They also have a great deal to gain because of their desperately low starting point. The substandard and crowded living conditions and the dangerous and unpleasant working conditions of recent immigrants, like the participants in Duplin, especially, couldn't get much worse. In looking again at the process and context of immigrant participants' emotion work, I underscore the simultaneously beneficial and detrimental implications of their grin and bear it orientation. I suggest that their emotion work helps them endure their circumstances and probably even move ahead, but it also reinforces the dream ideology and ultimately the poor circumstances of recent immigrants and poor and working class people in general.

Several of the immigrant participants expressed pride in their ability to withstand their situations. Whereas in an earlier example Claire credited her personality for her apparently unique capacity to 'do almost anything', several immigrant participants

114

saw this strength as a group trait and/or one that reflected their immigrant experience. For instance, in response to a question about the most important thing he wanted to obtain in this country, Edgar said, "What I want is to get a job where I earn well so I can leave. I do not want to stay here for a long time. I want to obtain a good job. I do not care if it is a hard work I will do it. As you know we Hispanics are [made] of work." Antonio described his work in North Carolina as follows:

> We have to clean the lines where we put the lights. Sometimes fifty to one hundred feet in width. Sometimes we clean fifteen feet and then later in August I started working with the chain saw. I was working with that for about five months. In reality that job was a little hard, but for me it was not bad. Because as you know we, the Hispanics, are used to hard work. So it was not difficult. In regards to the pay, comparing with what a person earns here it is not bad at all. I earned twelve dollars per hour. For me it was ok.

While admirable, workers' eagerness to make the most of their situation and their pride in persevering are also dangerous to the extent that these emotions reinforce both the ideology and the material conditions of the immigrants. Their eagerness and pride might be considered "repressive satisfactions." Bartky (1990) uses this term in reference to women's engagement with and performance of body rituals through which women become infatuated with and internalize an inferiorized body. Bartky suggests that by altering their bodies through weight loss, cosmetic, fashion and exercise rituals, women may feel empowered, yet they ultimately participate in and perpetuate their own oppression. I would argue that immigrants' eagerness to put their hard work to the test fuels employers' exploitative interests and practices. Key to the parallel I'm making is the illusion of control held by both women and immigrants. There is great comfort in being able to see things in the same way the dominant group

does and in the belief that one has control over how one is seen. However, the satisfaction of striving for or achieving some level of control can be blinding. While women can control and manipulate their bodies, they do not, as a group, control the process through which images or representations of women and beauty are manufactured. They have no guarantee that tomorrow's beauty rules will not change. There is no guarantee that, even before age catches up with them, women can keep up with the process of self-alteration as beauty standards are continually 'raised' to the extent that plastic surgery and eating disorders are common place. In the absence of real and/or sustained access to social power, women may see their ability to practice self-control and self-denial as a form of power; but, their bodily control is not only psychologically damaging, it can be physically self-destructive as well.

Neither do immigrants ultimately control the process through which images of workers are manufactured. On the one hand, the interviews we conducted with employers reveal an image of immigrants as exceptionally hard-working. All of the employers interviewed speak favorably about Latino/a workers. For instance, a manager from Nichols expresses his straightforward preference for a Latino workforce in this way:

> They are the best ones. They are the ones that stay and make it
> through Nichols. They are the–I tell you, I wish I could have more of
> the Hispanics. Now those are the ones that become Nichols. I had
> three guys, well actually the last four or five guys that we picked that
> come through the temporary to Nichols are Hispanics. Hispanics,
> Hispanics, Hispanics. The only problem is lately is that again we give
> an exam and it is English and I haven't had that many [that passed],
> but the ones that do make it are the ones that stay.

The employers credit immigrant workers for their strong work ethic, their hesitancy

to complain or ask questions and especially in terms of their willingness to take the

jobs that North Carolinians presumably won't. Several employers speak as though

immigrant workers have 'saved the day.'

> **Leslie:** Alright. Why are you hiring Hispanics? What's one of the
> most important reasons you think you are hiring Hispanics now?
>
> **Mr. Hayes:** There is nobody out there. The labor market as I
> mentioned earlier is extremely tight. If we had to depend on the local
> population we would be in serious trouble.
>
> **Leslie:** Now why?
>
> **Mr. Hayes:** The job market. The unemployment rate for Duplin
> County last time I checked was 3.2%. Anytime they say it drops to
> five or lower unemployment and you are hiring warm bodies,
> breathing people, a lot of them, Leslie, don't want to work. But if you
> have to depend on the local population to fill our job needs, it would
> never happen.

The stereotype of the hard-working and eager Latino worker undoubtedly reflects

immigrants' actual efforts. It also suggests that immigrants may have the potential to

advance, especially if they can continue to impress employers. However, the

interviews with employers also imply that immigrant workers cannot expect to cash

in on the stereotype forever. Several employers reveal a sense that immigrants'

special desirability is short-lived. For instance:

> **Leslie:** Tell me about the Latino worker. You see strengths and weakness that
> differ from the American worker for example? Do you notice a difference?
>
> **Mr. Smith:** In the very beginning when I got here I would say that their work
> ethic was a little better. That they were always here. But as time goes by I'm
> finding that the Latinos are no different from the Whites or the Blacks.
> You've got your good, you've got your mediocre and you've got your bad.

> **Leslie:** Okay. So you sensed that to begin with but now you are seeing that....
>
> **Mr. Smith:** The longer they are here, the more I think they adapt the ways of others.

In the next example, there is again the suggestion that immigrants become less attractive over time:

> **Leslie:** …What about Hispanic workers with management. How does that interaction, is that fine?
>
> **Mr. Carter:** It depends. Those that have been here for a while, sometimes will get a little cocky thinking that nothing can happen to them – sort of an immunity thing and then the other ones that are here, you can just feel when they're talking, they're here til they get enough money and then they are out of here. They're working until the threat of their documents getting found out or something. And then they are out of here so it doesn't matter what you do to them.
>
> **Leslie:** Okay.
>
> **Mr. Carter:** And then there are those in the middle that will worry that if I take their badge and hold onto their badge, they are, oh no! The world has
>
> ended.

That these employers would lament the presumed transformation of immigrants suggests their eagerness to exploit willing workers while they can. They speak as though there exists only a short window period in which immigrants are ideal workers, or less euphemistically, most easily exploited workers. The interviewee's mockery in the final sentence of the last excerpt suggests an insensitivity and lack of awareness regarding the fear, vulnerability and uncertainty common to recent immigrants' experiences. It is not some essential and unchanging group characteristic belonging to Latinos that employers favor; rather, it is simply their exploitability.

Their eagerness is just what employers want and need. Immigrants' sense of confidence and/or control rests on false or at least shaky and temporary premises. What these excerpts also reveal is the way that employers pit groups of workers against one another. Immigrants look good especially or perhaps only, in relation to the image employers hold of local and lazy workers. In other words, the foil against which a desirable immigrant worker is measured is an American (often black) worker. As the excerpts above reveal, immigrants are also susceptible to employers' skepticism and their eagerness to locate labor problems within workers themselves rather than within the conditions of labor. Furthermore, employers' comparison making can work both ways for immigrants. Just as the immigrant worker benefits from the presence of a less attractive foil, he or she could be threatened by the presence of even more eager, vulnerable, desperate workers. The continuous influx of such immigrants or 'economic refugees' seems inevitable given the current global nature of the U.S. economy. Just as women cannot keep up with demands of the sexist fashion-beauty standards that shape their body rituals, neither can workers physically withstand, for long, the relatively unchanging and intolerable conditions of available work.

To reiterate, the satisfaction immigrants gain from their strength in enduring their conditions, especially with a grin and bear it attitude, is both helpful to their ability to withstand the circumstances of their lives and potentially harmful to their long term emotional and physical well-being. Immigrants' attitude shifting suggests an intuitive understanding of how best and most efficiently to garner the energy needed to keep

going. While their emotion management may be empowering in this way, I would argue that their emotion management also devastates participants' desire and ability to act in ways that challenge their circumstances.

Whether it's surface or deep acting that participants perform through their emotion work, the results can be harmful. To surface act, to wear a smile at work, despite one's dissatisfaction, is to play into the hands of the elite, who are often eager to exploit and uninterested in improving labor conditions. The more compliant the worker, the smoother the process of exploitation. While immigrants' eagerness to push themselves in their struggle to survive may lead to some mobility, their grin and bear it perseverance may have diminishing returns. Even if they can withstand the intense physical toll of their work, immigrants will sooner or later bump into the same barriers of dead end jobs that many of the local participants have encountered. Workers' attitude shifting emotion management plays a key role perpetuating the cycle of class oppression. The struggle for survival demands a type of emotion management that limits the development of a critical consciousness. Although surface acting does not destroy one's consciousness, it most likely defuses workers' resistance, especially if workers lack cognitive and linguistic tools as well as an autonomous space within which to develop a critical consciousness.[8] While surface acting may defuse workers' potential for resistance, deep acting may effectively destroy their consciousness. To act deeply is to risk estrangement from one's self and

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[8] I elaborate on these ideas in my concluding chapter.

one's emotions. As Hochschild (1983) points out, emotions may lose their signal function. Workers may develop such blinders that not only are they unlikely to protest their circumstances, but they also may numb themselves completely. Although I have focused on the case of immigrants, which is unique given their vulnerability, to the extent that emotion management defuses energy for and interest in mobilization, each instance of sucking it up/pep talks among participants might be considered a repressive satisfaction.

Summary

In this chapter I have argued that the majority of the participants call upon themselves to abide by the dream even as they refer to challenges they encounter in pursuing success as promised by the dream. I showed how these participants manipulate their emotions: they manage their frustration, anger, fear or despair by shifting their attitude and/or proclaiming a general willingness to take whatever comes. In referring to their challenges, these participants expose flaws within the dream; their experiences reveal that opportunities are not necessarily abundant and that hard work doesn't guarantee mobility. However, as participants reveal these flaws, they don't name them as flaws; they do not, in other words, question the logic of the dream, Instead, they hold themselves accountable for pressing on or for living by the individualistic tenet of the dream ideology. The participants do not dwell on their own inadequacies or by blame themselves for not working hard enough. By contrast, they deflect this kind of self-doubt and in some cases even seem to take pride in their

121

present and presumed future ability to withstand their circumstances and hold doubt at bay.

At the heart of their emotion work is the practical matter of survival. In general, the participants in this study are people who struggle to make ends meet and struggle to balance the demands of their paid work and family care responsibilities. Getting by requires physical endurance and calls for, or perhaps demands, emotion work, as well. I have not only argued that emotion management represents a coping strategy, I've also suggested that it simultaneously reinforces the American dream ideology, limits their ability to challenge their circumstances and ultimately perpetuates class oppression.

Deflecting doubt may spare the participants' much-needed survival energy, by buffering them from the kind of questioning that an explicit and conscious awareness of the dream's unmet promises might entail. But, it also requires energy to employ these inward-looking emotion management strategies or psychological defenses against class-related injuries. Perhaps participants store up energy in another form of emotion management, which I examine in the next chapter. In this outward-looking emotion work strategy participants point their fingers at others who apparently fail to abide by the dream. Here participants blame others for not working hard enough. While the first form of emotion management seems to help participants stifle their frustration, they appear in the second form to vent frustration with their finger

pointing. I will argue that this type of emotion work also entails devastating

implications.

Table four: Participants' grin and bear it emotion management

	Grin and bear it response:	
	General willingness	**shifting attitude**
Duplin County participants		
Maryann	Yes	
Tricia	Yes	
Kim		Yes
Renee	Yes	
Dietra		Yes
Deborah	Yes	
Luis		
Omero		
Edgar	Yes	
Antonio	Yes	
Francisco		
Jorge	Yes	
Cabarrus County participants		
Gracie		Yes
Gloria		Yes
Shelia		Yes
Tonya		Yes
Sharon		
Claire	Yes	Yes
Rebecca		
Trenton	Yes	Yes
Jim		
Bob		
Sonny		
Judy		
Estela		
Teresa	Yes	
Dolores		
Victor	Yes	

Chapter six: Othering among subordinates

In the last chapter I showed how most of the participants manipulate their emotions by shifting their attitude regarding their challenges and/or proclaiming a general willingness to take whatever comes. With this emotion management they press on and in effect hold themselves accountable to the 'pull yourself up by the bootstraps' notion contained within the American dream ideology. Whether and to what extent the participants buy into the dream is not entirely clear. However, I have argued that whatever they may believe about the dream, participants draw on the language of the dream. This, in itself, is consequential given the role language may play in shaping ideas and reproducing inequalities (see e.g., Murphy 2001; Santa Ana 2002). In drawing on the dream ideology, their emotion management allows the ideology to continue to be an ever present, convenient, flexible reference point; it allows the ideology to be invisible.

Furthermore, by helping participants press on, their dream-related emotion management makes it easier for the participants, in effect, to consent to circumstances that fly in the face of the dream's promises. Because such consent is at least shaped by, if not also demanded by participants' practical survival needs, it should be distinguished from acquiescence.[1] Participants' choices are constrained by both the absence of relatively attractive employment alternatives and a viable local labor

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[1] Burawoy (1979) uses this distinction between consent and acquiescence.

movement, as well as by the participants' individual and familial survival needs. Their emotion management apparently helps participants do what they need to do to survive.

In this chapter I examine another management strategy and further explore participants' engagement with the American dream's rhetoric. I show how participants manage their emotions by pointing their fingers at fellow working class and/or working poor people. While the first form of emotion management is an inward-looking strategy that seems to help participants stifle their frustration, the second form is an outward-looking strategy with which the participants vent their frustration.

Othering

Before I provide an overview of my analysis and delve into participants' accounts, I will describe the process of othering and elaborate on its significance. Othering is a method of marking boundaries between one group of people and another. This process often involves moral judgments such that one group is defined as bad and the other good. Lorde (1984) argues that Americans are unaccustomed to relating to differences as equals; we are programmed to fear and sometimes loathe difference. In Western society, difference is defined in dichotomous, oppositional terms such that "one part is not simply different from its counterpart; it is inherently opposed to its 'other'" (Collins 1991). The ability to define others can be a powerful resource for shaping social and material reality. When powerful people define others, the

consequences are substantial (see e.g., Fanon 1967; Said 1978). hooks (1984) argues

that current processes of domination are based on the manipulation of difference by

people with the authority and resources to objectify subordinates. She explains that as

objects, subordinate people's realities, identities and histories are defined by others.

By defining others as categorically unworthy (e.g., genetically, physically, culturally

or morally inferior), privileged or advantaged people have a convenient explanation

and justification for their continued objectification or oppression of others.

Othering involves the distortion of difference. Advantaged groups mark others'

behavior, physical traits or identity as different with no examination of their

assumptions regarding what is normal. Their own behavior, physical traits and

identity are assumed to be the norm, the universal, unchanging and autonomous

baseline from which comparisons can be made. Privileged groups are the subjects, not

the objects of this kind of othering. As subjects, they have the potential to imbue any

kind of difference with social meaning, most often equating difference with deficit.

The majority of participants of this study point their finger at others, defining them as

different and/or inferior. Their finger pointing can be referred to as "defensive

othering among subordinates". According to Schwalbe et al. (2000), this is the

process by which individuals seek to deflect the stigma they themselves experience as

members of a subordinate group.[2]

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2. It is possible to other upward as well. For instance, Lamont (2000) shows how working class men in
the United States draw boundaries between themselves and "people above," i.e., managers and

The practice of othering subordinates reflects more than the psychological struggles of working class people. It also reflects their material struggles and points to the fact that oppression, by definition, forces people to compete for scarce resources. Carving out the boundaries between us and them is not only about salvaging identity, but about defensively protecting what seem to be one's own material interests. Tense, distrustful race relations as well as inter-racial conflict and violence are shaped by real or perceived competition (see e.g., Blalock 1967; Bonacich 1972; Olzak 1993). As an example, Fine et al. (1997) analyze this process among white working class men and boys whose white male privilege has been corroded by economic changes in the 1980's and early 1990's, such as corporate flight and downsizing, automation and declining union strength. Their analysis reveals that these white males respond by displacing their rage onto "undeserving others," people of color and white women. Like these researchers, I will draw attention to the material and psychological matters shaping the practice of othering.

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professionals. Working class people use a moral yardstick to judge "people above" as lacking personal integrity, sincerity and positive interpersonal relations. In this study, I only came across one example of upward othering in which a black participant, Trenton, implies that his white supervisors are morally inferior; or more precisely, he suggests that they undoubtedly suffer as a result of their immoral actions. Trenton says, "All I know [is that] … they are not as happy as I am. I know that. I'm sure of it. You might not understand what I'm talking about.… Inside, what they feeling, what they thinking, when they lay at home in the bed at night. Could never be right, huh? Because I've done something wrong before and I was so depressed and couldn't sleep. And I don't think somebody could do that [mistreat workers] everyday and be comfortable. I don't think so … unless it's a special breed, that I don't know about." The prevalence of othering down could reflect a taken for granted sense among the participants that social hierarchies are just, that is, they mirror people's different unequal skills, contributions and natural talents (see e.g., Della Fave 1980 and Kluegel and Smith 1987 for illustrations of this phenomenon).

Venting frustration, holding disillusionment at bay

My analysis reveals that the majority (17/28) of the participants criticize other people who presumably fail to abide by the meritocratic principle of the dream. They complain about or "other" people who they believe get something for nothing (I refer to this group as the beneficiaries of preferential treatment) as well as those who presumably feel entitled to something for nothing (whom I call slackers). In casting other people as meritocratic rule breakers, participants expose their wish that the dream's logic actually worked. Their emotion management reveals what Lerner (1981) calls a "longing for a belief in a just world." Whether or not they do truly believe in the dream is again unclear. That participants want to believe does seem clear. In particular, I suggest that their complaints expose the participants' attachment to the equity principle, at the heart of the dream's meritocratic tenet. Equity is the notion that rewards should be directly proportionate to investments (Homans 1974; Hochschild 1981). As participants complain about others who try to obtain or actually succeed in obtaining something for nothing, they cling to the idea that a fair world is one in which the equity principle operates; they are holding others accountable to this principle.

Their complaints reveal a struggle that has both an emotional as well as a cognitive basis. What I would argue underlies their emotional struggle is their disappointment regarding the dream's unmet promises in their own lives, especially in light of the way they believe others to be making out well, sometimes like bandits. As I will argue, this emotional struggle fuels by inter-ethnic or inter-racial hostility and

129

misunderstanding. The source of their cognitive struggle seems to be their desire or need to believe that the world makes sense. They know they are playing by the rules and seem equally convinced that others aren't. Their emotion management reveals their ambivalence and perhaps confusion: although participants want to believe in a world that operates according to the equity principle, a world with clear cut measuring sticks for deservingness, they recognize at some level that such a world doesn't exist. What apparently charges this cognitive struggle is the way it's bound up in participants' sense of morality. They seem to have what Durkheim's (1947) terms is an essential need for a moral ideal. Given the absence in our culture of viable alternative ideologies, for instance, egalitarian-based ideologies that offer a different, but still all-encompassing framework for understanding the world as a moral and meaningful place, participants cling to what's available. They cling to the dream ideology, especially its notion of equity.

I argue in this chapter that the emotion work strategy at hand is about venting frustration. In light of their need for a moral ideal, emotion management is also about participants' (perhaps unconscious) efforts to hold their disillusionment at bay or to avoid what Durkheim (1947) calls "demoralization." Whereas the emotion work strategy discussed in the last chapter is driven by practical needs, this form is shaped by an interplay between emotional and cognitive needs. I suggest that the act of criticizing others allows participants to sustain their belief or hope that a just, equitable world can exist. Their emotion management allows them to project frustration onto people who apparently break the rules. In addition to providing an

outlet for their frustration, their emotion management supplies a lens through which they can see a (at least potentially) just world. While I've maintained that emotion management plays a key role in perpetuating inequalities, here I stress the role that cognitive processes play in legitimating and reproducing inequalities (see e.g., Della Fave 1980; 1986). I argue that participants' emotion management deflects attention and diverts energy away from the task of evaluating the rules themselves.

As I illustrate how the participants construct two types of rule breaking images— those of the slacker and the recipient of preferential treatment, I flesh out the implications. I show that the images are coded along cultural/nationalistic lines: Americans are cast as slackers, whereas immigrants are targeted as the recipients of special treatment. I suggest that participants' failure to question the dream itself allows the glorification of immigrant workers' vulnerability, reinforces power evasive thinking, stifles worker solidarity and fosters racial misunderstanding and racism.

Slackers

The first type of rule-breaking complaint is about slackers. Slackers violate the equity principle; they get by or seek to get by without contributing their fair share. In the following excerpt, a white participant from Duplin reflects on her experiences as a crew-leader. Tricia comments on the poor work ethic of other American workers, depicting them as lazy slackers:

> **Tricia:** … if I'm leading the crew, I don't want any Americans … on the crew. Because –

> **Katie:** You didn't want any Americans?

> **Tricia:** … I've had a lot of experience working with American people in the field. And I've worked with maybe twenty American people in the field. And every one of them sat down. And when I asked them, "Why are you sitting?" [Mimicking the workers:] "I am an American citizen. Let them Mexicans do it." You know. And I'm like, "Okay. Well, we don't need you anymore." I mean because if they're gonna come off with an attitude like that --they gonna sit down just because they're American citizen? I prefer for them to tell me their stomach was hurting.… Or you know, anything. Instead of just because they're an American citizen.... And so that's why I prefer not to work, if it's a field, I don't want, I prefer not to have an American.…

Part of Tricia's frustration may have been related to a lack of respect for her authority as a woman on the part of the American field laborers. She asserts her authority by implying here, and stating explicitly elsewhere, her preference for a non-American crew. It isn't just their laziness, but also the presumptuousness of the American workers that annoys Tricia and helps build her case regarding their inadequacy. Her mimicry, in particular, suggests that she places herself above her fellow American working class people. One form of emotional pay-off of this othering process derives from Tricia's implicit comparison making. She apparently identifies with immigrants, whom she uses as a foil against which the laziness of others is measured or illuminated. Another form of emotional pay-off derives from the very act of offering testimonial support for the American dream ideology. Her comments confirm her allegiance to the dream's emphasis on hard work. She doesn't have to state that she's a hard worker, herself; she's aghast at others' poor work ethic and this reaction speaks for itself.

It is also possible that Tricia simply prefers supervising Mexican workers, who by

virtue of their undocumented status, have fewer rights and are easier to control. Casting American workers as lazy might seem, to Tricia, more socially acceptable, than uncritically naming immigrants as exploitable, especially since Tricia is married to a Mexican immigrant. Underlying Tricia's othering, therefore, may be a power play between Tricia and her Latino crew, but one that is somewhat disguised by her focus on American workers' faults.

American Culprits

Like Tricia's commentary, the following one also casts Americans as slackers. Jorge, a Honduran immigrant living in Duplin, complains that Americans work slowly and only in soft jobs, whereas Hispanics will do any job that is designated to them. According to Jorge, Americans say they "can't do it," and only like to work where it's easy. He recalls that three of his former African American male co-workers had all quit because the work was too fast. Jorge's comparison making is explicit; his recognition of his own relatively strong endurance most likely supplies a righteous confidence that keeps him going despite the hardships he's encountered, including a serious bout with pesticide poisoning.

Tricia and Jorge's commentaries quite possibly reflect accurate observations of their respective experiences as frustrated crew-leader and exceptionally devoted worker. That is, their comments entail concrete references that appear to be based on more than the kind of hearsay included in other participants' complaints about slackers. For instance, Teresa, who is a Mexican immigrant living in Cabarrus, believes that

Hispanics work harder than Americans, and that among Americans, blacks are lazier than whites. Teresa's belief rests on something she's heard about blacks' option of going to the unemployment office to "get stamps." My point is not to assess the validity of participants' slacker complaints, but to point out that whether participants' observations and assumptions about slackers are warped or entirely accurate, their comments contain explicit or implicit self-serving comparisons and therefore function as emotion management strategies that boost their own egos and/or their will to press on.

Only Americans are cast as slackers. Like the Latino/a immigrant participants, these North Carolinian participants apparently have no qualms about othering people like themselves, fellow Americans. The local participants engage in intra-group othering. For instance, some black women participants, such as Gloria, point their finger at other black women, sometimes targeting people they know. In the following excerpt Gloria, one of the black participants from Cabarrus, criticizes women in her neighborhood, implying that there is no excuse for their refusal to grab the opportunities held out in front of them:

> **Gloria:** The majority of them where I live don't work. Don't want to work.

> **Jeff:** How does that happen?

> **Gloria:** They don't want a job…. [They're] waiting on the system to kick in. System say, "Alright. This is it. Quit having these babies and get a job." They will not work. I'm telling you they offered them five hundred dollars, I mean four hundred dollars a month to go to school to learn a trade. They had transportation for them to go get their diploma. Uh, GED….What more can you offer these people down

here that's black? They don't want anything.... How can you teach
your children something when you don't know anything. "Hey, the bus
come and pick you up." Four hundred dollars a month. Go get it.

It is especially noteworthy that Gloria's critique of welfare women is so clearly

racially loaded. By posing the question "What more can you offer these people down

here that's black?" she downplays the complexity of the lives and constrained choices

of poor single mothers and exaggerates the extent to which joblessness or laziness is a

'problem' within the black community. She also implies that it's a primarily black

community problem as opposed to one within other poor communities. In the next

excerpt Gloria again distances herself from fellow working class people. Here she

expresses skepticism about her own friends' work ethic:

> **Gloria:** … I would never recommend anyone for a job. I don't
> recommend people for jobs.
>
> **Jeff:** Um and what was your doubt about this? Why wouldn't you
> recommend people?
>
> **Gloria:** Because so many wouldn't work out. You know, someone
> says -they-, "I need a job." Well you know their history, they're not
> going to work. So why should I recommend you for a job where I
> work? When I come to work? And if things don't work out, than the
> boss man going to say, "Well I could've hired that other person.…
> And had taken a chance with that, instead of hiring someone that you
> recommend, that won't even work." So I don't recommend anyone to
> work. Not even my children. And I love them.

Gloria's comments reveal her sense that good workers cannot afford to risk their own

reputation. While she worked at the mill, in other words, her boundary marking

strategy was self-protective. Her insecure sense of her status as a good worker is

telling: although Gloria worked for the mill for nearly thirty years she was eventually

pushed out by an unsympathetic manager who was skeptical that Gloria could

maintain her productivity level after she'd suffered from various health problems.

While Gloria is quick to criticize fellow black women, other locals are reluctant to acknowledge the relatively poor work ethic of fellow Americans. In the following excerpt, Jim compares Latino and white construction workers and hesitantly admits the relative strength of the former group, despite their limited English skills:

> "Oh, I know it for a fact.… I've got friends that work them [Latinos]. And they do … work for less wages. And they're, they're, you know, notorious for being on time, everyday. [Sighs.] You know, there's that language barrier. But, … repetition teaches anybody anything. And they … catch on. But they're there. And in some cases, as bad as I hate to say it, they're there before the white men'll get there.…They'll be there when, I've had [white] guys with a million and ten thousand excuses, about "why I can't be here tomorrow." "I've to do this." And "I've got to do this." Or [they'll] just be drunk or tore up or something. And they're [Latinos] actually dependable. So, uh, they're selling their selves."

Glorifying workers' vulnerability and raising the bar for workers' exploitability

It might seem that the pattern of recognizing, even praising immigrants and casting Americans as slackers points to an underlying respect among locals for immigrants and their pursuit of the American dream.[3] Although this kind of respect may exist, in the next section I demonstrate that immigrants are targeted in another type of rule-breaking complaint. Furthermore, in this section I argue that the apparent praise for immigrants also contains potentially harmful implications. However participants feel

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[3] It might also be the case that the local participants are awed by immigrants' work ethic, and that this awe evokes fear and doubt. They may fear being displaced by recent immigrants and/or may doubt their own ability to meet the high standards set by the example of immigrant workers.

about the work ethic of immigrants, who they explicitly or implicitly commend in

their slacker complaints, and however confident they feel about themselves as

workers as they criticize slackers, their commentaries do little to lift the situation of

working people.

As the examples below illustrate, the effect of their comments can be to glorify

workers' vulnerability and leave unquestioned the poor conditions of working class

employment. In the following excerpt Maryanne begins by praising the work ethic of

immigrants, subsequently casts American workers as uniformly inadequate and

finally blurs the distinction between immigrant and local workers:

> [Latinos] are willing to work faster. [Sighs.] It's hard work.… I think
> the way we're raised here as we grow, we want do the easy way. And
> we don't see that well, sometimes you have to do whatever way you
> can. And, it's not the easy way out. In order to make --I mean from
> where they're from, they [immigrants] have to work hard, just to make
> thirty dollars a week.… So when they come here, as hard as they work
> there, they work here. And they see they make more, you know, they
> make a lot more money. And it doesn't stop them from working harder
> though. Uh, though, you know, if you get what I call Americanized
> [laughs], then you start wanting the easier jobs.… I called it
> Americanized when they learn how to, um, use the system.… Some of
> them will go on welfare. Get the food stamps. Get what they can. Um,
> they learn all, some of the negative things about America. You know,
> not to say welfare is negative, but they learn how to use it. And that's
> kind of like negative. It's supposed to be a positive thing to help
> people out until.... But they'll get used to it. Um, learn how to fall
> down on the job and get workman's comp. You know, stuff like
> that.…You know, they're just like some people here. You know. And I
> think that's, they learn all the little gimmicks to it … if they ever learn
> the other way [the American way], then they're constantly going and
> having babies just so they can get that check. And then I call that
> Americanized.… But there's some Americanized things that are good.
> Like when you know your rights. You know, what you can, uh, what
> employers can do and what they can't do.… That's the good part about
> being Americanized.

As with Tricia's commentary, Maryann's words serve as testimony to her belief in a strong work ethic. She conveys her disappointment with some immigrants' transition into American life. Maryann implicitly lumps herself into the hard working group and presumably takes satisfaction in such group membership. However, in a sense, her account is also self-denigrating; her anti-welfare critique belies the fact that she's been on and off welfare for eight years and struggled to make ends meet as a single mother. Furthermore, the praise she offers hard-working immigrants has complex, somewhat contradictory implications. Maryann fancies herself an advocate for Hispanics. For instance, she believes that her clients, the Latinos who use her translation service, see her as someone they can count on in emergencies and as someone who won't abuse them the way that lawyers do. There is some emotional pay-off in praising immigrants. However, beneath the surface, Maryann's comments imply that immigrants are the best workers when they don't know their rights or when they don't assert their rights. In other words, she glorifies their vulnerability, while also criticizing American workers, who know and apparently abuse their rights. Perhaps what Maryann dislikes the most about the Americanization process is immigrants' English language acquisition. In other words, her 'admiration' of non-Americanized immigrants also reflects her straightforward business interests.

Luis, Tricia and Maryann each say something about being American and knowing or claiming one's rights. As revealed above, Tricia mocked US workers for assuming they didn't have to work because of their citizenship. In the next excerpt, Luis argues that Latino workers are easier for managers to work with because:

most of them, they try to, uh, like I said, they're not comfortable with welfare or any of those types of services.… And they try to work or try to retain a job longer. In Mexico they don't have, uh, fair labor laws. You know. If the boss doesn't like you, you're gone. He didn't have to give you an excuse why you're fired.… And so here they tend to bring some of that with them. So, they tend to try to do the job and try to get along with everybody to retain their job.

To praise immigrant workers who are complacent, either because they're unaware of their rights or aware of their limited rights and choices as undocumented workers and limited English speakers, is to raise the bar on what is a reasonably good work ethic and to lower the standards on tolerable and fair labor conditions.[4]

Preferential treatment beneficiaries

To illustrate the second form of othering complaints, I highlight an excerpt from an interview with Judy, one of the few white female participants. Judy is bothered by the language assistance that she supposes is readily available to immigrants. During Jeff's interview with Judy, he asked her what she thought about having more Latino and Latina kids in the schools:

> Well, I am probably very old-fashioned. I have no problems with them coming to the schools anymore than blacks coming to the schools. They are not white schools. They are schools for children…. All children, German, Irish, Japanese, it doesn't matter, have a right to an education. And they can all go together. They don't have to go to separate schools. I have a real problem with how much we have had to accommodate the language barrier. And, that I feel, needs to be a

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[4] It's noteworthy that the three North Carolinian participants to whom I refer here, who simultaneously praise immigrants and glorify their vulnerability, all have connections to the Latino/a community: Luis, himself, is Mexican American; Maryann was married to a Mexican immigrant, and has a daughter from that marriage; and Tricia has a Mexican husband, with whom she has a child. The pleasure, meaning and/or satisfaction they gain from their relative closeness to the immigrant community may either blind them to the ways they take advantage of recent immigrants or provide an easy justification. Maryann, especially, sees herself as a trusty helper among the immigrant community.

responsibility of those people who come into the United States to live.... There seems to be a special okayness to the Hispanics coming without any preparation or language development.

Judy apparently believes in the principle of equal opportunities in the realm of education; she declares that all children in the US have a right to an education, that is, under the condition that they speak English. She frames her critique of immigrant rule-breakers by drawing upon the idea of a meritocracy, which assumes an equal playing field, an equality of opportunities. In her view, the liberal granting of language assistance to immigrant students violates a meritocratic code. By providing immigrants with translation help, schools make exceptions to meet or cater to the special needs of one group. The need for making exceptions should be precluded by the presumed level playing field. Furthermore, Judy feels that immigrants shouldn't get away with not putting forth any effort. Judy's complaint rests on the assumptions that immigrant children don't speak English and they're making little effort to learn English.[5]

When Jeff asked about the policy of schools toward immigrants Judy admitted her anger and described another example of how immigrants receive special treatment that is unwarranted.

> **Jeff**: What do you think about the way the schools are responding to there being more Latinos in the schools?

> **Judy**: Well, they are getting lots of teachers.... They are doing a lot of training on the culture. They are definitely responding to the need.

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[5] Portes (1996) reveals that children born in the United States of immigrant parents as well as children who immigrate to the United States at a young age tend to learn English and do so without substantial delay.

Jeff: And what do you think of this?

Judy: I have a little bit of anger about it. 'Cause I think it is a certain group of people who have been given some very extra tax supported services. And there are so many of them, meaning that it is more services that are going to be needed. And it is not our responsibility. It is their responsibility to acclimate themselves to the society where they move. It is not our responsibility to provide them with interpreters. They have so many [language courses at Rowan Technical College.] There are hosiery mills here who, when they hire, and they are hard working people. I give them that. Very dependable and reliable. The mills themselves will take time from the job and have someone come and teach them English while others are working. And these people are getting paid ... while they're learning English. I don't understand that.

In this piece, Judy's complaint about the special help available to immigrants again hinges on the equity principle, the idea that people's efforts should determine their rewards. She indirectly accuses immigrants of not working hard enough, if at all, to learn English. Judy implies that immigrant workers will take English classes while they're on the clock, but that their efforts stop there. Judy talks about responsibility, drawing a distinction between the responsibilities of immigrants versus natives three times in consecutive sentences. She argues that immigrants need to make the effort to assimilate to US life, rather than allowing or expecting Americans to do the work. As she presents it, immigrants generally don't speak English, don't have to care about knowing the language and are not making any efforts to learn it. And yet, in the midst of her complaint regarding immigrants' effort she affirms the apparently unassailable hard-working immigrant stereotype. Her 'pull yourselves up by the bootstraps' philosophy thus applies not primarily to working, as in paid labor force participation, but to the cultural work of assimilating.

Judy's complaints are self-affirming in two ways. First, I suspect that the very act of expressing her convictions regarding opportunities and rewards is satisfying for Judy. In other words, her complaints serve as a testimony to her beliefs. Furthermore, Judy buoys herself up by beating others down. The object of her complaints, immigrants, and the substance of her rationale, their rule-breaking behavior, gives her something concrete to latch onto in asserting her convictions.

Immigrant culprits

While it is locals who are consistently cast as slackers, immigrants are uniformly the target of complaints about unfair or inequitable preferential treatment**.** To the extent that the North Carolinian participants are compelled to displace their frustrations onto immigrants, it is not surprising that their complaints take this form, rather than that of the slacker image. It would be difficult to tamper with the hard working immigrant image. First, folkloric "rags to riches" stories among immigrants are close to the heart of the American dream ideology. Furthermore, there seem to be plenty of stories and observations in Duplin and Cabarrus about immigrants taking the nasty jobs (in the fields and in certain animal processing plants) that no longer interest local workers with better options. Finally, Government and corporate rhetoric depicting immigrant labor as the solution to local labor shortages also strengthen the cultural credibility of this image. Also, as Hondagneu-Sotelo (1995) argues, a common anti-immigrant narrative is the "government resources drain" story that targets women and children as trouble-makers, who expect and sometimes receive medical care, tax-supported public assistance, free education and so on.

Another noteworthy pattern is that none of the immigrant participants level preferential treatment complaints against locals or other immigrants. The majority point to barriers they face in the workplace related to their lack of English language skills and proper documentation. These references are offered as explanations for why they have to take certain jobs and why they cannot afford to be choosy. However, they do not translate into claims about the privileges of locals. In this sense, the immigrant participants seem to accept the rules of the game.

Reinforcing the dream and its blinders

The local participants' finger-pointing accounts simultaneously expose the dream's flaws and bolster the dream. Again, their accounts speak to the participants' ambivalence. The next example suggests that the process of othering rule breakers provides an outlet for participants' frustration, allowing them to continue to have faith in the equity principle of the dream.

Gloria, an African American interviewee, whom I introduced earlier, uses exaggeration and imitation, like Tricia, to reveal her skepticism about rule-breakers. She complains in the excerpt below that Taiwanese immigrants receive special treatment. She explains that she and her former (American) co-workers at Cannon Mills resented immigrants' ostentatious flashing of the advantages accrued by their immigrant status.

> **Gloria:** The workers didn't like them, what-so-ever. Because they've never paid tax…. They would let us know. "We no pay no tax." "We

no pay no Social Security." "No, no. All this free. Government give it to us free." [Imitating accents.] "We have free home. Two percent interest. Car free. No down payment." And they could be fired but the next day, they're back on the job because they have a interpreter. He brings them right back in. So, there was a disagreement in the mill about that....

Jeff: Is there any arrangement like that with Latino workers?

Gloria: I don't know. I don't think so. Because I heard someone say, they had to pay tax.... [The Taiwanese] didn't pay the tax. After five years, they go back home. Stay three months. They come back. Get their jobs back. Everyday's tax-free. And they don't mind telling you. "We don't pay no tax." So I said to the boss man, "We don't want to pay no tax either." [Laughs.] He said, "Well, find a country that wants you."

Gloria presents a concrete story that demonstrates how immigrants violate the equity principle: without paying any taxes, without making commensurate contributions, immigrants (even those who come and go with little apparent investment) are reaping all kinds of rewards including free homes and cars. Perhaps by exaggerating immigrants' difference by imitating their accents and using broken English, Gloria intended to underscore her point about their undeservingness. It may be that Gloria's reference to her supervisor's "find a country that wants you" advice is merely an embellishment. Still, Gloria's sense of being unappreciated and under-rewarded is unmistakable. The intriguing and ironic aspect of Gloria's complaining is that in insisting that immigrants receive preferential treatment, she implies that the rules prescribed by the dream are not always applicable. She exposes the dream as flawed. Yet, rather than questioning the tenets of the dream, she clings to the idea that the equity rule can or should be universal. What's wrong, in her view as she expresses it, isn't the set of rules but the people who violate them.

144

There is further irony in the fact that Gloria, herself, invents a picture of a flawed world in which immigrants make out absurdly well. Regardless of the managers' attitudes about Taiwanese employees, it is surely not the case that the government awarded these same individuals free homes and cars. Perhaps Gloria's need to vent frustration regarding her own situation compels her to allude to imaginary flaws in the system, flaws that make other people look bad, but that somehow don't require her to abandon her faith in the dream. It seems not only that her finger-pointing emotion work depends on the dream's logic, but also that believing in the dream itself has significant emotional relevance. Abandoning hope is too risky, and the dream's logic is flexible enough to withstand contradictions or revisions. Gloria's apparent sense of being cast aside suggests that she's aware of the disparity between the dream's promise and her own life's circumstances. Whereas participants downplayed discrepancies in the previous chapter, Gloria and other participants highlighted in this chapter emphasize discrepancies between the dream and reality. Gloria takes issue with discrepancies in other people's lives, perhaps because it's too painful to acknowledge explicitly those closer to home. Here the featured participants emphasize that it is not fair that others get off the hook. In the previous chapter their attitude-shifting emotion management seemed to reflect their sense that they couldn't let themselves off the hook; the participants offered no explanations regarding the fairness of their own need to 'grin and bear it.'

Looking down versus looking up

Another implication of participants' finger pointing is that it facilitates power evasive

rhetoric. In venting their frustration by scapegoating others, participants avoid the question of how power imbalances shape their own lives and immigrants' lives. In this next example, Sharon's complaints about immigrants' preferential treatment reveal how the tendency to look down at rule breakers goes hand in hand with a reluctance to look up at those in power, the rule makers. A young African American woman, Sharon had been working for Wachovia Bank in Charlotte for three years at the time of the interview. She used to work at the Perdue Farms chicken plant in Concord, one of the key employers of Latina/os in the area. Unlike the immigrant workers, Sharon wasn't on the plant floor killing or cutting birds. She worked in the Human Resources department doing paper work such as attendance reports, insurance claims, and I-9 forms. She comments on a change she'd noticed over time, involving more company catering toward immigrant workers.

> **Sharon:** And then after a year or so, we had to start doing applications that were in Spanish, even then we had some that couldn't read … the application that was printed in Spanish for them to complete. We had some that [had] illegal social security cards. The green cards.… I'd say in a week's time we might get two out of maybe two hundred applicants that had them ….
>
> **Katie:** Two out of two hundred. That's very few. So when, with the application process, did you say that they did make it a Spanish application?
>
> **Sharon:** Right.
>
> **Katie:** But some weren't literate? So, what would they to do? Could you work there, if you couldn't read?
>
> **Sharon:** Yeah. They had--we had supervisors that ... were able to communicate with them. You would have to actually sit down and sometimes fill out the application for them.

Even though Sharon acknowledges that immigrants' lack of English and sometimes also Spanish literacy skills didn't make a difference on the plant floor, she was still annoyed that the company accommodated immigrant employees. Sharon's frustration with immigrants getting off the hook and being given special treatment was not inconsequential. She believes that part of the reason the company fired her had to do with her firm beliefs about fairness and her unwillingness to overlook the way the immigrants' treatment at the company violated her convictions. I asked Sharon why she left her job at Perdue:

> **Sharon:** They said they had like a corporate downsizing. Supposedly. But, they said I would have to cater to the Hispanics. They said I wasn't going to cater to them. I feel if you live in America, speak my language. And if I would go to their country, they would do me just the same. And I'm just the type of person … I stand up for what I believe. A lot of people, can't, you know, deal with that.

What is important about Sharon's commentary is that it reveals how easily participants slip into the othering mode. Sharon has reason to criticize her company, and she does. She alludes to the company's downsizing practices as well as their catering practices. But, in this and other references to her former employment at the chicken plant, Sharon devotes more time to criticizing immigrants than the company. She also reserves her harshest words for Latinos, whom she considers "just plain nasty." In the above excerpt, she reiterates and emphasizes her frustration with immigrants' presumably poor English skills and congratulates herself for being willing to say what's on her mind. I suspect that while anti-immigrant rhetoric is familiar to Sharon, anti-system rhetoric is not. She knows she doesn't like what she saw happening at the chicken plant, but she has an easier time harping on immigrants

and demonstrating their undeservingness than elaborating a critique of employer

practices or the underlying currents of the global economy that shape these practices.

I wondered if Sharon thought that her (white male) supervisor was among those

particularly concerned about catering to the Hispanic workers. Sharon agreed, saying,

"His personal secretary was uh, I'm going to say she was like from South America....

So therefore, they were trying to get more of the uh, Hispanics within the office

too…. They had a couple that were in our management there that were [Hispanic]." I

suspected that Sharon might interpret her experience as displacement:

> **Katie:** Huh. So did you feel like you were pushed out? Or ... were
> you ready to go?
>
> **Sharon:** I -- You know, it was, at the time it just came up on a
> Wednesday, and [they said] like "look, Friday will be your last day."
> ...
>
> **Katie:** But would you have wanted to stay there?
>
> **Sharon:** No.
>
> **Katie:** You were ready to go. Mostly because of the people? Or what,
> what would you want--
>
> **Sharon:** The hours were too long. And then I had mostly gotten tired
>
> of just seeing how they would come in … trying to get [in]. You
> would see some that came in everyday. And everyday they would have
> a different social security number. With [an inaccurate] birth date --
> you can look at some people and tell they're not of age. Guys fifteen
> [years old], trying to say they're twenty-one or twenty-two.

Sharon doesn't see herself as pushed out. Instead, she implies that she was glad to

leave the company. The audacity of immigrants as well as the pandering of the

company toward immigrants drove her away. As Sharon emphasizes immigrants' rule

breaking and other deficiencies she downplays the importance of power. What's missing from her comments and explications is recognition of immigrants' vulnerability on the one hand and their efforts on the other. Also missing is a substantial or comparable consideration of the hand played by more powerful actors. For example, Sharon does not draw attention to the ways that management benefits from a workforce predominantly made up of recent immigrants. Neither does she mention how management benefits from (and may strategically build) a workforce consisting of diverse and disunited groups of people, who cannot communicate with one another, who don't understand each other and who possibly despise one another. By focusing on immigrants, their so-called preferential treatment, their behavior and/or morality, she deflects attention away from the people – not only employers, but also social service providers, and government officials/policy makers-- who make decisions and create or perpetuate systems that apparently advantage immigrants and hurt other people. She displaces her frustration, anger, and/or resentment onto immigrants, in effect scapegoating immigrants.

The topic of immigrants' limited English skills surfaced elsewhere in the interviews with North Carolinians. It's important to note that some Latina/o immigrants in these counties have already learned English, either in their home country, in another US state or here in North Carolina. I observed immigrants' eagerness to learn English when I sat in on several well-attended ESL classes in both counties. Furthermore, most of the non-English speaking Latino/a immigrants we interviewed expressed a clear desire to learn English, recognized the importance of knowing English and

spoke to the difficulties in not being able to communicate in English. Because efforts to accommodate Spanish speakers are rare, inadequate, and/or only recent, non-English speakers have limited access to public spaces and to the people who are long time locals, as well as limited opportunities for promotion at work. While there are bilingual translators who offer to escort non-English speaking immigrants to the doctor or the bank, these 'helpers' often take advantage of the recent immigrants, charging them outrageous rates. Immigrants have to negotiate carefully where they can go without English skills and also where they can work. While several plants in the research sites hire non-English speaking workers, it's up to their discretion how they'll tie wages and mobility to language skills.

Racialized defensive othering

The next example, from Sonny's interview, reveals how defensive othering reinforces racist ideology and in turn bolsters racial inequalities. While Sonny enjoys certain privileges as a white male, he also struggles as a member of the working class. Apparently underlying his comments of frustration regarding immigrants' undue treatment are his class insecurities.

> **Katie:** So what about, um, Hispanic people? Do you see the same things happening with them? Like [do] the police give them special treatment? Or [does] the government give them special treatment?
>
> **Sonny:** Oh, yeah (drawn out). Oh mercy! Hmmm.
>
> **Katie:** What do you mean? Can you give me an example? [Clears throat.]
>
> **Sonny:** Well, they're letting [them] come in here. Or they're coming on their own. Mostly coming on their own, I think. Or whatever.

And they bring a bunch. And they come here and they're taking up the jobs. They good workers. Now don't misunderstand me. But, they'll work cheaper. They're taking up the jobs. [Pause.] Uh, and they go back to Mexico and they bring their older people back with them. And they jump on all these benefits. They get everything. They get all the tax breaks. Uh, [pause.] --there ain't nothing right about that.

Katie: So what kind of benefits do you mean? The tax benefits?

Sonny: Well, if they bring their momma or daddy back with them or their grandpa and he works--gets himself a job over here, works for a year. He jumps on social security. And he gets all the Medicare benefits. He gets everything everybody else gets. And there ain't nothing right about that.

Sonny admits to being unclear about what's going on with immigrants. Yet, he goes on to criticize immigrants as though his suspicions are true. In the excerpt above, Sonny imagines that immigrants get special treatment. By 'special' Sonny apparently meant 'equal.' He comments that it's wrong for immigrants to get everything that everyone else gets. Judy and Sharon don't want to see immigrants getting extras or bonuses. Specifically, they complain about immigrants getting special language help at school and work. They stress the importance of assimilation efforts, suggesting that in time, immigrants could hypothetically gain legitimate access to US schools and workplaces and the rights/rewards associated with these institutions. Sonny, by contrast, questions the right of immigrants to be in the States in the first place. While both Sharon and Judy at times also criticize immigrants who were 'illegal,' Sonny takes this a step further suggesting, as the next excerpt reveals, violent measures for controlling immigration's problems.

Sonny: I believe that most people who are like me, you know, or fifty year old people that think about the same way I think. I think you'll get about the same thing out of most of them.… They think this whole

system is gone. It's rotten. It's crooked. [Pause.] Uh, none of them believe there's any hope for it anymore.

Katie: Huh. So what, I mean, let's say that things somehow were going to change drastically for the better. What kind of world would that be? You said that things are going to have to get worse. But suppose they got better ... what could we do to change things for the better?

Sonny: Well, they're going to have to stop all this immigration business. Just stop it all.…We got too many people here now. [Pause.] They're going to run out of, they're going to run out of everything one day. Land, nowhere for them to live, no jobs. Money. They keep taking people from all over the world in here.

Katie: [Coughs.]

Sonny: I don't see no way! You think about it. [Pause.] And that Colombia down here, where all this drug business is coming from. Well, they just ought to tell that man down there, say, "You either stop it or we'll put the bomb on you big time."

Katie: [Laughs nervously.]

Sonny: I mean, somebody's got to call the shots somewhere.

Not only does Sonny seem to consider US immigration laws too lax, he apparently opposes immigration altogether. He resentfully questions immigrants' appropriation of American opportunities. Entering and working within the US, receiving tax breaks and social services are construed as privileges not entitlements. Sonny implies that these privileges should be reserved for US citizens.

To violate his sense of fairness, immigrants need not receive extra, but simply equal opportunities and access. Of course, Sonny also opposes extras for immigrants, as the next excerpt reveals.

Katie: So is that, do you mean that it's not right because other people

aren't getting the same treatment? Or what is wrong about it, in your
opinion? [Pause.] Is it that they are being treated special, in a special
way? Or?

Sonny: Well, it looks to me like they are. I don't know about the tax
business. I understand that they don't pay no tax for four or five, six
years, when they come over here and get a job. You know. And I wish
they'd a give me some kind of treatment like that buddy. I wouldn't be
grumbling about my tax, county tax. I'd have some money to pay it
with.

Sonny is clearly a bitter man. He appears to be even older than his seventy years with

a deeply wrinkled face, as if he's smoked heavily for years. He looked at me very

seriously, sometimes squinting his steel blue eyes, and pointing his finger at me

sternly, saying, "listen woman." I couldn't help but notice his large wrinkled hands

when he asked me if I'd ever worked. When I told him that I hadn't ever done manual

labor, he started laughing, and wouldn't say why when I asked him. His example

reveals the long-term futility of channeling anger against one's fellow subordinates.

Sonny has been othering people of color since he saw Cannon Mills turn 'plum bad'

twenty years ago, when, in his eyes, minorities were moved into positions of authority

in front of more deserving white men. Although like then, Sonny now seems to feel

better about himself when he casts people of color as undeserving, the economic

insecurity that fuels his racist complaints remains. Sonny has worked hard for many

years, serving in the Navy for two years, working at Fieldcrest Cannon Mills for

twenty-two years and another textile plant for an additional seventeen years. He

resents that older people are struggling to make ends meet more and more each year.

His fears and frustrations are projected onto fellow working class people who are

struggling in their own right. Sonny's racialized comments reflect his class-related

injuries, although his comments downplay class as a system of stratification. Sonny draws attention to what he has failed to receive, but instead of blaming the economic elite, he blames working class and poor racial minorities.

Implications of othering

To underscore the implications of othering as an emotion work strategy, I narrow in on the example of several black female participants' finger pointing. These women also have an interesting relationship to the dream ideology, a unique relationship in that, compared to most of the other participants, they are on the verge of being critical of the dream. Whereas the immigrants I highlighted at the end of Chapter five stand to gain from their faith, given their relatively good chance of seeing some results for their attachment to the dream, I argue that these women stand to lose a lot. They stand to lose in that neither their criticism nor their attachment to the dream's promises is likely to change or improve their current situation unless they can harness the energy spent on finger pointing in a different way. Given the way these women move in and out of power evasive talk, their commentaries provide a useful jumping off point from which to further consider barriers that impede participants' potential for mobilization. I will suggest that despite their occasional criticism, they, too, seem to lack the language that would allow them to articulate fully and make sense of the problems to which they allude. Their critical moments are less empowering than they could be therefore, and may even be disempowering.

Gracie, Dietra and Kim are among the North Carolinian interviewees who are upset

by the special help they imagine to be readily available to and exploited by

immigrants. In making claims about immigrants' tax breaks and their easy access to

welfare assistance, they insist that immigrants shouldn't receive assistance that is not

available to everyone and suggest that they want everyone to be treated equally. Other

participants complain about immigrants' preferential treatment without making a case

for their own deservingness. That is, they simply carve out the categories of

deserving/undeserving, taking for granted their own place among the deserving, and

emphasizing where immigrants fall short, or what immigrants should do. By contrast,

the three women at hand apply the meritocracy fairness rule to their own lives,

explicitly saying something about their own lives, as they do about immigrants' lives.

They clearly bring their own struggle to light and present this struggle as evidence for

why they are deserving and how they feel cheated. For instance, at turns throughout

her interview, Gracie spoke of struggling and making it. Gracie had her own struggles

in mind when she complained about the way immigrants readily receive the kind of

assistance she wants and needs:

> ... blacks seem to think that [immigrants] don't have to pay taxes and
> stuff like we do. They get food stamps. They get all these things free
> that we aren't able to get. Because I was sick, [I] start getting sick ...
> And I had been sick so much--and I went to social services and asked
> them if they would help me to buy some of my medicine.… Because I
> had a lot of medicine to buy. I was going to the hospital two and three
> times a week getting therapy on my back. And I had arthritis so bad.
> You know and everything. So. I couldn't get any help. [Pause] I had
> worked all my life. And this makes you feel so bad. When you need
> some help then you can't get any….

Dietra also describes how she personally has struggled and failed to secure the kind of help she needed and supposed was accessible to immigrants. As with Gracie, Dietra's convictions regarding the unfair terms of immigrants' assistance reflect her own suffering.

> **Dietra:** They can come in here and get food stamps and stuff like that. And they don't, you know, people here, they have to go through all this red tape. And they can come here and have babies, you know. Stuff like that…. You know, it don't seem fair. Their buggie's full of food. And you're struggling trying to pay light bills, telephone bills, house payments. And you go down there to Social Service [and] try and get food stamps and they give you a hard time. "Well, you're making too much money." Or something like that. You know. It's, it's just harder [for us].… Because right now with my mom here with me, it's like, the system, they will not pay me to stay home with her. But they will pay, it's not talking about Hispanics or nothing like that, it's just how the system is kind of, to me, is kind of mucked up.

It is worth noting that this last sentence sets Dietra apart from the other participants who make preferential treatment complaints. She alone self-consciously reflects on her reliance on the stereotype of immigrants' easy access to public assistance as a strategy for underscoring her own deprivation. She clarifies that her point isn't to criticize immigrants, but the system. She stops short of an articulate critique of the system, but does bring the system into the picture.

Not only do Kim, Dietra and Gracie bring their own struggle into the picture as they problematize the unequal distribution of assistance, but they also explicitly link their struggle to their status as African Americans, alluding to their history of discrimination and oppression. Kim for instance, put it this way:

> **Kim**: They can work and get lot of public assistance. A lot of people

can't get that. They can work a forty-hour job every week and get Medicaid for children or the small kids. They can go to the hospital for no charge. And we're here working all these years, you know....

Katie: And so people, do you think that they're mad about that? I mean or how do they feel about that? Like it's not right?

Kim: It's that, it's not fair. With us being in this country long as we have and they come six months or a year and they get better benefits than [us]....

Gracie also explicitly ties her notion of struggle to her status as a minority:

Gracie: And I hear people say ... in the black community, they don't think it's fair that they come in here and can get all this help.... And we are natives (emphasized) here.… And we can't get any help. And we think it's not--I don't think it's fair ... I hear them say they don't even pay taxes. I don't know. I don't know whether this is true or not. But, uh, [pause] it makes us feel kind of bad that we can't get help-- and they're getting so much help. And we're minorities too.… And I think it should be the same. I think we should be able to get the same kind of help.

Katie: So you feel like you're being treated differently it sounds like?

Gracie: Well, in a way yes. Yes. In a way, umhmmm.... Seems like we've always been at the bottom of the totem pole anyway. So naturally, they come to our country and they're getting better treatment than us. So naturally, we gonna resent that some.... This is what I hear people --most people saying, you know.

The ease with which these women name the racial undertones of their struggle

suggests that they have the potential to understand the situation of other people of

color and perhaps even join them in struggle. However, this apparent potential for

understanding and solidarity is lost amidst the apparent resentment fueling their

assumption that immigrant women are working the system and that the system works

for immigrant women. They further imply that immigrant women are not, like them,

struggling to get by, nor do they seem to imagine them to be similarly harassed by such government agencies as the Department of Social Services.

Dietra, Kim and Gracie's talk shows how they have personally suffered because of the discrepancy between the way the fairness rules are construed and the way they've played out in people' actual lives. These women have struggled because their rewards haven't corresponded to their level of hard work and struggle, as promised by the fairness rules. In light of that discrepancy, their perceptions about immigrants' preferential treatment take on even greater meaning and feel like salt on their wounds. Their perceptions don't appear to fuel a sense of anger toward the system; their energy, their emotional venting is directed as immigrants.

The commentaries of these women entail a creative usage of the dream's rhetoric. As Hochschild (1995:250) contends, the American Dream performs brilliantly as an ideology in that "it has distinct boundaries, but capacious content. It provides a unifying vision, but allows infinite variations within that vision…. It encourages people to not even see aspects of society that make the dream impossible to fulfill for all Americans." Gracie, Dietra and Kim rework the dream's rules in a clever way. Because they acknowledge that immigrants are working hard, they can neither claim that immigrants are lazy nor utilize willingness to work as a criterion for establishing who deserves assistance and mobility. If they're to use meritocracy rhetoric as a tool to discredit immigrants, then they need to tweak the rules a bit. These women are not espousing conventional anti-welfare rhetoric with claims that welfare destroys

people's work ethic, nor anti-welfare user imagery a la Reagan's welfare queen caricature. They claim that hard-working immigrants' rewards are undeserved by implying that the important criterion is not work or effort per se, but (a long history of) struggle. They emphasize struggle as if to say that black Americans, but not immigrants, have struggled long enough, banked up enough suffering and paid their dues.

Their comments are analogous to what Piper (1992) calls "suffering tests". Piper uses this term to describe how some other black people respond to her as a light-skinned black woman:

> And I have sometimes met blacks socially who, as a condition of
> social acceptance of me, require me to prove my blackness by passing
> the Suffering Test: They recount at length their recent experiences of
> racism and then wait expectantly, skeptically, for me to match theirs
> with mine. Mistaking these situations for a different one in which an
> exchange of shared experiences is part of a bonding process, I
> instinctively used to comply. But I stopped when I realized that I was
> in face being put through a third degree" (1992:6-7).

The way that Kim, Dietra and Gracie hint at the idea that immigrants haven't passed a suffering test is problematic in two ways. First, they seem to assume that recent Latino/a immigrants do not, themselves, have a long history of struggle, whereas the immigrants we interviewed most often came to the United States because of economic need. Most of the immigrants with whom we spoke alluded to past struggles in their home countries, their more recent border-crossing struggles and their immediate concerns about papers, nativism, language and/or poor working and housing conditions.

Second, their reasoning implies that (race/ethnic based) struggle is normal and/or acceptable. Instead of explicitly questioning why they themselves or any other person or group should have to struggle in order to get by, they accept or resign themselves to the individualistic and painstaking rules of the game. In their frustration, they target Latino/as, not the government or corporations, who in their account are unfairly giving immigrants special benefits. Furthermore, their individualistic focus on Latino/as as undeserving clouds their ability to see parallels between their struggle as working class, African American women and the struggles of Latino/a immigrants. They fail to see their shared interests and fail to hold the government and employers accountable for playing a role in and perpetuating the struggles of working class people. Finally, these three women, who are single caretakers, ignore altogether or at least downplay the fact that there is a structural incompatibility between caretaking and success at the dream. The dream is for disembodied workers who have no nurturing responsibilities.

Barriers to demystifying the American dream ideology

These examples amplify the complexity of participants' relationship to the dream ideology and shed light on the barriers to the demystification of the dream ideology. Rather than wholeheartedly buying into the dream, these women do seem to have doubts, but lack a language necessary to fully articulate a critique or clearly grasp the possibilities that solidarity with similarly situated people could bring forth. The moments of power cognizant, critical thinking in the commentaries of Gracie, Dietra

and Kim are accompanied by others in which they implicitly promote, while obscuring, white supremacist, capitalist and sexist interests. Not only do they lack the language, but also, as mentioned earlier, the participants generally lack the space within which to develop a critique. Furthermore, even when this space has been available, for instance, even among those participants who have become involved with community organizing, the absence of time and resources presents another obstacle. Dietra, in fact, had been involved with justice campaigns but at the time of the interview was completely absorbed with and overwhelmed by her job and her caregiving responsibilities.

In addition to considering what blocks participants' potential criticism, it's useful to allow how understandable it is that these three women and other participants have moments of true faith in the dream. I suspect that it is not only the convenience and flexibility of the dream, but its emotional appeal that makes it so alluring. One thing that seems to hook these women as well as other participants is the hope that things are already or will be better for younger generations. Their future orientation, which is rooted in their caregiving, can boost their support for the dream. So can past memories. Participants' optimistic or faithful attachment to the dream ideology may be shaped by their sense of history. As an example, Gracie's relationship to the dream ideology may be rooted in her assessment of her grandchildren's lives in light of her own. She may judge her grandchildren's success (they've graduated from college and secured 'good' jobs) as reason to believe in opportunity and meritocracy. The conditions of the lives of this younger generation are, in fact, very different from

those she struggled through as a domestic worker and as one of the first black women to work at Cannon Mills when the company was required to open its doors to blacks. Gracie reflected, "now you can start at the bottom and end up at the top, that used to be impossible for blacks." Although exaggerated, Gracie's comments reflect the possibility of change, which she herself has witnessed over her lifetime. Perhaps more salient than the lasting impact and evolving manifestations of racism in shaping Gracie's reflections regarding the dream's premises, is her certainty about change evidenced by historical comparisons.

What is interesting about the American dream ideology is that its popularity endures without the sanctions that presumably shape the appeal of other ideologies (including those to which people appear to be loyal despite life circumstances that might create doubt). Americans' faith in, or more precisely, their public expression regarding the dream ideology is not governed by legal or economic sanctions, as seems to have been the case for Cubans in relation to socialism in the post-revolutionary era. Neither is their freedom and propensity to believe or doubt shaped by the social sanctions that may preserve faith and compliance within religious communities. What apparently bolsters any ideology, whether the American dream, religious ideology, socialism, and so on, are the emotional costs of abandoning one's belief. As I've argued in this chapter, it is not only the participants' struggle for survival that drives their emotion management, it is also their, perhaps unconscious, efforts to avoid demoralization. Given that the framework provided by ideologies is often all encompassing, to doubt,

question or lose hope is akin to walking onto an emotional tightrope. Doubt can entail

disorientation, a sense of meaninglessness and a loss of the reassuring and validating

sense that the individual and collective sacrifices made along the way in the name of

the ideology have been worthwhile.

I would say that there is little doubt Gracie, Kim and Dietra, as well as the other

participants in this study are aware of challenges they face as working class people. I

have shown that the participants are skeptical about the dream's premise of abundant

opportunities, and I've argued that participants' emotion management strategies entail

implicit references to the flawed working of the dreams in their lives. This awareness

would seem to be a necessary precondition to the development of a critical stance

toward the dream, but it is not the same as being critical of the dream. As Mann

(1970) reveals, it is not uncommon for people to hold contradictory ideas. It's

possible that the participants clearly understand the nature of the concrete struggles in

their lives, which conflict with the dream's premises, while also buying into the

dream. It is important to keep in mind the possibility that for these workers (as for

others, see e.g., Kluegel and Smith 1987), the concrete and abstract operate as

separate realms such that discrepancies between the two don't come to light.

I do, nonetheless, suspect that, at some level, the participants in this study are aware

of the inconsistencies between their experiences and the dream ideology. I don't think

emotion work would be needed otherwise. I suspect that their emotion work functions

as a bridge between the dream and their reality. Emotion management represents a

163

response to the discrepancy, but also obscures the discrepancy and buffers the participants from the disorienting and/or painful blow of full-fledged awareness.

Summary

In this chapter I have explored the participants' outward looking emotion management strategy of finger pointing or othering. I have shown that a majority of participants make complaints in which they define others as rule breakers. Two specific rule-breaking images surface in these complaints: slacker and the recipient of preferential treatment. In making such complaints about rule breakers the participants draw on the meritocratic tenet, especially the equity principle, of the American dream ideology. Whereas participants' practical needs seem to drive their attitude shifting emotion work, it is their cognitive need to believe that the world makes sense that underlies their othering emotion management.

I have argued that implicit in participants' complaints is an exposure of the flawed workings of the American dream ideology. While participants don't elaborate a critique of the ideology, they're clearly ambivalent toward the discrepancy between their ideas about equity and their observations of their own and others' lives. If, as they suggest, there are people getting something for nothing, then it would follow that the equity principle of the dream should be called into question. But, just as the participants eschewed an explicit critique of the dream ideology in their commentaries on their challenges and their "grin and bear it" approach to pressing on, here they avoid this critical route as well. As I argue in this chapter, instead of

164

criticizing the ideology itself, the participants displace their frustration onto fellow

working class people. As a result, I argue that participants glorify workers'

vulnerability, raise the base for workers' exploitability and perpetuate inter-ethnic

hostility or misunderstanding. I have also underscored the barriers to participants'

desire and/or ability to demystify the dream including: the absence of tools with

which to criticize the dream ideology and the economic system it supports; the

absence of an autonomous space in which to develop an understanding and critique;

and the ability to make historical comparisons that uphold the dream's promises.

Also, I have argued that in addition to emotional gains of othering –the participants

buoy themselves up by beating others down- there are emotional and cognitive costs

of not performing emotion management. As it deflects attention away from questions

regarding the validity and value of the equity principle, participants' emotion

management sustains their sense that the world can be just; it allows participants to

avoid becoming disillusioned and demoralized.

Table five: Othering fellow subordinates

	othering fellow subordinates:	
	slackers	preferential treatment
Duplin County participants		
Maryann	Yes	
Tricia	Yes	
Kim		Yes
Renee	Yes	
Dietra		Yes
Deborah		
Luis	Yes	
Omero		
Edgar	Yes	
Antonio		
Francisco		
Jorge	Yes	
Cabarrus County participants		
Gracie	Yes	Yes
Gloria	Yes	Yes
Shelia		
Tonya		
Sharon		Yes
Claire		
Rebecca		
Trenton	Yes	
Jim	Yes	
Bob		
Sonny		Yes
Judy		Yes
Estela		
Teresa	Yes	
Dolores	Yes	
Victor		

Chapter seven: Conclusion

In this final chapter I summarize the major analytic findings of my study and then

discuss the implications for social change. I begin my discussion of social change by

underscoring the basic ways the American dream remains outside the reach of this

study's participants. I suggest policy changes that would address the blatant

discrepancies between the dream's promises and the lives of working class people. I

then consider social movements as an avenue of change, pointing out that an

important part of social movement mobilization is to offer a collective identity and

critical consciousness. Given my argument that a critical consciousness is necessary

for social movement activity, I suggest three directions for future research geared at

better understanding the emotional and cognitive processes of consciousness raising.

Even without more research, I suggest two social change strategies that would help

create a more critical consciousness among oppressed people.

Analytic conclusions

This dissertation examines how a group of twenty-eight working class people in

North Carolina, including African Americans, whites and Latino/a immigrants, relate

to the discrepancy between the American dream's promises and their own

circumstances. The American dream ideology encompasses deeply held ideas about

opportunity, meritocracy and individualism. It promises that anyone with enough

will, talent and virtue may pursue and reasonably anticipate success (Hochschild

1995).

As working class people, as women, and/or as people of color, the participants in this study consistently encounter circumstances that compromise the promises and premises of the American dream. For instance, some participants struggled simply to make ends meet. Furthermore, nearly all the participants describe opportunities as limited. Some have to work two or three jobs in order to get by, many are stuck in dead-end jobs, and others have been passed over for long hoped for promotions. In addition, many participants have experienced prejudice or discrimination in their workplaces and neighborhoods. For the most part, the participants' lives bear little resemblance to those glorified in familiar "rags to riches" stories offered as evidence supporting the dream ideology.

My analysis focuses on how the participants make sense of their lives and how they cope with their circumstances in light of the profound discrepancy between the dream and their reality. My first conclusion is that participants respond to their circumstances with inward and outward looking emotion management. With their inward looking emotion management strategy, participants cope by developing a "grin and bear it" stance regarding challenges and a lack of opportunity. One way participants manage their emotions to this effect is by shifting their attitude in order to shut off or dull the impact of an unpleasant feeling. Another is using "I can do it" pep-talks to muster up a general willingness or readiness to deal with whatever comes their way. I suggest that participants' practical survival needs drive their "grin and bear it" emotion management.

With their outward looking emotion management participants cope by venting frustration. They "other" fellow working class people, pointing their fingers at others who apparently fail to abide by the meritocratic principles of the dream. Recent immigrants make especially easy targets for long-term residents. Two specific rule-breaking complaints surface: the slacker, who feels entitled to something for nothing and the recipient of preferential treatment, who presumably gets something for nothing. While the practical needs of the participants underlie their "grin and bear it" emotion management, I suggest that it is also their emotional and cognitive needs that underlie this second form other emotion management. Participants long to believe in the dream's logic. They want to believe that a just world, one that operates according to the equity principle, can exist. Their outward looking emotion management allows them to cling to this belief.

My second conclusion is that underlying participants' emotion management is ambivalence toward the American dream ideology. They neither wholeheartedly buy into the dream, nor do they actively criticize the ideology. I find that despite the participants' exposure of the dream's failed promises, their emotion management is bound up in the logic of the dream. Their emotion management represents a response to the dream, it takes place within the dream's logic, and, in the end, reinforces the dream.

In one respect, participants suggest that opportunities are limited and that hard work does not guarantee getting by, much less mobility. Yet, in another, with their inward-

looking emotion management strategies participants hold themselves accountable to the dream's individualistic notion that they must pull themselves up by their bootstraps. Similarly, with their outward looking emotion management, participants implicitly refer to the dream's flaws while simultaneously clinging to the logic of the dream. Even as they complain that others are getting something for nothing, they stand by their conviction that a meritocracy can and should exist. With their outward looking emotion management, they project their frustration onto the apparent rule-breakers and avoid questioning the rules themselves. I suggest that participants intuitively know to avoid an explicit questioning of the ideology that shapes their world as this could lead to what Durkheim (1947) calls demoralization.

My third conclusion is that participants' emotion management has both helpful and hurtful implications. Their inward looking emotion management helps participants press on, as they know they must. It also allows them to feel good about themselves; for instance some seem to take pride in their present and presumed future ability to withstand their circumstances and hold doubt at bay. However, to the extent that participants gain satisfaction from their emotion work, I suggest that it's a repressive satisfaction, one that ultimately perpetuates their oppressive conditions by, for instance, facilitating the ease with which participants may be manipulated and/or exploited in the workplace. Participants' outward looking emotion management strategy enables them to buoy themselves up as they lash out against others. However, I argue that this short-term gain of othering is outweighed by the long-term costs such as perpetuating inter-ethnic hostility and misunderstanding and inhibiting

solidarity among oppressed people. Furthermore, as participants project frustration onto so-called rule breakers, their power-evasive emotion work deflects attention away from the ideology itself, the economic system from which it derives, and the elite agents of this system.

My fourth conclusion concerns the luring and tenacious nature of the American dream ideology. My analysis reveals that even though the content of their talk plainly reveals the dream's failed promises, the dream continues to provide a nearly all-encompassing framework for the participants. Even those participants on the verge of criticizing the dream resist making the leap into unknown emotional and cognitive territory. They opt to tweak the dream's rules or logic, rather than letting go of the dream's logic altogether. My research suggests that the short-term rewards gained by emotion management and the disorienting and demoralizing cost of doubting the dream lure participants back to the dream's rhetoric if and when they begin to stray. My study also suggests that participants lack the tools with which to imagine and develop an alternative framework. It's therefore important to think about how participants might develop the critical consciousness and courage that would enable them to understand, cope with, and respond to their situation in ways that strategically promote their own long term interests.

Implications for future research and activism

In this final section, I cover five topics as I address the social change implications of my study. First, I refer to the types of struggle characteristic of working class lives

and suggest policy changes. Second, I discuss the potential for social movements as one avenue of change. Third, I consider the implications of this study and others regarding the process of consciousness raising and its essential role in social movement activity. Fourth, I make several suggestions regarding the direction of future research aimed at better understanding the emotional and cognitive bases of consciousness raising. Fifth, I present two specific social change agendas that are geared toward raising the consciousness of oppressed people.

Struggling to make ends meet

My findings point to specific obstacles working class people face in their struggle to make ends meet. As I summarize these obstacles, I suggest changes that would diminish the discrepancy between the American dream's promises and their life circumstances, making emotion management less imperative.

Balancing paid work and family responsibilities

First, many of the participants in this study struggle to balance their paid work and unpaid family responsibilities. I recommend a restructuring of work and family life, along the lines of that proposed by Williams (2000), one that would benefit poor, working class and professional employees. Williams argues that we must eliminate from the marketplace the ideal-worker norm, which is based on the idea that workers devote their lives to work and have no family responsibilities. As Acker (1990) also points out, this disembodied and androcentric view of workers tends to disadvantage women as well as men who co-parent or who are single parents. The ideal-worker

172

norm hinders the development of numerous family-friendly restructuring possibilities

including: the provision of quality, affordable childcare; paid leave opportunities;

well structured schools; tax allowances for children; and a more rigid enactment of

stiffer child support policies (see e.g., Hochschild 1997). The corporate world's

response to work-family needs has been limited (Hochschild 1997; Reskin and

Padavic 1994). Given the slow response on the part of corporations and the

government,[1] Williams (2000) argues that child rights advocates and labor unions

must be brought into this considerable battle to restructure work to meet family needs.

Limited rights of workers

Second, many of the participants' struggles are rooted in the absence or limitation of

their basic rights as workers, such as the right to a safe working environment and the

right to organize for better conditions and higher pay. Working class employment

tends to involve repetitive work that alienates workers from the product of their labor

and allows them little control over the process. The setting of such employment is

often unpleasant—either too warm or too cold, and often loud, and dirty. The

conditions of unskilled or semi-skilled labor often involve the risk of repetitive

motion injuries, pesticide poisoning, and exposure to other dangerous chemicals such

as carcinogenic dyes. Exacerbating these health hazards is the reality that many

working class jobs don't include health insurance benefits. I would recommend a

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[1] The government's slow response reflects not only the public's unwillingness to make demands (Reskin and Padavic 1994), but also the legislatives ideas available to lawmakers, most of which fail to challenge the traditional separation of work and family (or formally address the gendered division of household labor), even when they ostensibly challenge barriers to women's opportunities in the public sphere (Burnstein et al.1995).

series of changes as outlined in *The Common Sense Foundation's Report on the State of the Worker in North Carolina* (2000). Among the report's recommendations are: raising the minimum wage from $5.15 to $8.50 to compensate for inflation and allow working people to get out of poverty; repealing the Right to Work law, which undermines the power of labor to organize for better pay and working conditions; allowing collective bargaining among public employees; and, establishing ergonomics standards to reduce the number of long term injuries, the costs of workers compensation claims and lost productivity.

Unfair international trade laws

Third, this study suggests that local and immigrant workers alike are disadvantaged by international trade laws and policies, which guide, or at least encourage the transnational flow of labor and capital. For instance, local textile workers in both research sites experienced first hand or witnessed economic dislocation resulting from the shutting down of US plants. Furthermore, many of the immigrant workers send money to their families in Mexico or Central America each month. Their family obligations as well as their fearful and uncertain position as undocumented workers make them especially vulnerable, easily exploitable employees. Industry leaders would be less able to exploit workers if the US government granted amnesty to economic refugees, including those people who immigrate 'illegally' to this country looking for a way to support themselves and their families. As is, international trade policy ensures a pool of vulnerable workers both within and outside the United States. Bacon (1996) presents an immigration policy based on human rights. He

recommends, among other things, the elimination of the legal distinction between undocumented and legal aliens, a distinction that he argues harms both immigrants as well as the US economy.

Race and gender discrimination

Fourth, the participants in this study, both the workers and sometimes the human resource personnel as well, spoke plainly about the existence of race- and gender-based hierarchies within their workplace. Tomaskovic-Devey's (1993) research on gender and racial occupational inequalities in North Carolina reveals that employers practice statistical discrimination, channeling blacks into jobs with lower educational credential requirements and lower training costs. He finds that discrimination and racism persist in the organization of the labor process, as well. For instance, compared to white employees, black employees more often end up in lower skilled jobs that are more routine and tightly controlled, and that have less complexity and authority. Just as some of the human resource personnel in this study revealed their preference for immigrant workers, statistical discrimination in hiring practices has been documented elsewhere (e.g., Kirshenman and Neckerman 1991, 1994). Such practices are often found to be rooted in racist images, such as the perception that potential black male employees are uneducated, scary, irresponsible or lazy (Moss and Tilly 1995) or the perception that black women are typically single mothers, whose family demands interfere with their job performance (Brown and Kennelly 1997). I would underscore the need for eliminating the various and dynamic forms of discrimination in the market place.

In summary, these changes—restructuring work to meet family needs, improving workers' basic rights, restructuring international trade policies to improve the conditions of labor inside and outside the US and redressing discrimination practices-would help undo the most obvious contradictions of the American dream ideology, making the dream's promise more accessible to working class people.

Social movements as an avenue for change

These policy recommendations are admittedly tall orders, which beg questions regarding whether and how such changes might be possible. These questions are even more important to ask in light of the fact that, as my study has shown, current practices of domination are self-perpetuating. Elites have little interest in changing their practices and little need to do so, thanks, in part, to the widely cherished American dream ideology that upholds the status quo. My study suggests that the emotional lure and logic of the ideology captivate even people who have a great deal to gain by questioning and challenging the ideology, the political economic system it supports, as well as the practices of the elite agents of this system. More specifically, I have shown that the participants in my study draw upon the rhetoric of the American dream ideology in their efforts to cope strategically with the challenges entailed in leading lives outside the promises of the dream. Their strategies include shifting their way of seeing so things don't look so bad; such shifting allows them to press on as they know they must and to displace their frustration onto other subordinated people.

These seemingly contradictory practices have been observed in diverse contexts. Whereas I've explored how working class people, in effect, perpetuate their class oppression, other research has elaborated the processes through which women internalize sexism (e.g., Bartky 1990), people of color struggle with internalized racism (e.g., hooks 1993) and internalized homophobia plagues gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people (e.g., Allen and Oleson 1999).

Consistent with my findings, other research has revealed how people invent methods to not see something that's painful or disturbing in addition to methods of venting and displacing frustration, often with the similar effect of reinforcing the very situation that calls for coping mechanisms in the first place. An interesting example comes from Hochschild's (1989) analysis of how married couples deal with (or deny) the problem of women's time and energy consuming "second shift." Over the time that Hochschild observed the Holt family, she watched as the tension surrounding the couple's conflicting gender ideology and their related ideas about how housework should be divided escalated to the point of threatening their marriage. Hochschild documents the process through which the couple invented a family myth that offered a 'solution' to this tension. This myth was based on the idea that by dividing the housework chores along the lines of the upstairs and downstairs, they negotiated a fair division of labor. She refers to this strategy as a family myth because it was only fair given the distorted way they defined what counted as equitable contributions to household work; the "downstairs" included only the basement and none of the daily housework responsibilities. Hochschild suggests that on Nancy's part, the myth

could only be sustained with considerable emotion work. She suggests that in order to believe the myth Nancy had to avoid all the mental associations that reminded her of the inconsistency between her deeply held beliefs about fairness and their mythical arrangement. Hocschild suggests that this avoidance was not just a matter of denial but of "intuitive genius." Another strategy employed by Nancy was the "rezoning" of anger-inducing territory; she made this territory smaller, and also managed her anger by devising other ways to think about the things that angered her.

That denial and venting may be generic coping mechanisms makes it difficult to imagine how change might happen. However, this social pattern also points to the malleable nature of human consciousness. People routinely and creatively invent alternative ways to see, evaluate, relate emotionally and respond to their circumstances. Without this aspect of human behavior social movements would be useless.

A large body of research supports the idea that social movements can be an effective avenue for social groups excluded by the dominant power structure to effect change (e.g., Giugni, McAdam and Tilly 1999). Taylor (2000:220) argues that social movements, defined as "forms of collective action where solidarity is employed with some temporal continuity to transgress, challenge, or defend the values, institutions and structures of society," are a driving force for change in complex societies. She outlines a hopeful vision of a "social movement society," one in which social protest would be routine, social movement networks would serve as sources of community,

meaning and identity, and social movements would foster multi-cultural citizenship.

Taylor argues, in fact, that a social movement society is already upon us in the United

States, where social movements have existed for two hundred years and where the

sites for collective action have widely expanded in recent decades beyond the state to

schools, families, workplaces and religious institutions. In addition to describing the

ideal society, Taylor summarizes the conditions that promote social movement

success. Drawing on a wide body of research, she succinctly explains "how to

mobilize a social movement." First, she suggests that a group must be able to identify

and translate dynamic cultural, economic and political conditions and events into

protest opportunities. For instance, a group might capitalize on the availability of a

master protest frame, such as civil rights, or seize the moment after a turnover in an

organization's or a town, city or state's leadership, or build alliances with an

unanticipated ally. Second, Taylor argues that successful social movements are

founded upon indigenous networks—preexisting groups of people who already

communicate on a daily basis, have close emotional ties and share cultural values and

practices. A third condition of successful movements depends on their ability to

mobilize around a collective identity that derives from members' common interests

and solidarity.

Critical consciousness as a foundation for social organizing

What Taylor doesn't explicitly address is how collective identity and critical

consciousness emerge. Other researchers have explored the paths to consciousness,

emphasizing the range of experiences associated with a raised consciousness (e.g.,

Chow 1987; Cook 1989; Gurin 1985; Katzenstein 1987; Klein 1984). Only a few of the participants in this study have been involved with community organizing efforts, despite the presence of activist groups and coalitions such as Black Workers for Justice in Duplin County and the Piedmont Peace Project in Cabarrus County. Like many oppressed people, most of the participants are not organizing for change. This may reflect poor outreach efforts on the part of the research sites' activist organizations and/or their failure to offer an agenda that is meaningful to a broad range of people. My study reminds us to pay careful attention to the processes that can, under certain circumstances, discourage the transformation of consciousness among oppressed people. My findings imply that not only does the emotional gain that people derive from such coping strategies as attitude shifting and venting impede possible shifts in consciousness, but so do the emotional and cognitive costs of abandoning such strategies. These findings underscore the need to better understand the interplay between emotions and cognition, especially as this interplay allows people to invent what seem to be politically disempowering ways to see and relate to their circumstances. An important question, to ask is then, can people reshape their consciousness in a way that allows them to recognize the contradictory, sometimes self-destructive results of their coping mechanisms. We might also ask, what kinds of information and experiences are necessary to reduce the emotional and cognitive costs of doubt as well as the emotional appeal of the dream? With these questions in mind, I close with a consideration of directions for future research as well as avenues for social change.

Directions for future research

I have three suggestions for future research. First, I suggest that social theorists examining the processes through which capitalist social structures are reproduced should address the emotional as well as cognitive processes fundamental to legitimation processes. Della Fave (1980, 1986), for example, argues that the legitimation of our capitalist political economy hinges on the cognitive process of self-evaluation. In his theory, people are impressed by those who occupy the highest positions within the stratification system, that is, those who have the most wealth and power. People rely on the equity principle to transform their ideas about differential impressiveness into differential deservingness. Della Fave argues that people lack the necessary, objective information with which to assess people's contributions and thereby assess whether their power and wealth are appropriately deserved. People therefore make assumptions regarding people's contributions to ensure a consistency between what level of power and wealth they see themselves and others having and what level they believe is deserved. Della Fave shows that given these processes the poor and powerless see their disadvantages as justified. It would be interesting to explore, for instance, how emotions play into the cognitive processes that are central to Della Fave's theory of self-evaluation. For instance, what emotional needs shape people's need or desire for consistency?[2]

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[2] Other emotions might come into play in the evaluation of people who are richer and more powerful than oneself, such as envy, jealousy and shame. These emotions might influence legitimation processes beyond those that are central to Della Fave's theory.

Second, I suggest that researchers should examine the conditions under which

emotion management is disrupted. Some studies that address contradictory and/or

self-destructive emotion management have explored the processes by which people

come to see their ideas and situations in a new light. For instance, Kleinman's (1996)

ethnography about an alternative health organization demonstrates the conditions

under which women staff members woke up to the inequalities within their

interactions with the male practitioners and within the organization in general.

Kleinman traces their path toward disillusionment, which included the women's

growing awareness of being unappreciated, their diminishing sense that the

organization provided a sense of community, their increasing distrust of the male

practitioners and the increasing presence of conflict among the staff members. These

conditions influenced women's decisions to leave the organization. Goetting's (1999)

work looks at the conditions, such as women's low self-esteem, fear of abandonment

and financial dependence, that influence women's 'choices' to stay in abusive

partnerships with men. She also explores the emotional resources (e.g., self-esteem

courses) and cognitive resources (e.g., more education on domestic abuse) upon

which the women drew in eventually leaving their oppressive partners and situations.

More research in this vein that focuses on process would lead to a better

understanding of the emotional and cognitive paths to a 'raised' consciousness and

the possibility of change.

Third, I suggest that researchers continue to study the emotional and cognitive

barriers to a transformation in consciousness. Massey (2002) presents an interesting

history of the emotional development of humans and a convincing argument as to why sociologists need to pay more attention to emotions. He draws on research in neuroscience and psychology to show that emotional cognition precedes rational cognition in evolutionary time and in real time. According to Massey (2002:20-21), "emotionality remains a strong and independent force in human affairs, influencing perceptions, coloring memories, binding people together through attraction, keeping them apart through hatred, and regulating their behavior through guilt, shame and pride. By failing to theorize emotion and by ignoring interactions between rational and emotional cognition, sociologists derive an incomplete and misleading view of human social behavior."

As a specific suggestion for future research that takes into account Massey's argument, I propose an ethnography[3] of workplace breakrooms. The idea would be to observe groups of people with shared interests and experiences that could, but have not yet become mobilized. Such a setting would allow a researcher to observe bonding, venting, rationalizing and other emotion management strategies as they happen in interaction. An observational study would allow a researcher to gain insight into the coping practices that may be invisible, or at least unremarkable to workers—

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[3] As Katz (1999) argues, there are limitations in studying emotions by analyzing how people talk about them, given that "even if they commonly occur in the course of speaking, they are not talk, not even just forms of expression" (Katz 1999:4). I suggest an ethnographic approach with observation and interview methods.

ones to which they would be unlikely to refer during an interview. It would be especially helpful if the researcher were given permission to videotape, allowing her or him to carefully study interactional dynamics that at first escaped their attention. As far as studying the interaction between emotional and rational cognition, the researcher could observe, for instance, whether and how upon sharing a work-related experience, a worker provokes an emotional response in her co-worker, such as laughter, anger or embarrassment. How does this interaction create or dissipate a bond between the workers? How do the co-worker's responses shape what the experience now means, what their co-worker relationship means, and how the story-teller will feel or think about the experience when she or he returns to the job? The important goal, again, would be to better understand how emotion management happens, what is gained by emotion management and what is at stake or what risks would disengaging from emotion work practices entail. Another advantage to this observational approach is that it could reveal that some form of resistance is already happening. Although coping may be understood as antithetical to resisting, Taylor's (1996) research on women's self-help groups is a useful reminder that resistance takes many forms.

Avenues for consciousness raising and social change

I propose two avenues for social change aimed at transforming consciousness, both of which recognize that for oppressed people and all people there are emotional and cognitive risks involved in letting go of one's worldview.

Democratic pedagogy

One strategy for raising consciousness about the flawed logic and unrealistic promises of the American dream is to promote education that provides adults and young people alike with critical thinking tools. As one way to demystify the dream, I am a strong proponent of democratic pedagogy "aimed at creating critical citizens who can analyze the social contradictions that constitute everyday life within capitalist democracy and at transforming relations of exploitation and oppression" (Fischman and McLaren 2000:168). The ideas and example of the Brazilian educational philosopher and pragmatist, Paulo Freire, are at the heart of this pedagogical model. Freire's efforts began in the context of Brazilian government sponsored literacy campaigns, where he navigated the challenge of motivating peasant learners to read and write by developing a dialogue-based teaching methodology. Freire's literacy campaigns were aimed at teaching adults to read and write, while also teaching them how to "read the world;" in other words, they become politically literate with a new way of knowing and naming reality in the ever-evolving process of "conscientization."[4]

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[4] Freire's emphasis on the liberating effects of a dialogue and critical consciousness speak to Habermas' (1985) assumption that human freedom requires a critical examination of the legitimacy of the values guiding actions. Collins (1998:118) explains, "the way out of oppression and domination probably requires much more than education to overthrow the hold elites have on power, but for Freire the only *educational* means for such a dramatic step is a pedagogy of the oppressed." I agree that critical pedagogy is but one step in the project of dismantling oppressive forms of social organization. I find Lamont's (2000) cultural materialist framework useful in teasing out the various factors that shape the structured context in which people live, and which must be part of any social change agenda. He suggests that people's lives are shaped by: 1) the relative availability of cultural resources, such as the narratives made available by historical, religious and national traditions, as well as those made available by intellectuals the mass media and the education system; 2) structural conditions such as the market position of workers; and 3) general society features such as the size of the welfare state and the level of social and geographic mobility.

Three interrelated components of Freire's model are worth elaborating. First, in

Freire's framework, the educational setting is organized in a democratic and non-

hierarchical way. Both students and teachers are learners, unlike the conventional

framework in which teachers decide, talk, act and know, while students remain

passive and simply "bank" knowledge transferred to them as though it were a "gift"

(see e.g., Freire 1970, 1993). Second, the content of instruction derives from students'

realities and reflects students' needs and interests. Teachers draw out clues as to what

is important in the students' lives and provide concrete information as a basis for

critical analysis of the students' social realities. Third, the process is fundamentally

rooted in dialogue. It is through dialogue (student to student and student to teacher

dialogue) that students develop critical investigative tools,[5] a new way of

understanding their lives, as well as a new language with which to talk and write

about their lives. This model assumes that a critical consciousness cannot be

generated from the imposition of ideas. Even the themes of any given lesson cannot

be predetermined or imposed; rather then are "generated" through creative, self-

evolving, and non-standardized dialogue (Shor 1992).

According to Shor (1992) successful critical dialogue creates new student-teacher

relationships and modes of communicating. He suggests that the process of dialogue

results in the development of a new language, what he calls a

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[5] As Freire puts it, "For dialogue to be a method of true knowledge, the knowing subjects *must approach reality scientifically* in order to seek the dialectical connections which explain the form of reality' (my emphasis, Freire 1970, quoted in Morrow and Torres 2002:118).

third idiom… that is different from the two conflicting ones brought to the class by students and teachers… it is simultaneously concrete and conceptual, academic and conversational, critical and accessible…. The dialogic process overcomes [student and teachers'] noncommunication…. [Students'] everyday language assumes a critical quality while teacherly language assumes concreteness (Shor 1992:255).

The process of dialogue often begins with the posing of a problem, a method that considers all topics as subject matter to be questioned. For example, such questions as "what is a living wage?" or "what rules operate at work?" might be posed. The ongoing process involves reflection, dialogue, the posing of a revised or an altogether new question, investigation of relevant reading material, again the posing of a question, and finally the discussion of action strategies. According to Morrow and Torres, the method is "*generative* (but not deterministic) in that it builds on the logic of possibilities implicit in the generative themes of everyday experience. This open-ended, processual model is oriented toward learning to *produce* knowledge. Such competence training is dramatically different from the imposition of content in behavioral models of education and propaganda (2002:225, emphasis in original).

Freire's work spans twenty-five years and includes dialogue about educational praxis related to not only to the development of literacy among peasants, but also to the education of urban poor in the so-called Third World, the higher education of depressed youth in New York City, labor union organization and student freedom (Collins 1998). Community organizers in the United States have successfully adopted these democratic pedagogical tools. Project South is an organization of scholars and

activists devoted to humanistic social change through the training of popular

educators and conducting of popular education workshops. They assume that

"education is an integral and critical part of building a movement that develops our

consciousness, our vision, and a winning strategy for a new global society"

(Illenberger and Wallach 1998:5). Their popular education method utilizes three

tools. First, they use a myth quiz, which "challenges our knowledge of issues that

affect us everyday … [and which] helps us confront the stereotypes and

misconceptions that cloud our ability to address core problems in society" (1998:20).

Second, their approach uses timelines as "an interactive way to learn history that

integrates people's lived experiences with the significant events and trends that shape

current issues. [The timeline is used] with an eye toward learning about ourselves, our

society, and a grassroots perspective on issues that call for action" (1998:24). Third,

Project South's popular education model uses critical questions that are "designed to

provoke thought and analysis…. The act of questioning is a search for meaning and

understanding of how we as individuals and members of communities fit into larger

social and political contexts.… [Questioning] provides the building blocks for

creating effective strategies for future action" (1998:31).

What Project South popular education workshops offer is a space in which

participants may grapple freely with their familiar and deeply entrenched ideas as

well as new ones- some that are inevitably disturbing or disorienting and others that

are inspiring. It is crucial that such a space be autonomous from such people as

supervisors and managers, who might inhibit the development of critical thinking and

action and who might punish resistance by isolating, demoting or even firing 'defiant' workers. Also essential is the opportunity for dialogue among oppressed people within an autonomous space. Dialogue can lead to the discovery of shared ideas. In his study of how construction workers respond to and cope with inequalities and alienation, Robinson (2001) found that some workers didn't believe inequalities to be legitimate, but they assumed that most other workers did believe in their legitimacy. When it comes to his knowledge of inequality, one worker says you "grit your teeth and bear it" (Robinson 2001:67). This worker then added that he'd never had the opportunity to discuss such ideas, having assumed they weren't appropriate for normal conversation. Such assumptions impede individual and collective action.

Dialogue among oppressed can also provide grounds for identifying conflicting sets of ideas and identifying new ideas. Ideally, as in Project South's organizing model, dialogue is established among diverse groups. Such an opportunity among this study's participants could help dispel misunderstandings—such as the idea, popular among North Carolinians, that immigrants receive special treatment. Dialogue between whites, blacks and Latino/as could also enable them to recognize such common interests as the need for a living wage and health insurance. It could provide the comforting knowledge that they're not alone and could help participants build alliances and strategic action plans.

Other research underscores the importance of autonomy as well as dialogue and collective understanding among oppressed people in fostering social change efforts.

189

For instance, Frederickson (1982) analyzes the unprecedented success of organizing

efforts within the Southern textile industry coinciding with the entry into the mills of

black workers. Only in the 1960's when black workers were no longer excluded from

the textile industry did labor organizers begin to make gains within an industry where

the nature of work inhibited solidarity. Frederickson suggests that blacks' widespread

support for labor unions in part reflected their experiences in churches and

educational associations, which provided them with a collective framework outside

the domination of white elites for solving problems facing the black community.

Rollins' (1984) study of black domestics also points to a need for collective resistance

and action. Her study suggests that oppressed people may carve out an autonomous

space within their own mind for resistance. Some of the domestic women in her study

developed "ressentiment" toward their white women employers, which "attests to

their lack of belief in their own inferiority, their sense of injustice about their

treatment and position, and their rejection of the legitimacy of their subordination"

(Rollins 1984:231). Although domestics' ways of coping with degrading treatment,

such as refusing to identify with their employers, protected the black women from

psychological damage, Rollins suggests that their strategies were not effective in

changing the employers' behavior.

While it is important for young people especially to develop a critical consciousness,

we might ask with reasonable skepticism whether democratic pedagogical methods

stand a chance within the United States public education system. There are several

obvious and enormous obstacles. First, the US public education system is, in general,

190

geared not toward students' critical understanding of their own world, but instead

toward the state's mandated test material. Furthermore, our system is driven not by an

interest in liberation but increasingly by corporate interests (Fischman and McLaren

2000). Finally, the radical nature of the consciousness raising to which Freire's model

is geared poses a problem for its popularity. Applied to the theme of the American

dream, the process of conscientization would expose the flawed workings of the

American dream. Students might also become aware that even in a so-called ideal

world where opportunities abound and equity prevails, inequalities and human

domination remain. They might realize that only when distribution rules are

restructured according to the principle of equality, as opposed to equity, can human

freedom become a possibility.[6]

Despite these obstacles, there is some movement toward teacher training that is

grounded in critical pedagogical models (see, e.g., Shor 1992). There are powerful

tools that teachers can easily employ without risking their jobs, despite their

accountability to state standards: "Empowered teachers acquire the skills of

researchers, and, in turn, teach their students sophisticated methods of inquiry.

Students are taught to use research-driven powers of analysis: observing,

interviewing, photographing, videotaping, note taking, and collecting life histories. In

doing so, students not only 'polish the traditional skills' that are valued in the

curriculum… but they also learn 'to uncover the forces that shape their everyday

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[6] Hochschild (1981) makes this distinction between equity and equality-based rules of distribution. Della Fave (e.g., 1986) assumes that the delegimation of capitalism as we know it requires an equality-based understanding of social organization.

lives: their place in the social hierarchy of their peer groups, their romantic

relationships, their vocational aspirations, their relationships with teachers"

(Kincheloe, Slattery, and Steinberg 2000:259).[7]

To reiterate, Freirean inspired democratic pedagogy is based on: dialogue, which

ensures and enriches connections between people; participatory curricula, which

generate a positive relationship between feeling and thought;[8] and an explicit goal of

conscientization. As such, these methods could very well appeal to oppressed people

who are poised to critique but lack the language, a non-threatening social space

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[7] Duke University's Center for Documentary Studies has several programs that provide young people with such tools of inquiry skill. Youth explore and document their own and other people's experiences with photography, writing and interviewing. The 'mission' of these programs, such as the Literacy Through Photography program, which collaborates with Durham elementary and middle schools, reflects the Freirean principle of using students' lives as the source of pedagogical content.

[8] Researchers have shown how emotions can influence or interfere with cognitive processes, often in ways that disadvantage certain groups within conventional learning environments. For instance, emotions can affect what is learned, how something is learned and how well it's learned (Sadker and Sadker 1986). Emotions can affect one's sense of what one knows (Luttrell 1997). Emotional displays can be mistaken for cognitive skills and competence (Ferguson 2001). One of the key proponents and practioners of Freire's pedagogy, Ira Shor, argues that students' desire for self-esteem is one resource on which teachers may draw in facilitating empowering education. He explains that " students want to be liked and respected by other students and by the teacher; they seek self-esteem but have not developed much of it in the classroom; they also seek self-esteem in the jobs they take, where they are underpaid and underappreciated; they want to be listened to and consulted; few authorities ask them what they think and what they want, so the dialogic class can be a refreshing chance to feel that their lives, thoughts, and words matter; to encourage their self-esteem, I listen carefully to what they say and take notes in class from their comments; I ask them to repeat their statements and to read their papers aloud, so that … other students can focus on the words of a peer as serious material for discussion; I also start a class hour with some reference to what students said before in the last one, to reinforce the importance of their words; I use their themes as problems for dialogue, to indicate the value of their perceptions and lives; I invite them to suggest themes and to bring in reading material, so that they help construct the curriculum" (Shor 1992:225).

and/or the emotional resources with which to leap into a new kind of understanding or consciousness about their world.

Rethinking history

Freire has described his work as a pedagogy of hope (Freire 1994). In addition to the cognitive tools that critical pedagogy offers, what is needed is a reason to believe that the difficult work of questioning and resisting the dominant paradigm is worth it. I would like to end by proposing one other strategy for providing a source of inspiration. I suggest that we teach history differently so that resistance struggles are moved from the margin to the center of study.

Revamping the way we teach and understand history could have far reaching effects on the consciousness of people who are poised to be critical, but who lack the language or momentum that would help transform their critical thoughts into action. With a different, fuller and more complex understanding of history, resistance would seem sensible, worthwhile, commonplace, and even preferable. A richer understanding of resistance would provide inspiration and hope that might counterbalance or even outweigh the fear associated with the emotional costs of doubt.

This strategy could be particularly effective if this new orientation to teaching history begins in classes for young people. I offer a teacher with whom I work as a model: she has designed her fourth and fifth grade curriculum around the theme of revolution, building on, or rather creatively adapting, the schoolwide (post-September

11th) theme of harmony. Throughout the year her students study such social

movements as the abolitionist, civil rights, populist, suffrage, and environmental

movements and their interconnections. It is also important for young people to

investigate (using documentary tools, for instance) contemporary social reality,

especially as it relates to past and ongoing social movements.

History lessons on resistance should also draw attention to the radical elements of any

social movement struggle. For instance, the struggles of socialist or radical feminists

who have sought change that would dismantle rather than improve existing social

arrangements.

Instructors could use documentary work as a tool for teaching history. Oral history,

film and video, as well as photography, are media that have the potential to move the

viewer/learner in a way that standard history textbooks cannot. An example is the

compelling visual imagery in the documentary film *Amandla! Revolution in Four

Part Harmony*, which deals with the history of struggle against apartheid in South

Africa as told through the freedom songs that often included the chant, "Amandla,"

meaning "power." To me, what is most striking about this film isn't hearing the

powerful and beautiful songs, but seeing image upon image of resistance, including

many scenes with thousands of protesters running through the streets. These images

were completely unfamiliar to me. The film reminded me of the general absence of

potent images of struggle and resistance within our culture and the devastating

implication that comes hand in hand with this absence—the implication that

oppressed people have always passively accepted their lot. As scholars of race and representation have made clear, images—both their absence and their hegemony—powerfully affect people's consciousness (see e.g., hooks 1992; Willis 1996). I am proposing that visual documentaries can provide inspiration in that they expand people's symbolic repertoire, allowing images of resistance to remain at the forefront of people's memory and consciousness.

Taking into account the power of visual imagery, I would also suggest that social activists interested in mobilizing oppressed people should fight for the inclusion of contemporary resistance stories within the mainstream media. Glassner (1999) presents a thought-provoking argument regarding the media's role in producing a culture of fear in the United States. He provides a useful illustration of the social construction of fears as he maintains that Americans' fears are manipulated because "immense power and money await those who tap into our moral insecurities and supply us with symbolic substitutes" (Glassner 1999:xxvii). Glassner draws attention to the vendors of our fears and their marketing strategies. He argues that just as news media are among those most responsible for generating and sustaining irrational fears, they're also the most promising candidates for positive change. An accurate portrayal of current forms of resistance is essential to making resistance seem sensible, and building a society in which protest would be even more routine.

What is most troubling about the American dream ideology is the failure of the dream to deliver its promises to so many of its whole- or-half-hearted believers. Given the

near impossibility that the powers that be will revamp the flawed system without pressure, it is important to understand and examine the ways that oppressed people (who have so much to gain from radical change) uphold and perpetuate the ideology. While it should not necessarily be the responsibility of oppressed people to change the flaws in the workings of the American dream ideology, it is unlikely that their lives will change without their active participation in the process. Future research should explore the conditions that could disrupt and diminish the emotional lure of the dream ideology, while activists should expand and revise their mobilization tactics using, for example, popular education tools, to transform the consciousness of oppressed people.

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Appendix: Participant interview guide

[Note: Some interviews will not easily follow the planned questions that follow. Rather, they will be more like free-flowing conversations. In interviews of that variety, the interviewer needs to keep track of topics that are covered and ask questions only about topics that do not come up by themselves. We plan to create a check list of important topics the interviewer can use to keep track during free-flowing interviews.]

[Note to interviewer: Here are some of the useful general probes you might use to elicit fuller responses:

Can you give me an **example** of that?
How can you tell?
What do you mean by that?
Can you be a bit more **specific**?
What would you say **in general**?
Is that different than it was before?
How do you **feel** about that?
What do **you** think?]

I'd like to begin our conversation with some questions about your neighborhood.

1. Would you tell me a bit about your neighborhood?

2. How did you come to live in Logan/Rose Hill-Magnolia?
    What was most important to you in looking for a place to live?
    Was it easy or hard to find somewhere like that?
    How did you find your place?
    Did you know people who live here before you came? (If yes,) Where did you know them from?

3. Is it getting harder or easier to find housing you can afford?
    Do you think that [certain groups] have an easier time finding a place to live?
    Why?

4. During the last few years, have you moved to a new home that you thought was better than the one you were leaving? (If not, do you know anyone who has?)
    In what way was it better?
    Do you know anything about the person who replaced you in your old home?
    Please tell me about this person?

5. During the last few years, have you moved out of a home that you were not ready to leave? (If not, do you know anyone who has?)

What did you do then? Did this turn out to be better or worse than your old home?
Do you know anything about the person who replaced you in your old home?
Please tell me about this person?

6.Who else lives with you? What is your residence like? (Listen for type [house, apartment, trailer], number of rooms, how crowded.)

7. How long have you lived I this house (or apartment or trailer)?
In this neighborhood?
In this part of North Carolina?
[for immigrants], in the U.S.?

8. [For Latino/Latina respondents] What was your main reason for coming to live in this area?
Do you think more of your family from where you lived before will join you?
How about your friends?
Do you plan to return home or do you think you will stay around here?

9. Are things better or worse around here than they used to be?
Can you tell me an example of that?

10. How long are you planning to stay here? Do you ever think about moving to another part of town?
Why would you want to move?

11. What sort of changes have you noticed in the neighborhood in the last couple of years?
How do you feel about these changes?

12. What kinds of people live in your neighborhood?

ASK NEXT TWO QUESTIONS ONLY IN INTERVIEW WITH AFRICAN AMERICAN OR WHITE RESPONDENT:
13. When did you first notice Mexicans or other Hispanics moving into the neighborhood?
How could you tell? How do you feel about this?

14. Before Latinos and Latinas began to live around here, what did you think they'd be like?

15. How do different groups get along in your neighborhood?

16. Can you think of a time when you talked with some of your Latino/Latina (African American) neighbors?

What happened?
Where did it take place?
Did anything surprise you?
Is it always like this?

17. Can you tell any difference between your Latino/Latina neighbors and everyone else?
Can you tell me an example of that?
When you say that, are you referring to women or men? Or both?

18. What do you like most/least about having Latino/Latina (for Latino/Latina respondents, African American) neighbors?

19. What do your friends say about your Latino/Latina neighbors? About African American neighbors? About white neighbors?

Now I'd like to ask you a few questions about another topic - the schools.

20. Could you tell me a little bit about the schools around here?

21. Which school(s) do your kids attend? What grades are they in?

22. Have the schools changed much over the last five or so years?
(e.g., number of students, new school buildings, new teachers, prgrams, etc.)
Can you give me an example of that?
When did you first start to notice these changes?

23. What are the good and bad aspects of having more Latino/Latina kids in the schools?
Do you think the schools should change the way things are? How so?
Do you think some of the teachers might agree with you? How can you tell?

24. Do your kids play with the Latino/Latina/African American/white kids at school (ask each group about the other two)?
If so, what kinds of things do they do together?
If not, do they ever mention the Latino/Latina/African American/white kids? What do they say?
Are your children's closest friends black? white? Latino/Latina?
Are there some classmates whom your children don't get along with? How do you know?

25. Before we go on to the next topic, let me ask a general question. What is the most important thing you are trying to accomplish these days?
For Latino/Latina immigrant respondents: Do you think it will be easier to accomplish that here than it would be in your home country?

What is the greatest obstacle to accomplishing that?

Let's end with some questions about your experiences at work.

26. Can you tell me a bit about work around here?

27. Can you please tell me about your present job. What do you do on a typical day? (Probe for some details.)

28. When did you start this job?

29. How did you get this job? (Listen for who recommended, role of personnel office, intermediaries.)

30. What are the good and bad aspects of this job?
    Why? (e.g., pay, security, advancement chances, work intensity, interest, variety, safety, autonomy)

31. What was the job you were doing before this job?
    How about before that?
    In your whole working life, what is the job you've usually done?

32. During the last few years, have you taken a new job that you thought was a better job than the one you were leaving? (If not, do you know anyone who has?)
    In what way was it better?
    Do you know anything about the person who replaced you in your old job?
    Please tell me about this person?

33. During the last few years, have you lost a job that you were not ready to leave? (If not, do you know anyone who has?)
    What did you do then? Did this turn out to be better or worse than your old job?
    Do you know anything about the person who replaced you in your old job?
    Please tell me about this person?

34. Is it getting easier or harder to find decent work now?
    How can you tell?
    Is this true for most workers?
    [If unclear, probe for] What makes work decent in your opinion?

35. What are the most **common** types of work for women around here these days?
    Is this true for women and men? Has this always been the case?
    How about for men? Has this always been the case?

36. What would you say are the **best** jobs in the area for men and women? (If doesn't mention both, probe.)
>	What makes these jobs good?
>	Who does these jobs?
>	How do they get these jobs?
>	Was it always this way? If not, when did you first notice a change?

37. What about the **worst** jobs around here- what are they? (For men and women. Probe if necessary)
>	What makes them bad jobs?
>	Who does these jobs?
>	How do they get these jobs?
>	Was this group always doing these jobs? If not, when did you first notice change?
>	What are the people who used to do the worst jobs doing now?

38. How many people do you work with who are black? white? Latino/Latina?
>	How well do you know the people you work with?
>	What do you like least/most about working with other black folks? white folks? Hispanics?

39. Do you work mostly with men or with women or with about equal numbers of men and women?

40. Are there some folks who you can't seem to get along with?
>	Can you give me an example of this?
>	Can you tell why you don't get along with them?

41. What do the other people you work with say about white/black/Hispanic workers?

42. What about the managers/supervisors- what do they think of white/African American/Hispanic workers?
>	How can you tell?
>	Are there some African American managers around here? Some Latino/Latina managers?
>	Do managers only hire the people they like and trust? Do they only promote these people?

43. We've covered a lot of ground. Is there anything you'd like to add, especially connected with the increasing numbers of Latinos/Latinas?

44. How well do you think Hispanics, African Americans, and whites get along around here?
>	Can you give an example?

37. Thank you very much for your help. We plan to write a report about what we learned and also to have a meeting with people in the community who have participated. Would you like to receive the report and be notified about the meeting? (If yes, ask respondent to mail in card in envelop with name and address and whether want report and notice in English or Spanish.)

Interviewer Observations

Date of interview

Time of interview

Gender of respondent

Race/ethnicity of respondent

Were the sampling criteria met with this respondent?
      lived in Logan/Rose Hill-Magnolia
      had children in school
      currently working
How willing was the respondent to talk/answer your questions?

Was the respondent fearful or reluctant to talk with you?

Which topics (if any) did the respondent seem most interested in?

How well did the respondent appear to understand your questions?

How old would you estimate the respondent to be?

Did you conduct the interview in English, in Spanish, or in a mixture?

If the respondent mentioned their level of education, what was it?

Where did the interview take place?

Was anyone else watching or listening during the interview? If yes, describe.

Other immediate comments about the respondent and interview setting: