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WP 1: Trust and Social Capital (2018)

Trust and Social Capital at Middlebury College:
An Analysis of Community and Isolation

SOAN 342 Spring 2018

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Glossary of terms

Abrasive social labor: the strain that it causes an individual to repeatedly correct or explain their identity to others over time, increasing emotional discomfort due to repetitive mis-identification. This strain is intensified by the fact that those with privileged identities do not have to put in the same work in order to be fully recognized and valued.

Biopower: "focuses on the body as the site of subjugation… [highlighting] how individuals are implicated in their own oppression as they participate in habitual daily practices such as the self-regulation of hygiene, health, and sexuality" (Pylypa 1998: 21). The theory of biopower locates choice and agency as forces outside of the individual, where individual action is a product of societal pressures.

Body work: he management of one's looks and physical wellness, to cultivate the "good body" (Foucault as cited in Pylypa 1998).

Body image fraction: a way to assert a different habitus that deviates from the monolithic "good body." There can be different fractions of bodies along a gradient, from the dominant "good body" to the "deviant body."

Bonding social capital: in-group social connectivity, often based on similarities within a dense network of relationships. Examples at Middlebury include race/ethnic/gender-based clubs and organizations, athletic teams, and friend groups that socialize regularly. Metaphorically, "sociological superglue" that unites people (Putnam 2000:23).

Bridging social capital: between-group social connectivity, often based on shared (but narrowly defined) interest. Examples at Middlebury include public service organizations, academic majors, and all-student picnics. Metaphorically, "sociological WD-40" that facilitates interaction (Putnam 2000:23).

Brokerage: the process of institutions fostering connections between members and to the institution itself, in effect, linking members to other members, to smaller organizations within the institution, and to the resources of both.

Class: in much of this report, we follow Max Weber's interpretive approach to economic stratification, according to which 'class' is only an analytical concept, not an experiential reality. Social actors experience difference in status groups based on meanings and ideas (such as prestige and categories), not simply economic identities.

Coping strategies: in this report, ways that minority students deflect the emotional costs of the social work of educating white students about social difference. Humor is a particularly

common strategy.

Cultural capital: the skills, knowledge, and forms of status legitimization and display, ranging from clothing styles to academic credentials. Social actors at Middlebury convert economic capital into the cultural capital by (for example) buying Canada Goose jackets and displaying ski pass tags on them.

Dialectic: a "constantly changing reality with a material basis" (Dictionary.com 2018). In this report, the term refers to the way that material conditions, such as the physical experience of being in a dining hall, interact with mental phenomena, such as ideas about group identities and values, co-produce one another through social action.

Displaced identity attribution: the treatment of various social identities as monoliths, mistakenly attributing certain qualities and/or behaviors to all members of a given group, rather than simply the individuals who actually display these traits/tendencies.

Economic isolation: a form and experience of social isolation that is caused or exacerbated by economic conditions.

Elite capture: a term from development studies, this is the unique ability of those who possess greater resources to employ those resources in accruing more benefits for themselves within a hierarchical structure (Adhikari and Goldey 2010: 186). Interventions to change the status of a group tend to be 'captured' by the dominant members of that group.

Expectation-based trust: the way that people feel connected to other people by projecting prior experience into the future. Related to 'ontological security.'

Geography of segregation: the social definition of particular spaces (and times) as race-specific contexts, such as a dining hall table where minority students usually sit,

Habitus: physical embodiment of culture, reflected in taste and aspects of social life otherwise considered inherent to quality. One's habitus is informed by one's life experiences and is comprised of habits, dispositions and skill sets that are acquired over time (Bourdieu 1984).

Habitus-block: the inability of those with an economic minority habitus to relate with the experiences of the dominant habitus. Not just the fact of economic stratification, but the feeling of inequality in daily life.

Habituscapes: combining the terms of habitus and -scape, habituscapes refers to the intangible

planes in which individuals operate depending on their accumulated life experiences. An individual's habituscapes may intersect with or may completely diverge from the those of the people around them, depending on others' unique experiences of the social systems in which they exist.

Homophily: the tendency of people to associate with others who resemble them and perform the same habitus. The 'birds of a feather' hypothesis, that similarity leads to stronger social ties.

*Identity***:** as **personal identity**, self-determined and multifaceted categories (e.g. racial, gendered, and socioeconomic) that one claims within their respective society; as **social identity**, the socially determined categories imposed upon individuals.

Intimacy: a strong social bond expressed through vulnerability.

'Marked' categories: socially recognized distinctions, which stand in contrast to unmarked and therefore normalized categories.

*Ontological insecurity***:** the lack of confidence that modern people have in the continuity of their self identity and in the constancy of the surrounding social and material environments of action. Part of the phenomenological sense of 'being in the world' when the world is changing rapidly and the future is unimaginable.

*-scape***:** fluid planes or dimensions, within which exist multiple realities, which change shape depending on the spectator. These scapes contribute to a broader idea of the "imagined world," since they shift according to individual perspectives and combine to produce every individual's unique understanding of the world around them (Appadurai 1990).

*Social capital***:** the sum of the resources an individual or group can claim by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition.

*Solidarity***:** the collective consciousness of a social group. In this report, we note how in-group solidarity can also function as a boundary-maintenance mechanism that prevents building connections beyond the group.

*Surveillance-habitus dialectic***:** the negotiation of surveillance, as the simultaneous action of seeing and being seen, as informing students' behaviors and conceptions of the 'norm' at Middlebury, and vice versa.

***Total intimacy*:** **the** potential of judgement or betrayal by others, exacerbated by the totality of an institution.

***Total socio-ecological institution*:** the experience of social, i.e., humans, and environmental, i.e., natural and built environments, at an institution.

Trust: the experience of comfort and ease when engaging in social interaction without fear of retribution for certain states of being or actions.

***Upward-leveling pressures*:** microaggressions that work to a promote mobility into other social, cultural, ideological etc. classes.

***White fragility*:** in this case, a dominant group's defensive denialism of being involved in race-based social relations of power and inequality.

Chapter 1: Introduction

The class of SOAN 342 Trust and Social Capital spent the Spring 2018 semester studying the sources, benefits, and drawbacks of social capital. As we have done this, we have also collected data on the current state of trust and social capital at Middlebury. Our class divided the work into four groups which conducted research on some of the key topics we identified on campus: race, class, queer groups, and body image. Those projects have coalesced into the following report. Below are brief paragraphs outlining the four sections of this report.

Race

Over the course of this semester, we have studied the concepts of trust and social capital as they relate to race at Middlebury. Our key findings are as follows: many students recognize peer-to-peer racial conversations as a source of counterproductive tension, express frustration over the ways in which individuals' complex identities are over-homogenized, and identify racial division as deeply embedded in several physical spaces on campus. Two major themes that arose from both our survey and our individual interviews were isolation and separation. These feelings were present both within and between groups of students. These experiences of division are antagonized by the perceptions of race on campus described above, leaving some students feeling unwelcome and unheard by both the administration and by fellow students.

Our survey data indicates a stark difference between white students' and POC students' perceptions of inclusivity on campus, with far more POC students claiming that they do not get the full "Middlebury experience" as a result of their racial identity. This suggests that students from different backgrounds may function on non-convergent planes of racial understanding and awareness despite their participation in the exact same environment. These "diverging planes" refer to the way that two students of different backgrounds may be in the same physical space, (e.g., Middlebury College, Ross dining hall), but experience isolation differently. Correlating with intersectionality, these planes comprise social fields of action, in which the unique combinations of social identities composing an individual exist. Moving forward, formal and informal attempts to bridge the gaps between planes might aid in simultaneously improving existing breaches in trust in peer-to-peer relations as well as in student-to-administration interactions.

Furthermore, our interviews illustrated the need to avoid treating singular identities as monoliths on campus. For example, viewing "black students" as a singular unit with identical needs ignores the distinctive personalities and experiences of every individual in this overly simplistic grouping. One remedy to this "identity oversight" was suggested in responses to both our surveys and our interviews – the creation of spaces for a more diverse array of identities on campus. For example, while many students lauded the AFC as a welcoming and inclusive space, others claimed that it is not socially accessible to many intersectional identities. As Middlebury

looks to create an environment where all students feel embraced and heard, the creation of spaces that recognize and affirm a more complex array of identities appears to be a logical next step.

Class

Our project focuses on inequalities in trust and social capital tied to economic status among students at Middlebury. Through our survey and interview process, we have found that students experience real consequences in their social lives due to their economic background. These consequences contribute to a general sense of social isolation on campus, and negatively impact students in the development of their social networks. Financial limitations can seriously inhibit a student's ability to participate in certain activities both on and off campus, and this inability to participate isolates them from their peers. Based on our early results, some of the most important aspects of student life that are affected by economic status include off-campus activities, especially skiing and break trips, as well as some on-campus events such as performances and parties. In order to rectify these inequalities, we would recommend that programs like First at Midd be expanded to provide first generation students with more information and resources. One of the major obstacles for first generation students at Middlebury is a lack of information on how to use campus resources as well as a lack of a strong support network. We would also recommend that the college continue to engage with these students as a group throughout their time at Middlebury, as this would strengthen their social networks so that they may feel less isolated on campus.

Queer Community

On March 9, 2018, The Middlebury Campus published an article by sophomore Ami Furgang titled *Calling All Queer People*. In it, he calls attention to a perceived lack of cohesive queer community on campus - this not only surprised him, but left him wanting more. After the publication of this article, Furgang went on to host a "Queer Voices" event that showcased different queer and non-queer survey responses in a discussion-based forum as a way to build some semblance of community. We decided to further explore this topic. The purpose of our overall research, and these interviews in particular, was to see if Ami's feelings concerning the lack of community are felt by other queer students on campus. The two main themes that emerged from survey and interview results were; one, social confrontations between queer identifying students and the straight community and, two, social confrontations within the queer community between those who identify as strictly homosexual and those who do not. Physical presentation is frequently used to mediate these conflicts - individuals will perform their sexuality through style. While this approach works for many, measures such as these can be exclusive to new or peripheral members of the queer community who present in a "less gay" way. Because of this, spaces prove to be important - a frequent recommendation we heard was for the facilitation of more events like the Drag Shows that take traditionally heteronormative areas and use them for LGBTQ+ activities. Another recommendation was for the hiring of a staff member who deals with queer-specific issues on campus. In our analysis, we will further explain

the issues surrounding queer community formation at Middlebury that make these recommendations appropriate and feasible.

Body Image

  This work endeavors to examine the isolating experience of body image at Middlebury. We will be taking both a top-down and bottom-up approach to our analysis, where we recognize both the influence of the institution of Middlebury on student experience, and student agency in resisting or recapitulating norms. The institution could exhibit agency through policy making or shifts in the construction of the institution.

  Middlebury College exists as a "total socio-ecological institution" results in "total intimacy" on campus. The total socio-ecological institution addresses the ways in which social and ecological dimensions fit together in a way that pervades everything in Goffman's usage of 'total.' A total institution is a place of work and residence where a great number of similarly situated people, cut off from the wider community for a considerable time, together lead an enclosed, formally administered life. Middlebury can be considered a socio-ecological institution, as both social, i.e., student, and environmental, i.e., natural and built environments shape student experience at Middlebury. Total intimacy is the experience for the potential of judgement or betrayal by others, exacerbated by the totality of the institution, where there are limited spaces to eat, work out, study, and socialize on campus, due to the small residential nature of Middlebury. This operates in students' lives through what we call the "surveillance-habitus dialectic," which the negotiation of surveillance (as the simultaneous action of seeing and being seen) as informing students' behaviors and conceptions of the 'norm' at Middlebury, and vice versa.

  The institutional context of total intimacy serves to magnify larger social issues of disordered eating and body image problems. These issues become more intense at Middlebury because of the institutional context. The total institution exacerbates these issues to such a point where some students feel like they cannot have the "full" Middlebury College experience, whether due to feelings of surveillance in the dining hall and gym or needing to leave campus to seek medical and mental support. We will use case studies, interviews, and survey data to support our claims.

Methodology

  This is a mixed-methods investigation consisting of online surveys and interviews. The SOAN 342 online survey was broadcast via Middlebury-specific Facebook groups, a student-wide email, and via the Facebook accounts of authors to their network of connections. Respondents were incentivized to take the survey with the chance to win one of fifty ten-dollar rewards to on-campus food retail locations. The survey was then subsequently "shared" by willing network connections, and so on, in a snowball-sampling fashion. The survey reached a broad cohort of Middlebury College students, with 607 respondents. There was a relatively even distribution of respondents from different class years, 2021/2021.5 comprised 28.3%,

2020/2020.5 comprised 28%, 2019/2019.5 comprised 19.6%, and the Class of 2018/2018.5 comprised 24.1%. 80.7% of respondents are not varsity athletes, while 19.3% are varsity athletes.

The survey asked twenty-seven questions of Middlebury College students:

1. Class Year [choose one]
   - 2021/2021.5
   - 2020/2020.5
   - 2019/2019.5
   - 2018/2018.5
2. Are you a varsity athlete? [yes or no]
3. What is your gender identity? [text entry]
4. Have you ever felt that a lack of wealth has prevented you from participating in certain activities at Middlebury?
   - Very Often
   - Often
   - Sometimes
   - Rarely
   - Never
5. If so, what kinds of activities have you been unable to participate in? [text entry]
6. How many of your friends do you feel are from the same economic background? [1-10 from "none of my friends" to "all of my friends"]
7. How many destination vacations have you gone on in the last 2 years? If you have studied abroad or plan to study abroad, please also indicate that.
   - 0
   - 1 or 2
   - 3 to 5
   - More than 5
   - I have studied abroad
   - I plan to study abroad
8. If you work on campus, please identify the primary reason why.
   - I do not work on campus.
   - I need the money to pay tuition
   - I use the money for personal expenses
9. Do you believe that you are [check all that apply]
   - "Very Skinny"
   - "Skinny"
   - "Average"
   - "Larger than Average"
   - "Overweight"

-"Toned"

-"Fat"

-"Buff"

10. How would you describe your body at Middlebury? [text entry]

11. What is a "good body" at Middlebury? [check all that apply]

-"Very Skinny"

-"Skinny"

-"Average"

-"Larger than Average"

-"Overweight"

-"Toned"

-"Fat"

-"Buff"

12. Describe a perceived "good body" at Middlebury [with a text entry]

13. Do others perceive you as attractive at Middlebury? [yes or no]

14. Does your perceived body image influence your workout habits? [yes or no]

15. Does your perceived body image influence your eating habits? [yes or no]

16. Do you believe other people take note of how often you work out? [yes or no]

17. Do you believe other people take note of what you eat? [yes or no]

18. Do you ever tell people you want to work out even though you really don't want to work out? [yes or no]

19. Please select one of these census categories to racially identify yourself:

-White

-Black or African American

-American Indian or Alaska Native

-Asian

-Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

-Mixed Race

-Other [with a text entry]

20. How often do you feel socially isolated at Middlebury because of your race? [on a scale from 1 to 5]

21. How often do you notice race in the classroom? [on a scale from 1 to 5]

22. How often do you feel unable to participate in Middlebury clubs/organizations as a result of your race? [on a scale from 1 to 5]

23. How often do you feel like you are treated differently by the Middlebury administrative staff and faculty due to your perceived race? [on a scale from 1 to 5]

24. Do you believe that the Middlebury administration is effectively combating racial issues on campus? [yes or no]

25. Why or why not? [text entry]

26. Are you more likely to trust other students who racially identify the same way you do? [yes or no]

27. Do you feel as though your race prevents you from having the full "Middlebury experience"? [yes or no]

The chapter on sexuality references data collected by Ami Furgang in a survey entitled Queer Voices. This survey was broadcast via Facebook, Twitter, and a Middlebury link go/queervoices. People were not incentivized to take this survey with money or prizes. Over the course of this semester we have gathered data on the formation, structuring, and gatekeeping of the queer community at Middlebury by analyzing survey data and conducting interviews. While a survey was sent out by other members of our class, we elected to use the results of another survey, which had recently been conducted by the Queers and Allies group. The survey asked five questions of Middlebury College students:

1. Tell us what your sexuality and/or gender identity mean to you?
2. Discuss your feelings regarding the visibility (or lack thereof) of your gender and/or sexuality
3. Tell us about an experience you've had in a queer space or event. It can be from a formally organized event, or just you and your friends.
4. Describe a difficult moment you've witnessed or experienced at Middlebury College relating to queer identity
5. Is there anything else you'd like to share regarding your experience/perspective as queer or questioning on campus? Any changes you feel should be made?

All data from Furgang's survey is available publicly at go/queervoices and in an installation in McCullough Student Center.

Chapter 2: Race at Middlebury

Addressing trust and social capital as it relates to race at Middlebury, the following chapter examines the ways in which racial divisions manifest themselves on campus along with some possible solutions that may alleviate racial tension. Our analysis draws heavily upon anthropological and sociological theory, with terms borrowed and adapted from leading scholars in the field. Defined below, these terms are brought into context with definitions specific to the research we conducted over the Spring 2018 semester. Our findings indicate that there are relatively low levels of trust between students (as described by themselves), that many students feel as though their identities aren't fully recognized, and that contested physical spaces on campus could be negotiated as more neutral or inviting than they currently are. These factors result in varying degrees of isolation for certain groups and individuals. The most concrete and feasible solution in respect to time and relationships between faculty and students would be to expand the resources offered by the Anderson Freeman Center, also known as Carr Hall, to other physical spaces on the Middlebury campus.

Part I: Methods

A. The Survey

The SOAN 342 class collectively generated a survey that was distributed to all students through school email and through a community Facebook page. Only registered Middlebury college students could take the survey and were incentivized to do so by the opportunity to win one of fifty $10 gift cards.

The survey was created by three out of the four groups in the SOAN 342 class and contained questions about race, socioeconomic status and body image. Students had several opportunities throughout the survey to elaborate on their answers with a text response, but were not required to do so. Our questions focused in on the experience of race as it relates to isolation at Middlebury. Some of our questions were:

1. Do you believe that the Middlebury administration is effectively combating racial issues on campus?
   a. Why or why not?
2. Are you more likely to trust other students that racially identify the same way as you do?
3. Do you feel as though your race prevents you from having the full "Middlebury experience"?

The data we collected from this survey will be discussed later on in our paper. Overall, the survey provided us with a solid foundation on which to both base our interview questions and ground the overarching structure of our final product.

B. The Interviews

Over the course of the Spring 2018 semester, we conducted interviews with five students and one staff member. The names of each student will be replaced by pseudonyms in the

following paper, since our interviews were conducted on the condition of confidentiality. Our interview with Elizabeth Burchard, the Director of Public Safety, was not conducted under the same condition; therefore, we use her real name in this work.

Although our survey provided us with some key data, our interviews were what really allowed us to more fully construct our final product. The honesty and thoughtfulness of our interviewees made an indispensable contribution to our understanding of the topics of race and isolation at Middlebury. We will make an effort throughout this paper to treat the comments of our interviewees as individual statements, as opposed to addressing them as a conglomerate person, to give them agency and to avoid overgeneralizing the opinions of different ethnic groups on campus. However, we will not discuss any identifiers beyond the interviewee's race and preferred pronouns so as to ensure their anonymity.

At several points throughout this text we will use direct quotes from our interviewees, which are often somewhat lengthy. We felt that it was more important to give voice to the spoken sentiments of the students we talked to than to reframe their arguments in our own words.

Part II: Intersectionality – On the Erasure of Complex Identities
A. The Survey

The notion, or more importantly the affirmation, of "living together" assumes a coherent set of normative rules, roles and responsibilities, which inevitably leads to the eradication of particular cultural identities (Keslassy 2010). Therefore, an effective analysis of trust and its relation to racial identity at Middlebury must take marginalized voices into careful consideration, maintaining a delicate balance between community unity and individual validation. The following essay concentrates primarily on individuals at Middlebury College who self-identify as POCs. POC, or *person of color,* refers to any student who self-identified as non-white in our survey. This acronym includes continent-specific (e.g. "*Asian*"), state-specific (e.g. "*Pakistani*"), and mixed-race identities.

We decided to create our own terminology – **displaced identity attribution** – to address the problematic conceptualization of students of color as a collective unit. The concept of displaced identity attribution attempts to encapsulate the way in which students collectively construct identities on campus and, in doing so, ignore the unique nuances of individual personalities and behaviors. As a whole, respondents to our survey voiced varying degrees of frustration with the treatment of groups of students as monoliths (e.g. "Black" identities), especially in regards to the limited racial categories that we ourselves provided when asking students to select their racial identity from a list of census categories. The method of attributing an over-generalized identity to an entire racial group displaces and/or obscures important and conflicting viewpoints that may exist within this group.

Monolithic labels such as "students of color" and "the administration" are often assigned to certain groups of people on the Middlebury campus. Within these overarching categories exist individuals with a wide range of opinions and unique constraints. Displaced identity attribution

works to conceal elements of various groups and, in doing so, critically derails forward progress. As one respondent to our survey lamented,

> It's pretty obvious that Middlebury's solution to "fixing" race problems on campus are the equivalent to putting a band-aid on a gaping flesh wound. Students of color don't feel supported by the administration and the administration does nothing to prove they are on our side.

While we do not want to minimize this student's frustration, these words nevertheless demonstrate the problematic results of displaced identity attribution. By asserting that the entire administrative body does nothing to prove it is on the side of POC students, this student ignored all the positive steps towards racial inclusion and awareness that have occurred in the past and are currently taking place on campus. In fact, our survey data shows that almost 30% of POC respondents believe that the administration is "effectively combating racial issues on campus." On the flip side, then, an acknowledgement of the diversity within the "POC" grouping is essential, since not all POC students appear to share the same level of dissatisfaction with administrative efforts.

However, we do want to give a voice to the majority of POC respondents (70%), who cited an apparent disconnect between the Middlebury administration's ideology and practice. Many students noted feeling an inauthentic expression of acceptance when it comes to issues of racial equity at Middlebury. According to one respondent, "This false neutrality only perpetuates the acceptance of racist ideology, not prodding students to think critically about issues that plague the campus and consequently [denying] the humanity of many students of color." The "false neutrality" this student touched upon seems to refer to a general sense that the Middlebury administration supports white students more comprehensively than POC students, despite its claims about ensuring the wellbeing of all students equally.

Other students expressed similar frustration about the lack of effective administrative action on campus, with one respondent claiming,

> I think that the administration still leans heavily on students of color to tell them when we are hurt, and relies on us to verbalize, through the 'proper' channels and in the 'proper' way, when spaces are destructive or dehumanizing, rather than having themselves constantly do the work to ensure that spaces are inclusive and healthy for their marginalized students.

The term "abrasive social labor" is useful in interpreting this student's response. Several students feel as though they must explain their racial identities to the administration, which becomes exhausting after a prolonged period of time – similar to the concept of a 'cultural tax' (the extra labor that minorities do to explain and represent minority perspectives and experiences as a service to the College). POC fatigue is antagonized by

the knowledge that white students need not put in the same social labor in order to receive acknowledgement from the administration. As Charlie, one of our interviewees noted, "This place (Middlebury) is *for* the elites of society" – in other words, wealthy white students. To refer back to the idea of "false neutrality" raised by one survey respondent, many POC students are exhausted by doing the work that they feel the administration should be doing all on its own, especially given its proposed goal of equity. Abrasive social labor is irritating because of the repetitive denial or misunderstanding of an individual's identity in a social context, requiring this individual to act politely even when offended by an insensitive questioner.

Competition between students of color and those operating without similar constraints (i.e. white students) adds to the **ontological insecurity** that a portion of POC students experience. Ontological insecurity is the opposite of "the confidence most human beings have in the continuity of their self-identity in the constancy of the surrounding social and material environments of action" (Giddens 1990: 92). As one respondent noted, "Many students still feel as though they aren't being heard and their issues aren't being addressed." This results in feelings of isolation, prompted by the sense that the administrative body, whose task it is to provide all students with equal opportunities to succeed, is favoring some students over others.

Overall, our survey responses appear to indicate widespread disagreement within the student body regarding the efforts of the administration. Although it may be easy to regard the administration as a single entity, the opinions of the student body appear to contradict this approach. Considering the steps that the administration has taken so far to better address issues of race on campus, it is clear that students have reacted differently to these administrative efforts. At the time our survey was conducted, some POC students seemed to be content with administrative actions while others felt as though they were still relatively invisible in the eyes of the college.

B. The Survey Method

In reflecting on her ethnographic study of Japanese culture, Dorinne Kondo describes her informants as "subjects who possess[ed] certain foreunderstandings of the ethnographer and the power to shape and control the ethnographer and the ethnographic encounter" (1986: 80). This balance of power between the researcher and their subjects creates a positive dynamic of trust and allows subjects to have more agency over the final product. This power balance was absent from the survey method that we employed, due to our need to easily and efficiently analyze our data.

The primary issue with this method is that questions are predetermined and thus the respondent is limited in their ability to shape their response. This problem was particularly evident in student responses to our question asking them to select their race from a list of the U.S. Census categories. If the respondent did not identify with any of the options we provided, they were prompted to enter their own description into an "other" box. One student attempted to push back against our limited options, by entering the following complaint into this box: "I am

multiracial. Why the hell am I not allowed to tick multiple boxes? Kind of screwed up for a survey trying to point out toxic aspects of campus culture. Really easy to just give the option to check multiple." When writing this question, we had experienced a tension between the desire to account for all possible identities and the need to organize our data. However, this respondent saw only the survey itself and not the decision-making process that had produced it. They found themselves unable to "shape and control...the ethnographic encounter," which produced a moral dilemma for us as the researchers.

The responses to our survey reflect the increasing proportion of people in America that do not fit into restrictive and outdated racial categories. However, it is on us as the researchers to consider the consequences of our methodological choices, even if these decisions are produced within a generally problematic context. The responses to the question about racial categories that we posed in our survey further illustrate problems embedded in the tendency to obscure some racial identities in order to more efficiently achieve a result.

C. The Interviews

Our interviews provided us with a more nuanced perspective on the importance of acknowledging intersectional identities and of avoiding the monolithic treatment of minority groups. Several interviewees, particularly those who claim multiple minority identities, pinpointed the difficulty of bridging the gaps between POC students and others at the intersections of marginalized identities. For example, Wendy, who identifies as multiracial, stated that "whenever I do take up POC spaces, it's very limited (and) it's probably better that I didn't say anything or if I just stepped out…[but] when in a majority white space, I don't question if I should be in those environment(s)." In regards to our focus on intersectionality, it seems as though in Wendy's case, her multiracial identity puts her in a different position than students of a single minority race. She finds herself forced to navigate various racialized spaces in a different way than other POC students might.

As a student who spent much time abroad, Wendy went on to explain the disparity between the way in which race is approached at Middlebury and in international spaces, claiming:

> The way people segregate themselves...people are always drawn to people that are similar to them, but at times I've noticed that that's taken to an extreme [at Middlebury]...compared to my experience abroad…we would consider that to be a bit much whereas self-segregation is justified here.

The habituscape within which Wendy functions as a self-identified foreigner parallels but does not intersect with the habituscapes of Middlebury students who may also appear non-white but were raised in an American society. While both international and American-raised minority students likely experience similar degrees of racial oppression, their reactions to these frustrations may diverge based on differing understandings of race as a social construct. As

Wendy notes, international students may be less likely to isolate themselves within strictly minority groups, feeling more inclined to engage in more diverse communities.

To further examine Wendy's statements on divides within the POC student community, we will turn to a discussion of humor as it pertains to race relations. Alex, a black-identifying student, spoke to the use of humor as a source of **bonding social capital**, bringing some POC students closer together, while excluding or mocking others (Putnam 2000). One example Alex gave was a derisive comment made by one of her friends, labeling their group of Dominicans as the "rainbow coalition." This phrase, without being an overt swear word, attempted to capture the quasi-non-white nature of these light-skinned students of color, referring to the tenuous nature of their status of POCs, since they are also 'white passing.' Alex cited the use of this type of racial humor as a "coping mechanism," a way in which her and her peers bond by mediating their lower social status. In other words, this use of humor relates back to a power struggle in the sense that it proclaims "some eminency in ourselves (the jokers) by comparison with the infirmity of others (the butt of the joke)" (Thomas Hobbes, as cited in Boskin and Dorinson 1985: 81).

Humor in this case is a form of **othering**, a way of distinguishing one group identity through differentiating it from another group. This concept comes from Edward Said's *Orientalism*, defined as a patronizing West imposing Western perspectives on what Western boundaries of "the Orient" was supposed to be (1979). In the context of Middlebury, othering operates as a way of further separating racial groups on campus inter- and intra- communally.

However, humor, as Alex mentioned above, can also serve as a viable **coping strategy** in an environment that is often not conducive to honest and productive racial conversations. Alex incorporated some of this humor into her discussion of race in the classroom, describing the typical situation at Middlebury of a predominantly white class taught by a white, male professor. According to Alex, any time race issues are discussed in this stereotypical setting, she can "feel peoples' buttholes tightening." This comment is a humorous POC interpretation of the white discomfort that often arises during discussions about race, a comedic take on relatively serious events that can prove affirming during discussions with fellow POC students. In other words, by taking a somewhat upsetting situation and coloring it with humor, Alex and her friends get the opportunity to bond over their own oppression, often at the expense of fellow white students.

Charlie, another one of our interviewees, who identifies as multiracial and queer, did not share Alex's proclivity towards racial humor, claiming that he doesn't have a lot of "racial beef" since he is "palatable to white people." Charlie went on to explain, "In POC spaces I feel like I've been deemed too white...on the white side of things" whereas "in queer spaces where we talk about race I have felt kind of affirmed in my person of color-hood." Like Wendy, Charlie does not feel a natural affinity with other POC students, remarking that he does not feel comfortable in predominantly POC spaces. Instead, he finds the most racial acceptance in majority queer spaces, which he noted are also predominantly white.

We must take this wide variety of racial experiences into account during an examination of racial identity on Middlebury's campus. While some students may seek refuge within an

exclusively POC community, using humor as a substitute for broader racial belonging, other minority students may feel even more isolated in POC communities than predominantly white ones. While it is crucial to ensure that all "identities" are fully welcomed by fellow students and the administration alike, an acknowledgement of the fluidity of the "identity" concept is similarly crucial.

Part III: Isolation – On a Pervasive Absence of Trust
    A. The Survey
       In our survey, 56% of respondents who self-identified as non-white also stated that they are "more likely to trust other students who racially identify the same way they do," as compared to only 16% of white respondents. In the same survey, 47% of POC respondents expressed feeling as though "their race prevents them from having the full 'Middlebury experience,'" as opposed to only 1.4% of white respondents. These statistics indicate a pervasive sense of racially-based isolation on campus – many students of color feel a striking disconnect between their racial communities and white students, a divide that is antagonized by the sense that POC students cannot derive the same benefits from their Middlebury experience as white students can.

       The fact that more than half of our POC respondents are more likely to trust others that racially identify in the same way they do likely exacerbates racial tensions on campus. This selective placement of trust has the potential to further entrench trends of physical racial separation along with the more cognitive aspects of isolation. However, POC students' distrust of racial "others" becomes more comprehensible when one considers recent demonstrations of racist behavior on campus, often perpetrated anonymously. One example of such behavior was the placement of white nationalist propaganda pamphlets in Davis Library shelves in the Spring of 2018. The propaganda posed a threat to the security that students of color feel in this public building, which was noted as a generally accessible location in our research. The ramifications of this anonymous act included the introduction of swipe-access-only entry into Davis during certain hours. Charlie, whom we interviewed in Davis, pointed out that this administrative action assumes that the pamphlets were placed in the library by a non-student, an assumption that Charlie was not as ready to make, suggesting his suspicion surrounding the racial opinions of his fellow students.

       Peter Geschiere's work on witchcraft in Cameroon sheds some light on the dynamics of trust at Middlebury. Geschiere examines the constantly shifting relationship between trust, intimacy and witchcraft, emphasizing the tension between "the fear of intimacy that can give the ones who you are close to a dangerous hold over you…[and] the need to establish at least some form of trust with one's intimates in order to collaborate" (2013: 101). At Middlebury, POCs must try to form bonds with other students while fearing the racist views that some of these individuals (witches, in a sense) have anonymously expressed. Because it is unclear who exactly holds these prejudiced opinions, POC students' reticence to trust students who do not share their racial identity appears to be a form of self-preservation, a strategy by which to avoid potential

symbolic violence. It may seem easier to distrust an entire racial group than to become vulnerable to one of its members.

Yet, the distrust between racial groups on campus appears to aggravate POC students' experiences of isolation. While distrusting students of other races may seem to be a viable coping mechanism at times, necessary to avoid the pain of racial exclusion, it can also feel quite limiting, preventing students from exploring meaningful relationships outside of their own racial communities. Furthermore, according to the results of our survey, POCs are questioning not only the motivations of their (likely white) peers but also the administration's responses to racist actions on campus. Seventy percent of POC respondents do not believe that the Middlebury administration is effectively combating racial issues on campus. Interestingly, the same number of white respondents shared this same belief. Although several positive administrative measures have been implemented in the past year or so, simply the perception that decision-makers are not taking adequate steps towards making Middlebury a safe place for students of all races has the potential to be quite isolating.

B. The Interviews

Our interviews also brought to light a sense of isolation among POCs, elucidating the major roles that fear and frustration play in limiting interactions between various groups of students on the Middlebury campus. As we describe these confining factors it is important to keep the above discussion of intersectionality in mind. Fear exists not only between different racial groups, but also among members within a single group. As always, we must avoid treating racial groups as monoliths and acknowledge the wide range of viewpoints and experiences that exist within them. The habituscapes that groups, subgroups, and individuals operate within are nuanced and demand attention if fearful reactions are to be avoided. While they all function within the same physical campus spaces, students' experiences of these spaces and the interactions that occur within them may be completely different or may converge at only certain points.

The fear of racial discussion manifests itself multiple ways, most notably between white and POC groups of students, within communities of color and among members of the Middlebury staff. While the reluctance to discuss one's opinions about race may arise for contrasting reasons in each of these circumstances, such hesitancy nevertheless prevents progress towards greater racial awareness and social inclusion on campus in every case.

One of the most noticeable examples of the reticence to discuss race occurs on the part of white students, who are often fearful of either potentially damaging their reputation by offending a POC student or of acknowledging their own feelings of white guilt. Robin DiAngelo describes this tendency as "white fragility...a state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable [for members of the white community], triggering a range of defensive moves" (2011: 54). **White fragility** functions primarily as a coping mechanism, allowing white individuals to both reframe themselves as victims during conversations about race and avoid initiating such conversations in the first place. As Sam, a black female interviewee, observed, "I

feel like [white students] are afraid of saying the wrong thing, so they don't say anything or they don't talk about it." White fragility is a critical part of both white and POC students' habituscapes, but functions in very different ways depending on the individual's race. One of the most problematic aspects of white fragility is that it often manifests itself in subconscious behaviors, allowing white individuals to control the framing of conversations about race often without explicitly intending to do so. POC students, on the other hand, are usually hyper-aware of the ways in which conversations about race are diverted on account of white discomfort. As one of the POC respondents to our survey noted:

> Because of the taboos surrounding race, I feel like there is a sense of political correctness people try to maintain (which is important) but when doing so, [they] fail to address the issues at hand. In essence, race issues are covered up.

The fear that both Sam and the above survey respondent describe highlights the social pressures that discourage productive conversations about race on campus. The reticence to engage in meaningful dialogues contributes to a cycle of ignorance, by preventing white students from building upon their racial understandings. Validating Sam's impression, John, a cis-white male member of the golf team, stated that race "is not really addressed" among his predominantly white teammates and that the topic of race is "not usually on [his] mind." John's ability to function at Middlebury without actively thinking about race is reminiscent of Giddens' views on civil inattention, the concept of trust as "'background noise' – not as a random collection of sounds, but as carefully restrained and controlled social rhythms" (1990: 82). While John operates within this realm of civil inattention, trusting fellow students without making any overt decisions to do so, members of the POC community feel as though they must make more conscious decisions about the people with whom they choose to interact and, as such, are not afforded the ease of civil inattention. It is this inattention that, in part, operates as an extension of white privilege furthering the social distance between students.

However, John's other comments seem to suggest an alternative to white fear of racial conversations. In fact, John did not express any reluctance to discuss such topics, instead stating that he enjoys engaging with the most "active" POC students on campus. When asked who qualifies as "active", John responded, "[Students who are] willing to reach out, get into those uncomfortable positions and talk about it." According to this comment, John appears to welcome rather than shun difficult conversations about race; the more insidious problem, however, lies in the fact that race is largely irrelevant to John's Middlebury experience, as is likely the case for many other white students here. Furthermore, John's comments ignore the **abrasive social labor** that "active" POC students must often undergo when trying to engage in conversations about race with their white peers – a problem that he does not have to grapple with on account of his own race. John's **habituscape** follows a different trajectory than those of POC students. He may be present in the same physical spaces, but often remains unaffected by and unaware of the issues that POCs must confront as a result of their racial identities. When examining the lack of

white-POC racial dialogue on campus, we must consider both white fear and white obliviousness to the gravity of such topics. As John himself explained, "[T]o me [race] doesn't matter, it's never been a factor."

Several POC interviewees also discussed feeling tension within student communities of color surrounding differing opinions on white students and the Middlebury administration. The fear in this case arises when students of color become concerned with appearing sympathetic towards majority white communities. Wendy expressed a common sentiment in POC communities that "if you don't appear to be...resisting the majority of the student body...you're not considered POC enough." Given this comment, it seems as though POC students face similar pressures to uphold certain reputations within their respective communities, since investing in white social capital works to reduce their POC social capital. Just as no white student wants to come across as racially insensitive or ignorant, no POC student wants to be shunned by their community for not being radical enough.

Charlie, who identifies as mixed, agreed with Wendy's observations, claiming that "[In POC communities,] there's this bias initially not to trust white people or to think white people are capable of learning." Because of this assumption, POC students who are willing to engage in critical conversations with white students or who may view white students as trustworthy and capable of racial awareness may face rejection from their own racial community. This dynamic suggests that there is more than individual abrasive social labor at stake when POCs interact with white students; instead, they can potentially damage their social capital as well. This fear of compromising existing relationships discourages the acknowledgement of differing viewpoints within groups of POC students and, in doing so, further entrenches the division between POC and white communities on campus. As Martii Siisianinen remarks in regards to Bourdieu's work, "So, even behind universal values lurk the specific interests of certain groups" (2003: 195). Despite the relatively universal value of creating intimate bonds within the Middlebury community, POC students can still feel limited by the confines of their racial community and the fear of reprisal for consorting with white students who do not understand various pressures of the minority experience.

Although we did not have the opportunity to meet with many members of the Middlebury administration during our interview process, we did get the chance to speak with Director of Public Safety, Elizabeth Burchard, who gave us some insight into the treatment of racial issues by Middlebury staff. The most telling aspects of this interview were the questions about race that remained unanswered, and what seemed to be reluctance to address an uncomfortable topics, specifically any mention of race. Although Burchard's attempts to redirect the conversation toward hiring and training policies were understandable given her official responsibility to uphold a certain degree of apparent objectivity and her awareness that this interview was not confidential, this does not detract from the fact that PubSafe officers are required to ensure student safety and, as such, are intimately tied up with issues of race on this campus.

Burchard's answer to the question of how many PubSafe officers identify as non-white was of particular note, as she responded, "I know that we have one [officer] who…. would probably tell me he's not white." She went on to explain that "when we hire we're always looking for more diversity…people don't usually relocate for the position…we're drawing from the pool of Addison County." Though hiring a more diverse group of officers might prove difficult considering the homogeneity of the Addison County community, the lack of POC officers is another factor that limits overlap between student habituscapes and the institution.

PubSafe-student relationships depend upon trust, especially in situations during which students must decide whether or not to reach out to PubSafe for help. As Burchard herself explained, "Every time we respond to something we explain that we're there to help….develop those one-on-one relationships [between officers and students]." However, given the recent national focus on police brutality, as well as incidents on campus during which PubSafe officers have been accused of racial profiling, it is unlikely that POC students will be as inclined to interact with PubSafe as white students might be. PubSafe plays a different role in every student's habituscape, acting as a positive resource only for some individuals, rather than the entire student body.

Thus, PubSafe-POC student interactions represent another instance of fear embedded within race relations on campus. POC students may be less likely to reach out to PubSafe officers, due to the fear that they might be treated differently or unfairly. In fact, as Wendy noted during her interview, "I know of a girl who was going from her home to the library and was followed by two PubSafe officers...as if she was not supposed to be there." The wariness of POC students towards PubSafe officers due to instances such as the one Wendy described likely contributes to Burchard's (and other officials') reluctance to actively discuss the topic of race in interview settings. This double-sided fear reinforces the separation that exists between POC students and the institution, creating a tense relationship rather than a problem-solving environment.

An examination of James Coleman's views on trust illuminates several factors that may underlie the reticence of POC students and PubSafe officers to place active trust in one another. Coleman explains how a potential trustor's decisions to trust others involves influencing factors similar to those made during a bet, where the *chance of winning* and *chance of losing* must be evaluated by both sides. In other words, trust may be a voluntary action of a single party or of two or more parties, with each party weighing the various pros and cons of a trusting relationship (Coleman 1990: 99). The distance present in student-institutional trust is likely exacerbated by the tendency of each party to concentrate primarily on the probable cons of a trusting relationship, negatives which are often portrayed by the media, instead of focusing on the potential benefits.

Coleman goes further to outline the quantifiable elements that lead an individual to trust (or place a "bet):

p = chance of receiving gain (probability of trustworthiness)

L= potential loss (as a result of untrustworthiness)

G= potential gain (as a result of trustworthiness)
Decision:
Yes, when p(L-p) is greater than LG
Indifferent, when *p*(L-p) is equal to LG
No, when p(L-p) is less than LG

Coleman's equations assume that trust is an entirely calculated behavior, utilizing "proof" of past or present experience. Yet rational choice theory, though important in economics, does not account for the social factors guiding decisions between intersecting habituscapes. The way in which the institution provides means for students to interact is related to habituscapes, as Middlebury brings students from diverse backgrounds together. In their chapter on body image at Middlebury, Corrigan and Wolfe note how "creating more physical spaces on campus...will work to increase trust and social capital on campus." Without overstating the obvious, physical spaces are key to managing a sense of community and security. Offering space for students to make these decisions would allow them to gain personal agency and develop the initiative to grow more racially conscious.

Part IV: Racial Geography – On Community, Space, and Comfort
Both our survey and interviews indicated a sense of isolation and displaced identity among many POC students at Middlebury. A factor that seems to relate to both of these themes is that of physical space. As Portes and Landolt explain in their article on "The downside of social capital," "**Solidarity** among some groups can create impassable barriers for others" (Portes and Landolt 1996: 4). Although the authors may be referring to more intangible boundaries in the above quotation, the concept of physical borders is applicable as well. While both individuals and communities stand to benefit in some ways from the small circles of trust built within racial confines on Middlebury's campus, they may be harmed by the physical limitations that these trust networks entail.
Using race as a guide map, several of the students we surveyed and interviewed identified a few spaces on campus as unspoken POC spaces, including the Ross cereal annex (an alcove that is literally on the margins of Ross Dining Hall) and parties in Coltrane. Alex maintained that some spaces on campus are "pretty integrated in terms of all groups, race and socioeconomic status included," such as the Grille and Bicentennial Hall. Other spaces are widely acknowledged as white and/or athlete spaces, such as Atwater parties, the central areas of the dining halls and the gym. Overall, our research showed that the **geography of segregation** on campus is both physical and temporal, or that it manifests itself both in static spaces and during certain events.
The Anderson Freeman Center received the most conflicting reviews from students both in our survey and during our interviews in regards to its inclusivity. Sam spoke quite highly of the AFC during her interview, claiming:

> [T]he AFC is wonderful...I love the people that work there...The murals that are there are beautiful, and [it] has a really nice atmosphere...People think that it's just a space for students of color, but it's for everyone.

However, other interviewees and respondents disagreed with Sam's sentiments, criticizing the AFC for spreading itself too thin by attempting to act as a resource for all minority identities at once. For example, Charlie noted that he does not feel welcome in the AFC, since it was "constructed for people of color." He stated that the student of color community (particularly the group of individuals who frequent the AFC) perceives him as "too white, or on the white side of things….[while] queer spaces [such as Chellis House] are affirmed because everyone else is white." One respondent to our survey wrote,

> One of my biggest issues is how the AFC was established. Yes, it should be established and it's great that it was. But what most people don't realize is that before AFC was established, Carr Hall belonged to the international students. It was a place for us to hold events and meet each other and talk about the daunting experience of moving away from home to such a scary and different culture. I was annoyed at Middlebury administration for replacing the ISSS with AFC so quickly. There are so many other buildings on campus that would be great for the AFC.... it felt like the administration was almost placing the needs of one minority over another.

This student pinpointed a key component of our analysis – **displaced identity attribution**. By making the AFC a space for *all* minority identities, the administration seemed to override the importance of having a space just for international students. Because minority students with intersectional identities often do not feel welcome in such singular spaces, the AFC became less accessible for students who may be unsure of where they belong on the Middlebury campus.

Middlebury's segregated spaces work to discourage interactions across racial boundaries. Sam, for example, stated during her interview that she does not feel "very connected to non-students of color on campus," even though one needs "to make an effort to befriend" other students of color. This suggests that although POCs still need to put in effort to build relationships amongst themselves, these interactions may be more accessible as a result of physical proximity to one another, the fact that POC students share space with one another more often than with fellow white students.

Many criticisms of the AFC seemed to focus on narratives surrounding what Alex dubbed the "right type of POC" in her interview. Alex, who attended a private boarding high school and who comes from a relatively wealthy background, explained:

When I'm hanging out at BSU, I feel comfortable because I'm around people who share the same identity [as me] but at the same time I feel uncomfortable. Because if you're not the 'right type' there are issues that arise...poverty gives people legitimacy in spaces of color.

Here, Alex describes the limitations of building trust networks when the distance between habituscapes increases. Alex expresses that although one's high socioeconomic status may be a factor that contributes to one's acceptance in many social groups at Middlebury, it may also work to exclude some individuals from certain minority spaces. The institution of clubs and other student organizations may stratify group access, sometimes promoting wealth while at other times condemning it. Alex's reference to the need to be the "right type" of POC in order to fit into minority communities relates back to our concept of **displaced identity attribution** – the treatment of and expectation that all students within a certain minority group will share certain characteristics. Alex's example shows that displaced identity attribution can work from the inside out, affecting POCs themselves, who may also rely on the stereotype that black students do not come from privileged backgrounds.

Wendy expressed a similar reluctance towards engaging in all-minority communities, instead finding the most comfort in artistic spaces, such as the Center for the Arts and the Hepburn Zoo. In these environments, Wendy explained, "I can talk about these issues and not have to think twice about how that's being perceived." Wendy's arts outlet provides her with a safe haven in a way that the AFC cannot, since her identity does not fit neatly in with those of the students whose voices are most dominant in AFC social space.

To contrast these POC voices, the only student we interviewed for whom a specific place of comfort (or discomfort) did not immediately come to mind was John. While other students mentioned the AFC, Chellis House, and the CFA as comfortable spaces, John stated that he feels comfortable "wherever [his] day takes" him. Identifying as a cisgender, straight, white, male athlete plays a significant role in his feelings of comfort. John's responses provide further evidence that POC and white students operate within diverging habituscapes, differentially cognizant of the role space plays in shaping the experiences of students on the Middlebury campus.

Based on these student responses, it seems as though a productive step forward would be to open up new physical spaces to facilitate interactions between various groups of students, providing them with the incentive and agency to create new relationships and the opportunity to generate new racial understandings. While bonding social capital is certainly at work within communities of color, our data suggests that the college is in need of bridging social capital to mend the many racial tensions and divides that currently exist as a result of fear and isolation (Putnam 2000).

Part V: Concluding Thoughts

After a brief evaluation of the state of trust at Middlebury, it has become evident that the ways in which students relate are inhibited by a level of social distance. This social distance, or space between habituscapes, is a reflection of the oscillating discourse between the desire for unity and the need for diversity in community. Student interviews paired with a survey indicated that there is no unanimous agreement as to the sources of this distance and isolation it causes, in addition to an absence of agreement for possible solutions.

Reflecting on the data, we recognize that a majority of the students of color or mixed students did not entirely represent the diverse backgrounds of others – Asian, Indigenous, Pacific Islander, or Latinx identities – despite our attempts to reach out to members of these communities. Our research also failed to address unmarked racial identities, such as ethnic Bosnians, as the magnitude of the issues related to these identities were not the focus of the study. The intersection of multiple identities, particularly those of minorities, increase invisibility and decrease the access to resources.

While identity-based politics can be a source of strength and community, categories like race and gender are intrinsically frameworks in which social power works to exclude (Crenshaw 1991: 1242). Even institutionally-sponsored events that seek to give students a more nuanced understanding of social identity, such as JusTalks and first-year orientation, can be counterproductive because this message can get diluted as part of a larger presentation. As one student in our survey noted, when the importance of the core insight – the idea that identity is a process that makes personhood interact with social categories in a context suffused with power – is not sustained by the institution, students can become apathetic about this critical part of a liberal arts education.

Permitting students to organically create their own dialogues on issues that are important to them would circumvent issues arising from a top-down approach. Members of the Middlebury community have a stake in the balance between nurturing community values while fostering agency – the two are as tightly bound as intimacy and vulnerability. In sum, creating spaces for students to bridge racial gaps seem to represent the greatest promise for productive and meaningful campus-wide change.

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Chapter 3: The Causes of Economic Isolation at Middlebury and the Impact of the Habitus

Introduction

This chapter will examine the role of socio-economic status in contributing to students' experiences of isolation at Middlebury. In doing so, our research centered on examining two interrelated issues: **economic isolation** and **elite capture**. Economic isolation is merely a form of social isolation that is caused or exacerbated by economic conditions. Elite capture refers to the unique ability of those who possess greater resources to employ those resources in accruing more benefits for themselves within a hierarchical structure (Adhikari and Goldey 2010: 186). Middlebury is subject to the same hierarchical framework as the rest of society, in which elites may be determined by factors such as their race, gender, or class. The specific focus of this chapter is on how class elites may utilize their position in order to increase their own social capital, at the expense of those who may be socio-economically disadvantaged.

Through examining the downsides of social capital, the connection between elite capture and economic isolation is revealed. As researchers such as Portes and Landolt have found, social capital is a resource that individuals may draw on through their social networks and, like any other resource, "the resources that some individuals claim come at the expense of others" (1996: 19). Moreover, not all sources of social capital provide the same benefits; a small social network may be able to provide one with greater benefits than a larger one if that social network is also connected with abundant resources (Portes and Landolt 1996: 19). For students, this may be illustrated in how some connections may lead to high-paying internship opportunities while others do not have the resources to provide any economic benefits. While this does not mean that social networks lacking in material resources are useless, it does show how having access to certain sources of social capital can widen the gap between economically advantaged and disadvantaged students. Elite capture naturally creates a system which "sustain[s] privilege and underpin[s] disadvantage," as the presence of social capital may actually increase inequality if access to its resources and benefits are not equitably distributed (Adhikari and Goldey 2010: 185). Thus, the process of elite capture cuts off those who are disadvantaged from potential benefits and ultimately increases their economic isolation.

Here it also becomes necessary to clarify our use of the term "class." We based our research and analysis on Weber's interpretive definition of **class**, which argues that classes are not true real-world communities, but instead "merely represent possible, and frequent, bases for communal action" (1958: 181). Class groups are not concrete categories, as members of the same class do not conceptualize themselves as such. Rather, the class groups we are examining could perhaps more accurately be described as status groups of individuals who share the same class situation, which "in itself creates specific life chances" (Weber 1958: 181). Though they may not conceptualize themselves as a group, those with similar class situations tend to have "generally *similar* reactions" due to their shared economic interests (Weber 1958: 183). For the sake of

simplicity, we refer to these individuals as belonging to a specific class such as the upper-class or the working-class for the remainder of this section.

Part 1: Theoretical Underpinnings

The Habitus and the Social Break

Our research draws heavily on the work of Pierre Bourdieu, a Marxist theorist who studied social capital and first coined the term "habitus" (1984: 165-6). Bourdieu defines the **habitus** as the "generative formula which makes it possible to account both for the classifiable practices and products and for the judgements…which make these practices and works into a system of distinctive signs" (1984: 166). In practice, the habitus operates as the internalization and perpetuation of class tastes. Therefore, the habitus is responsible for the creation of norms among specific classes. This can be observed among a number of fields; art, wine, sports cars, and activities such as skiing have all come to embody certain elements of upper-class tastes. This is in part caused by the fact that "the consumer helps to produce the product he consumes" (Bourdieu 1984: 94), allowing consumers to identify and mark certain products with specific symbolic values. This is perhaps most clearly seen in the field of art, in which the product has no objective value other than the cost of the canvas and utensils used to create it, yet it is assigned symbolic value according to how well it aligns with dominant tastes (Currid 2007: 386). Sociologists have long found that consumption itself functions as a means for "higher classes to differentiate themselves from everyone else" (Currid 2007: 387).

The use of consumption as a form of distinction is another vital element of Bourdieu's work that we have drawn on in our research at Middlebury. Bourdieu conceptualizes distinction as a tool in "symbolic struggles" over cultural capital, which allows classes to claim a "legitimate lifestyle" (1984: 247). As such, distinction is not a "conscious intention" of the upper-class to distance themselves from lower classes. Rather, individuals seek distinction in order to elevate their status in a field or to convert the cultural capital they acquire through that distinction into another form of capital, such as economic or social capital (Bourdieu 1984: 126). However, this distinction has greater impacts than merely constituting an aesthetic difference; it also results in a "social break" as the tastes between the upper and lower classes shift in opposition to one another (Bourdieu 1984: 23).

The prevalence of this social break has led us to craft the term **"habitus-block,"** to refer to the inability of those with an economic minority habitus to relate with the experiences of the dominant habitus. At Middlebury, we assume the dominant habitus to be an upper-class habitus based on the breakdown of economic diversity on campus. Around 67% of students come from families in the top 10% of the income distribution in the country, whereas only 2.7% of students come from families in the bottom 20% ("Economic Diversity" 2017). Our research is primarily focused on how this economic minority is further disadvantaged at Middlebury due to an incompatibility with Middlebury's dominant habitus.

Middlebury as a Brokerage Institution

Another important aspect of life at Middlebury is the role of organizational structures (in the form of the college administration, faculty departments, student organizations, etc.) in determining the distribution of social capital. One of the primary ways in which organizations affect social capital is through **brokerage**, "the general process by which an organization connects an individual to another individual, to another organization, or to the resources they contain" (Small 2009: 19). Current organizations at the college serve a key role in perpetuating the economic isolation experienced by some students, as they effectively direct the distribution of social capital towards their own members and thus deprive others of those resources. This will be discussed more in-depth later in this section.

Fortunately, Middlebury also has the opportunity to positively influence the distribution of social capital through new or current campus organizations. This forms a vital element of our recommendations for the college, as we hope that more inclusive and accessible structures will allow for a college experience that does not result in economic isolation for low-income students. Our recommendations draw heavily on the common traits of effective brokers, as outlined by Small: "(a) many opportunities for (b) regular and (c) long-lasting interaction, (d) minimally competitive and (e) maximally cooperative institutional environments, and both (f) internal and (g) external motivations to maintain those opportunities and sustain those environments" (Small 2009: 21). One of the greatest drawbacks to social capital is its difficulty to maintain, and third-party mediators such as college organizations have been found to aid in facilitating sustainable sources of social capital (Adhikari and Goldey 2010: 191).

Part 2: Survey Data Overview
Methodology

In formulating our survey questions, we sought to obtain answers regarding how one's economic background may affect one's sense of social isolation at Middlebury. Our first question hoped to identify the frequency of this sense of isolation among students, and follow-up questions were designed to locate where students felt most excluded due to class. We then attempted to create an accurate portrayal of the economic diversity among Middlebury students' social networks by asking how many of their friends they felt were from the same economic background. Lastly, we asked questions regarding the frequency of vacations students have taken and whether or not they need to work on campus in order to gain some insight on the economic status of our respondents; students who answered that they took more than five vacations in the last two years could be inferred to be from high income backgrounds, while students who identified that they needed to work on campus in order to pay tuition or send money home could be inferred to be from low income backgrounds.

Exclusionary Bonding Capital and Distinction

Out of the 607 responses to our survey, 41.8% of respondents said that they at least sometimes felt excluded from participating in certain activities at Middlebury due to economic

circumstances. 308 students then provided us with further explanation, pointing to which activities they felt most excluded from. Based on recurring themes in these answers, we divided their responses into several categories. Of these categories, off-campus activities were referenced most often as exclusive, with 174 respondents including mentions of taking trips during breaks or eating off-campus with friends as activities they felt excluded from due to economic status. 106 students specifically cited skiing as an exclusionary activity. Many students expressed frustration with how often their friends would participate in these activities, indicating that the repetition of these off-campus excursions resulted in a strain on the relationship between the respondents and their friends. As activities that exclude those with economic restrictions, expenditures such as skiing or break trips constitute a form of bonding capital which is "inward-looking and tend[s] to reinforce exclusive identities and homogeneous groups" (Putnam 2000: 22). As Putnam notes, bonding capital has the potential to create "strong out-group antagonism" (2000: 23), which is certainly reflected in some of our responses that pointed to such activities as "uber-white and rich" ("Trust and Social Capital Survey").

This criticism also reflects a particular distinction in taste based on class, as certain activities such as skiing have been labeled as "rich." For example, skiing serves not merely as an opportunity to form **bonding social capital** among the fairly homogeneous group of upper-class students which this activity is accessible to, but also serves an aesthetic purpose. Having a ski pass for Sugarbush, or the equipment, experience, or clothing needed for skiing, signifies a certain place within the Middlebury community just as much as it marks one's economic status. The distinction brought about by demonstrating the skiing aesthetic is not "only an incidental component in the aesthetic disposition" (Bourdieu 1984: 23). The comment that skiing is an "uber-white and rich" activity indicates a significant difference in taste that represents a "social break" between class tastes (Bourdieu 1984: 23-4).

Brokerages of Elite Capture

Several on-campus activities were also referenced as exclusionary spaces in our responses. 49 students mentioned being unable to attend concerts or performances due to the cost of tickets, and 36 students felt excluded from sports or club activities because they could not afford the cost of dues or equipment. Exclusion from on-campus events and groups is particularly concerning, as Middlebury aims to be an inclusive space conducive to forming **bridging social capital**, which is essential for "linkage to external assets and for information diffusion" (Putnam 2000: 22). This also demonstrates the concerning problem of elite capture, as the students who are financially able to consistently attend these events are able to expand their social networks as they interact with other students and faculty and are able to earn distinction through their exhibition of certain tastes (Bourdieu 1984: 12). As researchers have found, elites tend to "[use] their networks to feed their own self-interests and unleash the downside of social capital on the rest of the group" (Adhikari and Goldey 2010: 190).

Elite capture is particularly prevalent in regards to sports teams at Middlebury. There is a significant difference between how varsity athletes responded to the question on how often they

felt excluded due to economic circumstances and how the general student population responded. Among all students, only about 30% said that they never felt excluded. Among athletes, more than 45% of respondents said that they never felt excluded. The majority of athletes, 78.6%, claimed that they either "rarely" or "never" were excluded due to their economic background. This leads to some interesting possible conclusions. The first is that sports teams benefit from elite capture and are therefore likely comprised of higher-income students. Some of our survey data supports this conclusion, as athletes are less likely to be working on campus than non-athletes (48.7% of athletes do not work compared to 31% of non-athletes), and are slightly more likely to have gone on a number of destination vacations (45.5% of athletes have gone on at least 3 in the last 2 years, compared to 37.6% of the non-athletes). A number of students also cited the costs associated with being part of a sports team as reasons for feeling excluded, and students we interviewed also referenced a perception of athletes tending to be wealthier than the rest of the student population ("David," personal interview, May 5, 2018; "Bertha," personal interview, May 11, 2018). However, athletes also may not be able to work due to the time commitment of their sport and it may therefore be impossible to make a general statement on the economic status of athletes based entirely on our data.

The second possible conclusion to be drawn from our results is that athletic teams serve an important function as a brokerage of trust between students. Because all of the students on a given sports team share an interest in that sport, they are in a homophilous context which "[gives] rise to the trustworthiness that arises from one's ability to identify with the concerns of others" (Small 2009: 115). Involvement in an athletic team additionally requires repeated cooperative interactions with other students, which often increases their willingness to trust one another (Small 2009: 115). Middlebury athletes may also form connections with athletes from other colleges through repeated interaction, expanding their social networks and broadening the range of resources they are able to draw on. The athletic teams at Middlebury stimulates bonding social capital between athletic (generally white) people. The opportunities for bonding social capital at Middlebury are plentiful. Events such as school sponsored clubs and skiing find similar students and group them together. This builds friendships on campus, but it fails to reach students who are not similar to other students on campus. This raises the question of this semester's research – how do we reach people on campus who feel isolated?

Vulnerable Groups
Firstly, let's identify who these isolated people are. For the sake of this paper we will focus on people who feel economically isolated. One striking thing about the cohort of people who reported feeling economically isolated "often" or "very often" in our survey is the proportionally large number of minorities. Inside our survey 17.8% of respondents were persons of color; however, 41.8% of the economically isolated group is made up of people of color. This leads to unfortunate implications. People of color at Middlebury are more likely to be economically isolated than their white counterparts. Poor persons of color on campus are incredibly distant from the "Midd kid" ideal (rich, white, etc.). Another key attribute of the

economically isolated cohort is they are much more likely to work on campus than their peers. 86.7% of this group works on campus. 30-40% of the student body as a whole works on campus (Office of Student Employment, personal communication). Thus, a solution targeting the working population at Middlebury would reach many students who feel economically isolated. Another unfortunate truth about working is that it takes time. Time spent at work is time not spent with friends which can be socially crippling to those who work on campus. Although many students find ways to form friendships at work, these friendships often times are constrained to the work place with the occasional hello walking around campus. On the bright side (sort of), the stereotypical Middlebury student is busy. The juggling act of finding time for school work, friends, and extracurricular activities isn't exclusive to students with a job.

One of the most notable takeaways from the survey came from outside of the economic section; when asked "Are you more likely to trust other students who racially identify the same way you do?" students of color were much more likely to respond yes than their white peers. The difference is astounding – 65% of African American respondents reported that they were more likely to trust someone who racially identified the same way they did, compared to just 15.7% of white students! We hypothesize that trust formation happening more rapidly within a minority group is not restricted to race. Due to **homophily**, we believe trust would build quickly within queer communities and other groups as well; at Middlebury this might occur among people of low economic status. Unfortunately, our survey didn't go into this question. However, finding if there is a correlation that people of lower class status are also more likely to trust one another should be investigated in future research.

Part 3: Interviews
Methodology

In order to obtain a deeper understanding of how economic isolation is experienced by students at Middlebury, we chose to conduct semi-structured interviews with a number of students, as well as with Professor Miguel Fernandez, who works with first-generation students in the program First @ Midd. Because of the small population size of low-income students at Middlebury and the relative difficulty of locating such students, we chose to focus on an organization that works with first-generation students due to the increased likelihood that such students come from a low-income or working-class background. For our research, we interviewed four Middlebury students, three of whom identified as coming from lower or working-class backgrounds. One of these students was also first-generation. The last student identified as upper-class. It is important to note that these students were not selected through random sampling, but were friends with the researchers. We believe that the personal relationships between interviewees and researchers facilitated open and honest dialogue about the potentially uncomfortable topics surrounding class and isolation. All of the names appearing below are pseudonyms, with the exception of Professor Fernandez. We then transcribed and coded these interviews, paying special attention to instances where students described themselves as feeling isolated (Charmaz 2006). Our interview questions were also informed by

our survey results, leading us to ask questions focusing on particular aspects of life at Middlebury such as working on campus and ski culture.

<u>Deviations from Middlebury's Dominant Habitus</u>

One of the clearest themes to emerge in our interviews is the significance of habitus on students' experiences. Our research hypothesized that students who possess a habitus that does not align with the dominant habitus of the student body, which can be assumed to be an upper-class habitus based on studies of Middlebury's economic diversity ("Economic Diversity" 2017), are more likely to feel isolated on campus. This hypothesis appears to be accurate, as our interviews provided evidence to support this idea. David, a first-generation student who identified his background as working-class, describes feeling like a "foreigner" on campus ("David," personal interview, May 5, 2018). David experiences an inability to relate to other students at Middlebury and even feels a "shame" associated with his economic background ("David," personal interview, May 5, 2018). The following quote exemplifies a sense of displacement that is evident in the lives of students from lower or working-class backgrounds:

> There's also this culture amongst poor folk of being very reclusive and very submissive amongst rich people. Every time as a kid when I went over to one of the nicer houses, I just felt very uncomfortable because I felt like I wasn't allowed to touch these nice things or I wasn't allowed to be in that space. Because of the feeling that I might get that dirty. Which is weird, you have this perception that you are dirty and don't belong. And that same feeling comes about when, for example, I've snuck into Atwater parties and I've seen these male football players who in addition to displaying their male aggressiveness, very much…there's this connotation with, 'I have power over you, financially and physically' ("David," personal interview, May 5, 2018).

When David enters a privileged environment, the "uncomfortable" atmosphere he experiences is an excellent example of the feeling of having the wrong habitus in an unfamiliar social field. David marks himself as "dirty," and changes his behavior to be "submissive" ("David," personal interview, May 5, 2018). In our interview with Miguel Fernandez, he brings up a similar issue he has seen among first-generation students, which he describes as the "imposter syndrome" (Miguel Fernandez, personal interview, April 18, 2018). Students dealing with this issue feel as though "they don't really have the knowledge for [the position they are in], so they're constantly putting on a face of something that they aren't" (Miguel Fernandez, personal interview, April 18, 2018). David also experiences this environment as one of hostility, which may be due entering a space in which there is a harmful norm that discourages certain students from participating (Adhikari and Goldey 2010: 186).

David's experience is not anomalous either. Based on his experience working with first-generation students, Miguel Fernandez says that finding "a sense of belonging" and dealing with "an assumption that they're different to everybody else, that it's an elitist school" are two of the

most common issues these students struggle with (Miguel Fernandez, personal interview, April 18, 2018). This sense of isolation and alienation from other students is in large part driven by the symbolic "practices and products" which have been structured by Middlebury's dominant upper-class habitus (Bourdieu 1984: 166). "Social identity is defined and asserted through difference" (Bourdieu 1984: 167), which allows certain groups to distinguish themselves on campus through specific aesthetics or activities. One of the most obvious examples of this differentiation is the distinction that is awarded through wearing a Canada Goose jacket, which was mentioned both by David and by another student in an interview. This student, who chose the pseudonym "Bertha," identifies as having been raised in a middle-class environment, but currently lives with her mother who is "below the poverty line" due to unfortunate circumstances including the 2007-08 recession ("Bertha," personal interview, May 11, 2018). Bertha expresses the impact that habitus can have on taste through her statement, "If I had that much money I wouldn't spend it on that dumb jacket" ("Bertha," personal interview, May 11, 2018). Canada Goose has become a product at Middlebury that marks and expresses class differences, and the tastes of students accordingly align with their respective class identities.

Certain activities at Middlebury also serve as unique representations of upper-class habitus; sports such as skiing have become distinctive markers on campus that signify class status. Bertha, who herself skis, describes the sport as "bougie" and expresses frustration that it is such an inaccessible activity ("Bertha," personal interview, May 11, 2018). She also conveys the internal pressures exerted by Middlebury's dominant habitus to realize the "unitary world view it engenders" (Bourdieu 1984: 396).

> [talking about the role of skiing at Middlebury] I think it plays a big role. I think it plays a bigger role than we give it credit for, because on the one hand it's like we're in Vermont, everyone does something outside in Vermont pretty much, and then skiing, because Middlebury is known for having its own ski mountain, because we have Winter Carnival and we go to see the ski races, I feel like there's definitely a pressure to at least get out there once ("Bertha," personal interview, May 11, 2018).

This quote reveals the extent to which certain aspects of Middlebury's dominant habitus, such as skiing, have become normalized on campus. This can be extended to many other outdoor activities that were identified as exclusionary in our survey responses, as the outdoor aesthetic has become a normalized aspect of Middlebury's dominant habitus.

The Habitus-Block

Habitus can operate as an obstacle just as much as it can exert pressure to conform. Low-income students at Middlebury can experience a **habitus-block**, in that they find their own habitus to be incompatible with the dominant upper-class habitus. This prevents them from participating in activities which would award distinction among their upper-class peers, and also inhibits the creation of bridging capital between students of differing socio-economic status.

David experiences this in regards to skiing, expressing that he finds ski culture to be too "unfamiliar" and that spending money to ski seems "absurd" ("David," personal interview, May 5, 2018). Even if low-income students had the financial means to support skiing, many would choose not to do so because they would not feel comfortable conforming to a dominant habitus that they are unfamiliar with. Similarly, David demonstrates how this habitus-block that discourages working-class students from participating in sports is formed:

> I was never put in sports as a child, because my parents didn't have time. Oftentimes because parents are so busy, or simply because of money, oftentimes these sports that you get put into cost money, sometimes you can't get into that. Or there's no sports culture at your house because your parents are overprotective. You're not exposed to it ("David," personal interview, May 5, 2018).

The prevalence of the habitus-block also became clear through our interview with Miguel Fernandez, who emphasized that first-generation students often have a "perception" that there are some teams or clubs they cannot afford to be a part of (Miguel Fernandez, personal interview, April 18, 2018). Bourdieu, in his own analysis of sports including skiing, golf, and tennis, emphasizes that there are "hidden entry requirements, such as family tradition and early training" which make it especially difficult for those outside of the upper-class to participate in these activities (1984: 214).

Working on Campus and Economic Isolation

As stated above, one of the most interesting results from our survey was that students who work on campus were much more likely to feel economically isolated. This led us to pursue further information on how students experience work at Middlebury through our interviews. Professor Fernandez offered one reason why students who work may feel more isolated, as "students who have to work couldn't afford not to work" and therefore missed out on opportunities to bond with other students (Miguel Fernandez, personal interview, April 18, 2018). Intriguingly, the students we interviewed offered a contradictory view to the one we found in our survey; they actually felt that their jobs on campus had improved their experience at Middlebury and that they were actually *less* isolated because of their work ("David," personal interview, May 5, 2018; "Bertha," personal interview, May 11, 2018). Bertha described feeling a connection with many of her co-workers in the dining hall, both fellow student-workers and staff, and attributed her ability to go on trips over break to the pay she received from her work ("Bertha," personal interview, May 11, 2018).

These students did agree that there were some drawbacks to working however. David, who worked for long hours in the afternoon during his first year at Middlebury, said "When you work in such large gaps, you end up missing out on some events. Especially if the prime socializing time is when you're working" ("David," personal interview, May 5, 2018). Bertha also described how she occasionally feels alienated from other students when she is working,

saying "You're not always treated as you'd expect to be, and it's weird interacting with other students as a student versus as a laborer" ("Bertha," personal interview, May 11, 2018). In this sense, these jobs fail to serve as effective brokerage institutions between those students who work on campus and those who do not.

Habitus also appears to influence which students ultimately decide to work at Middlebury. Both David and Bertha state that they are uncomfortable asking for money from home, and that they rely on their campus jobs for almost all of their personal spending ("David," personal interview, May 5, 2018; "Bertha," personal interview, May 11, 2018). David attributes this to a part of his upbringing in the following quote.

> There's this culture among people who come from the working-class that we have to sort of put up with any struggle that comes our way because there are people who have had it worse. That's something that's been drilled into our heads since we were born. It's, 'don't complain, because people have it worse.' So when we encounter problems or issues in our life, our natural instinct is to say 'suck it up' ("David," personal interview, May 5, 2018).

David's habitus results in him categorizing many of the struggles that he faces as ones that he must deal with himself, without seeking help. This may be a motivating factor for many students coming from working-class backgrounds who choose to work on campus.

Friendship Case Study: How Economic Barriers and the Habitus Shape Social Networks

To display the real-life impact financial background can have on the creation of friendships we'll look into the lives of two freshmen at Middlebury last year: Ethan and Chad. Chad, an affluent white male, lives in the same hall as Ethan, who does not come from an economically thriving family. The two quickly became friends during orientation week. Inside orientation week their economic differences were masked by the planned mixers. The rigid structure of orientation helped facilitate bonds between the incoming students. As Small realized in his book *Unanticipated Gains* (2009), rigid structure can lead to the formation of social bonds. This is exactly the phenomenon that happens during orientation; students are forced together at rigidly scheduled times. A byproduct of being in the same place at the same time is the opportunity to talk and connect. The strict structure alongside the eagerness of incoming students makes orientation week a breeding ground for friendships. One of the many friendships that was made during that week was between Chad and Ethan. Ethan recalls first meeting Chad at one of the orientation events- "when the head of the event told us we could pick our partners we made eye contact" ("Ethan" personal interview, May 7, 2018). Inside our interview, we questioned Ethan on why he was drawn to Chad as a potential friend to which he responded "he looked like a cool guy. Athletic… I thought we'd have similar interests" ("Ethan" personal interview, May 7, 2018). Ethan's initial desire to connect with Chad can be explained by Merton's notion of **homophily** (Small 2009: 100). Homophily is the process through which people are more likely

to befriend/trust those who are similar to them (similar by race, background, habitus, etc). When Ethan saw Chad, he likely saw someone similar to himself as they are both white athletic individuals at Middlebury College.

Ethan and Chad's friendship didn't wane as the academic year began. Another key factor helped foster Ethan and Chad's friendship- proximity. Both students lived on the same freshman hall. The first year counselors on their hall hosted "Taquito Time" each week. During "Taquito Time" everyone on the hall was invited to come in and enjoy some delicious taquitos while listening to music and there were constant games of Mario Kart running on the counselor's TV. The weekly occasion broadened Ethan and Chad's friendship; through "Taquito Time" Ethan and Chad found a mutual interest in Mario Kart and made plans to play touch football with a larger group. Throughout the fall semester the two friends got closer and closer. When I asked Chad about the fall he reminisced- "there was a point that fall where [Ethan] and I would have a couple beers and play Mario Kart together every chance we got. It was a tradition" ("Chad" personal interview, May 12, 2018). It is important to note that Ethan and Chad weren't the only ones that participated in Mario Kart, drinking, and flag football; they were part of a larger social group. For simplicity we'll call this social group "the bros." In the fall Ethan and Chad were both socially equal members of "the bros." They were both invited to every hangout and part of a socially important group chat that kept the members of the "bros" inside the loop on what was happening.

However, the seasons changed; winter befell Ethan and Chad's friendship. With winter snow came ski season for Middlebury students. Chad is an excellent skier. He's been skiing since 7th grade. Through his years of experience, he can now traverse some of the most difficult trails Vermont has to offer. Ethan, on the other hand, has never skied in his life. So when "the bros" made a trip to the Snow Bowl, Ethan didn't attend. When we asked Ethan about that moment –

> They talked about [skiing] a lot before then... I knew all of them were really excited to finally get out and ski together and I was excited for them. I guess I was a little sad that I wasn't going there with them, but I remember I had a chance to get some work done. We also had plans to play Mario Kart later, so I would still see all of them later ("Ethan" personal interview, May 7, 2018).

And at first things were normal. Ethan still hung out with "the bros" every day. Then as J-term began "the bros" made plans to ski all the time. There began to be nights where they wouldn't drink as much in preparation for an intense ski session the following day. The group chat filled with messages making plans to go skiing, videos of them skiing, everything was about skiing. That's when Ethan began to feel a little left out. Chad, among others, offered to give Ethan ski lessons, however, he refused. We asked Ethan why he turned them down – "First of all the equipment and everything to actually go skiing is expensive. And even if I tried to ski I would never be able to keep up with my friends" ("Ethan" personal interview, May 7, 2018). Ethan is

right, and once again the influence of the habitus-block can be seen in how he is unable to conform to Middlebury's dominant habitus.

The wedge that skiing brought between Ethan and the rest of "the bros" deepened when spring break came. All the others made plans to go skiing in Colorado together. Ethan was left out as the rest of the guys had an incredible bonding experience. Then the most impactful divide came when it was time to decide living arrangements for the next year. "The bros" who went on the spring break trip made plans to live in a block together. Ethan was left out. This was the breaking point. The spatial proximity that was a binding force inside their friendship was lost. Throughout their sophomore year Ethan and Chad lived separate lives. "The bros" didn't intend to ostracize Ethan from their group. Chad has been on the record saying, "We all wished Ethan had come skied with us. We loved the dude" ("Chad" personal interview, May 12, 2018). But the initial structural forces of orientation and proximity that had held their friendship together had collapsed, and they were unable to overcome the obstacle of a differing habitus.

Conclusions

Our interviews allowed us to gain an in-depth understanding of why activities such as skiing are so inaccessible to some students at Middlebury, as well as the consequences this can have on students in their social lives. In order for Middlebury to effectively combat this issue, it will need to support structures which facilitate the creation of bridging capital, which has the potential to create bonds that are more inclusive and are not subject to Middlebury's dominant habitus (Putnam 2000: 22). Orientation is just one example of how the college can create bridging capital, but in order for any such program to have a lasting impact, it must be maintained throughout students' time on campus. Social capital is difficult to maintain on its own, and the involvement of Middlebury programs as third-party mediators is vital to creating sustainable social capital (Adhikari and Goldey 2010: 191).

Part 4: Recommendations to Facilitate Bridging Capital and Overcome Elite Capture

One of the most repetitive complaints from the economic section of our survey is feeling excluded from skiing. This is understandable as skiing has a huge initial cost. Poor students simply can't afford the equipment and mountain pass necessary to ski. Furthermore, those students are excluded from more than just the act of skiing. People who can't afford to ski are also barred from ski culture. One suggestion to help alleviate this – create more activities at the Snow Bowl besides just skiing. Ice skating has a relatively low initial cost for the consumer and requires much less training. Ice skating would give students who can't afford to ski an opportunity to be a part of the ski culture and be a part of bonding experiences such as the bus ride to the Snow Bowl. This would also aid in shifting the norms created by the dominant habitus at Middlebury and therefore eliminate both the impact of the habitus-block and the incorporation of exclusionary activities in the "Middlebury experience."

Ice skating is just one of the many skiing alternatives that could be offered, but some students have their hearts set on being skiers. It may not be economically feasible to make skiing

universally accessible to all students. However, school-mediated gear exchanges and ski lessons could make the dream of becoming a skier achievable for more students. For students who can't ski, it may be too late for them to become expert skiers in college, but the sheer number of people in our survey who want to ski would suggest that students would appreciate any effort to make skiing more accessible.

One opportunity to help realize the college's mission of lowering social obstacles for students from low economic backgrounds would be making tickets for school events such as concerts available for free to students who work on campus. This would help weaken the role of wealth in social events. Another opportunity to make the campus less exclusionary for those from lower economic backgrounds would be making J-term workshops and on-campus events free for those who receive financial aid on campus, thereby tearing down economic barriers to such events. The First @ Midd program is already attempting to deal with many of these cost barriers for first generation students from low-income backgrounds through the creation of a "money hub," which would centralize funds for students to draw on (Miguel Fernandez, personal interview, April 18, 2018). We would strongly recommend supporting this program as well as expanding it to continue engaging with these students throughout their time at Middlebury.

Two additional recommendations came forward directly from the students in our interviews with them. The first recommendation is to make information regarding financial aid and work opportunities more easily accessible and understandable for students. Specifically, both David and Bertha mentioned that the process of buying textbooks had been both confusing and a source of stress ("David," personal interview, May 5, 2018; "Bertha," personal interview, May 11, 2018). This is particularly concerning, as textbooks are a required tool for students to succeed at Middlebury and should be readily available for all students.

The second recommendation was brought up by David in his interview, suggesting that Middlebury should offer alternatives for study abroad ("David," personal interview, May 5, 2018). Coming from a minority and working-class background, David found the bureaucratic requirements for studying abroad to be an unnecessary hassle. He also expressed a feeling of isolation due to the fact that he would be unable to relate to the experiences of his friends once they returned from their own study abroad programs ("David," personal interview, May 5, 2018). The solution he offered was for Middlebury to create alternative experiences for students who are unable to study abroad.

Lastly, keeping an open conversation with students about ways to make the campus more inclusive would leave the door open for future insights. This report was limited by its semester-long research process, and any attempts at continuing this research in the coming years would aid greatly in assuring that students' concerns are addressed and that Middlebury continues to become a more inclusive space.

Concluding Remarks

Our research has found that several groups on campus face particularly detrimental experiences of economic isolation. Students of color, student-employees, and first-generation

students all stood out through both our survey results and our interviews. We have found that the habitus can act as both a normalizing force on campus, exacerbating the effects of exclusionary activities that conform to upper-class tastes, and as an obstacle for disadvantaged students in the form of the habitus-block. In order for Middlebury to become a more inclusive space for students of all economic backgrounds, it must take advantage of its role as a brokerage institution. This may come in the form of expanding already existing programs, such as First @ Midd, or through the creation of new organizations on campus to encourage sustainable bridging capital between students.

Currently, many students feel that certain aspects of life both on and off campus are inaccessible. Activities including skiing, break trips, and even events such as concerts and performances present either economic or social barriers to students from lower or working-class backgrounds, barring them from access to the social capital created in those moments and perpetuating systemic elite capture. Middlebury can only become a more inclusive space by both shifting the norms of the dominant habitus through offering alternatives and by providing support for those students who wish to participate but are financially unable to do so. "That goes beyond support for the cost of attendance, and into support for the cost of experience" (Patton 2018). Economic isolation on campus is an issue. *The New York Times* highlighted the degree to which Middlebury is made up of students from the upper-class in a widely read article last year. There will be no "fix-all" solution for economic isolation. However, the recommendations in this report could set forth a plan to improve the quality of life for poor students on campus.

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Chapter 5: Style and Exclusion:
An Analysis of Middlebury's Queer Community

Introduction

On March 9th, 2018, The Middlebury Campus published an article by sophomore Ami Furgang titled *Calling All Queer People*. In it, he calls attention to a perceived lack of a cohesive queer community on campus. Community, in this instance, refers to a set of social networks that link people to spaces, events, and other people in ways that facilitate the formation of trust and social capital. After the publication of this article, Furgang went on to host a "Queer Voices" event that showcased different queer and non-queer survey responses in a discussion-based forum as a way to build some semblance of community. We decided to further explore this topic. The purpose of our overall research is to see if Ami's feelings concerning the lack of community are also felt by other queer students on campus. We do this by looking at two major themes that arose in the interviews - one, confrontations between queer identifying students and heterosexual norms, and two, confrontations within the queer community regarding sexual identities. How do queer students attempt to mediate these confrontations? In the course of this paper, we will argue that the use of physical presentation is one way in which queer students seek to avoid these conflicts.

Physical presentation alone has an exclusive nature to it - for students who don't present as "gay," they can be miscategorized by both straight and queer students and forced to work harder to ensure their identities are correctly perceived. This social labor and 'cultural tax' is unevenly distributed, and this inequity often leads to frustration and resentment. The lack of queer spaces on campus adds to this problem. Our research, interviews, and survey analyses, show that the establishment of queer spaces and specific administrative personnel are two ways to make the queer community more accessible for new or peripheral members.

Theoretical Framework

Important in our discussion of a queer community is a definition of queerness. This is clearly a tricky affair - who can decide what does and does not constitute queer identity? What exactly is an identity? Following in the footsteps of Peter Geschiere in his book *Witchcraft, Intimacy and Trust: Africa in Comparison*, we will "follow the use of [particular terms] and the shifting ways people employ them to address changing situations" in a way that captures the "fluidity and ambiguity that seems to be the secret to the resilience of these ideas" (Geschiere 2013: 9). While we do not want to use terms so general that they lose meaning, we do not want to impose our own etic interpretations onto an unfamiliar community. We stumbled across one definition in Furgang's article: "I use the word "queer" to refer to anyone who is not straight and/or cis" (Furgang 2018: no page). Interviews and survey results echoed his definition, so it appears to be a good starting point. Generally in sociology and anthropology, a 'social identity' is a category and a classification of a group's behavior, thought, and style, not the self-awareness

and 'personal identity' of an individual (Barnard and Spencer 2002:292). In this chapter we follow the local usage of terms such as 'queer' at Middlebury, and also examine this term as a social identity that is continuously constructed as a negotiation between self and society.

In the discussion of physical presentation, it is necessary to establish a category of **"marked"** appearances. According to Ellen Lewis in her article *Who's Queer? What's Queer? Queer Anthropology through the Lens of Ethnography*, "Gay identity [is] linked to activities understood to be uncompromisingly gay" (Lewis 2016: 601). These activities are often linked to stereotypes - the examples provided are clubbing and musical theater. In the same way that activities can be marked as queer, so can presentation be marked in the form of style. In the Bourdieuian style of social analysis, physical presentation is a way for individuals to distinguish themselves. Specific styles are "tastes of luxury" - because the distinctions in clothes are not necessary in a utilitarian sense, they carry symbolic significance that separates social groups (Bourdieu 1984: 173). Style, then, is performed **habitus**, which Bourdieu defines as "durable and transposable dispositions through which we perceive, judge, and act in the world" (McGee and Warms 2012: 494). Habitus is the matrix of possibilities available to an individual; style allows individuals to display which choices they are making. When an individual feels comfortable in their body, they are following the dominant habitus of their social field; when uncomfortable, they are not.

Erving Goffman gives us a lens through which to analyze, and a vocabulary with which to talk about, this performance. An individual's appearance tells us the performer's social status and role in the ongoing scene of a social drama. The activity of the individual in front of their audience gives meaning to themselves, their audience, and the situation. The purpose of these appearances is to mediate confrontations and communicate implicit knowledge, as Mario Small explains. Contrary to the belief that specific information, like someone's name or address, are prerequisites for trust, Small argues that "implicit knowledge" is what actually creates trust (2009). Implicit knowledge can take many forms, from observed actions to physical appearances. Style serves as a symbol that "bridge[s] between the known and the unknown" and facilitates trust by providing context clues that allow for expectations about behavior to be formed (Hosking 2014: 40). The following sections will combine interview and survey data to demonstrate these points and will delve into the exclusive nature of style that comes from, as Robert Putnam would say, "too much" social capital (2000).

Confrontations with Heteronormativity

Many queer students feel that they come into conflict with heteronormative standards on campus. By "come into conflict," we are referring to the imposition of heterosexual norms onto queer students' social lives. Since Middlebury is such a small campus, and a majority of the campus is heterosexual and cisgender, most students assume their peers fit into heteronormative categories. Queer students expressed frustration with their professors', staff members', and peers' assumptions that they abide by heterosexual norms, and said they often feel awkward correcting people who have assumed their identity. One student we interviewed, Georgia,

identifies as a cisgender female who "like[s] people for who they are and not their genitalia" and is new to the queer community on campus. She has dated men in the past, so her peers typically assume that she's straight. Another respondent, Nick, said that he had an experience where his fellow students believed that he and his best friend, who is a girl, were dating. He identifies as a homosexual cisgender male, but self-admittedly does not fit into any of the "gay stereotypes," so his straight peers assumed he was straight.

These assumptions mean that queer students have the burden of explaining their sexuality to their heterosexual peers who, innocently or not, end up pushing heteronormative culture onto those who do not identify as heterosexual. Georgia feels "a little uncomfortable when [she] first tells someone [about her sexuality] and [they've] been friends for a while" because they will apologize for pushing heteronormative culture onto her. She feels compelled to comfort her friends and tell them that everything is okay, but wishes she were not burdened with this task. As she mentioned in her interview:

> I was talking with one of my friends… we were talking about their plans for the weekend, and which guys they were gonna get with and stuff, and my friend was like 'oh ya, Georgia, any boys you're looking at?'… and it just discounted a whole [aspect of my identity].

Georgia did not want correct her friends, both because of her discomfort and because she did not want them to feel badly. In this instance, using gender specific pronouns to refer to a potential romantic partner discounts an entire part of Georgia's sexual identity and forces her to work to be identified correctly - we will refer to this work as "social labor" (which, as the chapter 2 argues, is often 'abrasive'). Criticism of that nature might imply that her friends either do not know her as well as they think or do not care, even though this might not be the message Georgia is trying to convey. For many queer students, talking about their sexuality or correcting their friends is uncomfortable - this often means that heteronormative assumptions go unchallenged, and open discussion is absent.

Georgia also shared that her friends are not particularly knowledgeable about queer social identities. Rather than explaining her sexuality to her friends, since it does not fit neatly into a label, she will usually describe herself as "bisexual, because they know what that means." The campus community lacks the knowledge to recognize individuals who fall outside of the gay-straight binary (either heterosexual or homosexual); the '+' of LGBTQ+ is often lost on students. The lack of knowledge about queer issues by heterosexual/cisgender students means that queer students struggle to identify themselves to their straight peers, often leading to uncomfortable explanations and the essentialization of queer identities.

Confrontation within Queer Community

A major source of confrontation within the queer community concerns those who have recently come to terms with their social identities - for those who have just shed their straight

identity, joining the gay community is often difficult. The question of *who is queer enough* was a common theme in the interviews and survey, and it reflects the sentiment regarding queer-identity exclusivity and gatekeeping. Some people, like Emma, "feel intimidated to go to community events" because she does not feel "gay enough." What exactly does this mean within the Middlebury context? Part of it is due to the College's insularity and small size, which Emma thinks could serve as a "limiting factor." As Chapter 5 explains, this insularity is characteristic of 'total intimacy' at a 'total institution' that caters for and controls nearly every aspect of the lives of its students. Walking into various Queers and Allies programming, she feels as if "it's the same people going to the events all the time," which makes her feel like more of an outsider than a community member. Her lack of familiarity, coupled with the demonstrated intimacy between frequent attendees, makes her uncomfortable.

Appearance is the subject of another more subtle form of exclusion for members who are at the periphery of the queer community. When discussing some of the queer events on campus, Emma mentioned that she did not look queer in the same way other community members did:

> I hate when I used to go to [Queer House] events and people in the "queer" community would tell me I looked too straight to be there. [My presentation] doesn't mean I don't love women. I hate the narrative that just because I look a certain way, I can't be queer.

Another interviewee, Charles, noted:

> I think there's like the gang who hangs out in [the Queer Studies house]... those who are very comfortable with their sexual identity and present themselves… in a way that, like, shows that they're very comfortable… so I think that myself and other kids [who are new to the community] kind of feel intimidated to go to community events because it's the fear of 'oh, am I not gay enough?

Emma's and Charles' presentations - ones that are perceived by queer community members to be marked as "straight" - present a barrier to their entry into the community. Because they do not fit the accepted queer style (habitus), they lose access to the social networks that queer-presenting students have. In situations like these, the result can be "sexually frustrated girls [or other genders]" who "dress like [straight students] but…[are] discounted" as members of the queer community.

Another confrontation within the queer community that was revealed through the data collection process is the invisibility of the bisexual identity. "Queerness is a spectrum," Emma made clear in her interview, but it often is not treated as such on campus. "I am frustrated by the lack of bisexual visibility; there are lots of bisexual women on campus but not many that I would consider a part of Midd's queer community," Emma noted, illustrating the difficulty that many bisexual students have in finding a place on campus. "Even within the LGBTQ+ community,"

she indicates that there is more widespread acceptance of "people who are only homosexual rather than bisexual."

Bisexual invisibility is exacerbated by the difficulty in expressing a queer social identity after being in a heteronormative relationship. One female-identifying respondent, frustrated with her lack of perceived queerness after dating several men, commented:

> As a bisexual woman who definitely has a preference for women, but hasn't had the opportunity to actually [date] a woman, and has been in several long term relationships with men, I feel like my sexuality is often invisible, and find myself feeling not queer enough to belong to the queer community. Feeling like, what if I'm faking it? Overall, feeling like it's invisible and insufficient.

Because she has only dated men on campus, her friends assumed she was straight - these assumptions have pigeonholed her into a social identity she does not identify with, and forced her to undergo the abrasive social labor it takes to correct them. The work of adjusting other people's behavior to fit a marginalized habitus is both difficult and debilitating. The end result is both internal cognitive isolation as well as social anxiety - the two are inseparable.

The lack of visibility felt by many bisexual students extends to most other sexualities that fall outside of the gay-straight binary - this includes those who identify as bisexual, pansexual, asexual, and more. Many are frustrated at the lack of "support for people who feel like they're on the periphery." One of our interviewees, Austin, mentioned that "questioning your sexuality feels like you're in limbo… I wonder if that is in part [what] makes other people afraid to come out, because they're not in that environment [referring to the queer community]." The lack of "narratives of the questioning," coupled with BTQ+ invisibility and an exclusive social group, makes joining the community difficult.

Presentation as Mediation

Many interviewees and survey respondents use presentation to avoid the above confrontations and confusions. As performed habitus, style is an indicator of social and sexual identity. Habitus, as explained earlier, is the set of possibilities available to an individual given their social context, and is based off a series of behavioral improvisations which become standardized. The way a queer style habitus forms is through constant improv - as the community made efforts to distinguish itself through style, other members alter those styles, leading to a distinct set of dress regulations that define what it means to be gay-presenting. For example: when an established queer community member adopts a new style of dress, their social connectedness makes others more likely to both accept that new style and emulate it themselves. This set of "style rules" makes up what most Americans recognize as "gay stereotypes."

According to one of our interviewees, Phil, being aware of these stereotypes and using them to his advantage has made his life easier:

As someone who passes as male, it doesn't take much for people to see you as queer. Put on earrings, paint your nails, talk effeminately, these are all things I do partially for the purpose of being visibly queer. In high school some friends were surprised when I came out, but I have never really had to come out at Midd since everyone can sense it on me.

Comments of this kind were not uncommon; many survey respondents mention that, by playing into certain dress-code expectations, they could avoid the social labor it takes to identify as queer and therefore are able to avoid confrontations with heteronormative values. Most of our interviewees expressed that they were grateful for the ability to present gay - by "put[ting] on earrings [or] paint[ing] your nails," individuals effectively mark themselves as queer on their own accord and avoid having "coming out" conversations. These assumptions are not coercive because they are what the individual wants - when others correctly identify them as queer, they are spared having the types of conversations that Georgia has to have.

One of our interviewees also talked specifically about using presentation as a way to ease herself into queer culture. Matilda, a first year student, mentioned that while she is very accepting of her own bisexual identity, she is not totally comfortable with everyone knowing about it yet. Talking about wearing very specific items of clothing that she views as gay-presenting, she mentions that "I try to have subtle hints, but also… I'm not gonna show up in a rainbow suit." While the last part about a rainbow suit was followed by laughter and clearly intended as a joke, it highlights an important point - presentation allows queer individuals to choose exactly how they would like to be perceived. Matilda's familiarity with the queer style habitus allows her to present herself in a way that is just gay enough for her to be comfortable, but not too gay as to make herself stick out more than desired. Style, then, makes it easier to garner queer social capital and social bonding through physical identity manifestation.

As style gives individuals the ability to control exactly how much of their personal identity they express socially, it also allows them to assess other students' identities through the implicit knowledge gained by dress-code adherence. Implicit knowledge is a concept that comes from Mario Small's book *Unanticipated Gains: Origins of Network Inequality in Everyday Life*. In discussing trust networks formed between mothers with children at the same daycare center, Small asserts that it is not information that is the prerequisite for trust (as suggested by sociologist James Coleman, 1990), instead, it is "frequent exchange [that] builds trust" (Small 2009: 113). The example used by Small demonstrates that many mothers might not know each other's names but still trusted the other to look after their child in the event they could not pick them up right after daycare ended. Small saw that trust is formed through observation; if Mother A saw that Mother B was able to take care of her child, she would trust Mother B to look after Child A for a few hours. Concrete and seemingly basic information, like Mother B's name and address, was not necessary to gain Mother A's trust. Instead of using verifiable facts to make

their choices, mothers used the implicit knowledge gained from seeing how other mothers acted and presented themselves within the daycare context to assess if they could be helpful.

Style functions as an implicit sexuality and social identity communicator that allows members of the queer community to identify each other and build informal social networks without knowing explicit information. Style, then, facilitates faster identification - queer students can read encoded messages about sexuality without having straightforward conversations. Non-queer students, too, can read these dress codes and avoid putting heteronormative standards on queer students. For queer students who enjoy dressing in a gay-presenting way, style is useful: as we will discuss in a later section, however, it still leaves some students at the margins, and there is room for more inclusion.

Style as Identification, Identification as Trust

Style does more than mark queer identification - it also facilitates trust. Trust, in this context, is expectation-based and dependent on the abstract system of communal style. For background on **expectation-based trust**, historian Geoffrey Hosking writes that trust is "the expectation, based on good but less than perfect evidence, that events will turn out in a way not harmful to me" (Hosking 2014: 28). Trust is built on the premise of predictability, and the identification that comes from implicit knowledge allows for this. Fitting into the definition, the "evidence" of queerness is "less than perfect" - straight students could be performing the gay style habitus without meaning to, and inadvertently be sending messages to those looking for them. By putting faith into the collective consciousness and assuming that straight students will avoid doing this, queer students can identify and build networks with those they assume to be similarly queer. In this sense, queer style is an abstract system that serves as an agreement between those within and without the community.

The shared dress standard allows queer students to see "abstract systems" by falling into marked "social rhythms" that allow for safe exploration of face-to-face interactions (Giddens 1990: 80, 82). Style, then, allows for safety. One student, Charles, reflected this sentiment:

> In a place where it's safe and acceptable to not be straight, I don't want people to think I'm straight, because I'm not. I think in other situations, I might present myself as straight for safety purposes.

Charles makes the decision to don queer-marked clothing in situations where he *expects* that it's safe; he determines this safety based on the appearances of others. If they are performing queer habitus, he feels safe to do so as well; "in other situations," he might feel unsafe and decide to present in a heteronormative manner. Another survey respondent echoed this feeling - "people are using it [queer style] to feel safe and express themselves in a way they can't express themselves at any other party." Dress, and the implications and expectations it sets up, provide security to a community that is often threatened.

Safety aside, style makes it easier for queer individuals to trust that their romantic efforts are not all for nothing. One student, while admitting that they cannot always identify queer students correctly, noted that "stereotypes are helpful because if you're looking for someone romantically" you can do so more accurately. According to them, "even though aren't correct half the time," they allow for a semi-accurate expectation-based way of perceiving potential romantic partners. This helps queer students avoid putting themselves into situation where they may "waste their time" by attempting romance with someone not interested in their gender identity. Gay presentation allows queer students to avoid vulnerability and trust that their efforts are not going to be immediately rejected - this inherently links style to trust.

Style as Exclusive

As mentioned above, many queer-identifying students intentionally dress in order to perform their habitus and send social messages concerning sexual identity. This is a positive read of style - what happens to queer students who do not have a taste for queer presenting style? What happens to those who participate in the queer social field at Middlebury without the expected habitus? Many students, as mentioned earlier, expressed feelings of exclusion because of their straight-presenting style. Who determines what is gay, or straight? The question of who gets to define the habitus of gay presentation raises issues of power distribution within the queer community. Not everyone within the community has the same improvisational power when it comes to presentation, and this creates an unequal playing field that leaves some individuals feeling left out. According to Pierre Bourdieu in his explanation of habitus and changing culture, "behind [the defining of social norms] lies the whole social order;" distinctions are defined by the "faction richer in cultural capital" who have the most social impact (Bourdieu 1984: 173). Those with social access and prominent status within the queer community have the ability to decide what is queer and what isn't - their personal preferences eventually get worked into the accepted queer norm.

As a mediation of confrontation, then, style has an obvious downside in that it puts individuals with different taste and habitus on the margins of queer society. The problem ends up being *too much* bonding social capital among a small group. According to sociologist Roger Waldinger, "the same social relations that… enhance the ease and efficiency of economic exchanges among community members implicitly restrict outsiders" (Waldinger, cited in Portes and Landolt 1996: 2). While Waldinger is referring specifically to economic exchange relationships, the same goes for social exchange - relationships are built on give and take, and intragroup strength limits intergroup exchanges.

Community and social capital "demand conformity," and those who refuse are excluded (Portes and Landolt 1996: 2). The exclusion is cyclical. Those who are less secure in their identity may not feel comfortable performing a queer habitus of style; because of this, they lose access to queer networks and are repositioned as peripheral members. Putnam, in his book *Bowling Alone*, adds to this - "community restricts freedom and encourages intolerance" (Putnam 2001: 351). Because style serves to increase community in some ways, it stigmatizes

variations in presentation. Style, viewed in this light, can limit queer community access to the group of people on campus who have a particular taste in clothing and have the necessary social capital needed to join or alter that queer culture.

Opportunities for Gay Expression and Support: Spaces and Administrative Personal

In general, opportunities for queer expression at Middlebury are limited. Queer spaces on campus have largely been restricted to the Queer Studies House. This past April, Queers and Allies has facilitated many queer events in celebration of "Gaypril." For examples, they screened *Love, Simon*, held the Queer Voices event mentioned earlier, and put on a drag show. The drag show, which took place in Crossroads on the night of April 28th, was especially interesting. While neither of the authors here were able to attend the event due to conflicts in scheduling, we asked members of the queer community about it. During the drag performances, one student incorporated a speech from famous drag queen and transgender activist Sylvia Rivera. One interviewee, who was there during the show, noted:

> One really good moment was when [the performing student] incorporated this speech into his performance. There was a moment when [the student] was screaming gay power over and over and the audience was yelling it back and it was [very] meaningful.

McCullough is usually a heteronormative space in that queer events rarely happen there. This event, then, took a normally straight space and transformed it into a queer one full of both bridging and bonding social capital. The interviewee mentioned how much she enjoyed seeing a queer event take over a straight space - to her, it felt empowering. By converting a straight space into a gay one, Middlebury demonstrated a social transition towards more LGBTQ+ inclusion.

Using traditionally non-queer spaces for queer events is important and could lead to greater queer inclusion. As quoted earlier, the academic houses designated for queer events can be intimidating for new or peripheral members, and since they have faculty members involved in them, they don't feel completely oriented toward the student community. Using traditionally non-queer spaces for queer events lowers the barrier to entry for aspiring members of the gay community by diminishing the exclusive nature of existing queer spaces. It also serves to create another opportunity for inclusion for those who don't feel like they fit into the gay style habitus. Spaces, then, are an easy and feasible way to create more inclusion on campus - this initiative could come from any one of the multiple queer organizations at Middlebury.

A few interviewees also mentioned the possibility of including a queer-specific staff member. Our first interviewee was very explicit in his recommendation:

> I do know that there are colleges similar to Middlebury that have legit queer resource centers like here we have the AFC but it's for people of all marginalized identities, which is cool but also just way too broad… One thing that Q&A is

gonna hopefully work more on and people have tried this so many times in the past s [to] hire a single staff member…a queer coordinator who specializes in either supporting queer students or hosting events or anything in the middle. But I definitely know that we're lacking compared to other schools of our prestige, or size, and geography.

Of the ten other NESCAC schools, seven include queer-specific resource centers. Of those seven, three are staffed with administrative personnel. The seven schools are Amherst, Bowdoin, Connecticut College, Trinity, Hamilton, Tufts, and Wesleyan; the three with specific personnel are Amherst, Trinity, Wesleyan. Most resource centers included: a resource library, a space for queer-specific club meetings, a lounge space, and the opportunities for "ally" (referring to students who do not identify as members of the queer community) training. Many of these opportunities are available and appreciated at Middlebury, but not necessarily accessible for most community members. Below is a list of the resources available at the three specific institutions mentioned earlier:

At Amherst:
- Director of Queer Resource Center:
  - Non-student, full-time hired staff member who works to "bring change to campus through community building, stemming from programming."
- Race, Gender & Sexuality Education Specialist:
  - Develop programming to enhance students' understanding of race, gender, and sexual identity
- Student Outreach Interns who fit into one of these four positions:
  - An education coordinator
  - Two outreach coordinators
  - A program coordinator
  - A graphic designer

At Trinity:
- A professionally staffed space to support the educational, advocacy, and community building efforts for Trinity's LGBTQ+ population of students, staff, and faculty
- A Queer Resource Center Administrative Coordinator who:
  - Provides individual support and advocacy
  - Develops opportunities for queer leadership development
  - Advise the college on efforts to improve queer equity, access, compliance and opportunities

At Wesleyan:
- Queer Community Interns
  - Student members in charge of maintaining Queer Resource Center and planning programming

- Host office hours, once a week, for two hours
- A bridge between the Interns and Office of Student Activities and Leadership Development that helps sponsor events such as:
  - Monthly Queer Community Meeting
  - Pride Month
  - Queer Retreat
  - Weekly Support groups

These colleges provide models for the Middlebury administration to foster a more inclusive queer community on campus. The inclusion of resource centers with both full-time staff and student interns seems like a common way NESCAC colleges have attempted to make LGBTQ+ communities more accessible, and the authors feel that these programs could have a positive impact at Middlebury.

Conclusion

Our research shows that while there is a semblance of a queer community on campus, it is small and exclusive. For many queer students, access to social networks is difficult to obtain, and the established routes to gaining queer networks are intimidating. Administrative efforts to open up more spaces and implement staff members whose job is to deal specifically with issues within the queer community could help lower this barrier to entry. By creating more institutional and physical spaces for people to negotiate their personal and social identities, Middlebury could broaden the social field in which queer struggles to build social capital and community occur. More research would be helpful in determining a course of action; with the time and resource limitations we faced, we were unable to conduct an in depth study of the effectiveness of programs at the other NESCAC schools mentioned. Research of this kind would be the next step, and the authors believe it could lead to very positive changes for the queer community at Middlebury.

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Chapter 5: An Investigation of Body Image as a Source of Social Isolation at Middlebury College

Introduction

This work endeavors to examine the isolating experience of body image at Middlebury College. We will be taking both a top-down and bottom-up approach to our analysis, where we recognize both the influence of the institution of Middebury on student experience, and student agency in resisting or recapitulating norms.[1] The two perspectives leverage the discourse of top-down Foucauldian approach to power and the bottom-up actor-oriented conception of individual agency, as theorized by Norman Long. These inductive and deductive approaches are not mutually exclusive, but rather interrogate how the formation of norms simultaneously functions as both top-down and bottom-up, creating a network negotiation of power (Bourdieu 1984; Long 1992). As such, avoiding a reductive binary identifies the institution of Middlebury and students as interrelated categories.

Middlebury exists as a **total socio-ecological institution**, which results in **total intimacy** on campus. The idea of the total socio-ecological institution addresses the ways in which social and ecological dimensions fit together in a way that pervades everything in Goffman's usage of the word, 'total' (Goffman 1961). Middlebury can be considered a socio-ecological institution, as both social, i.e., student, and environmental, i.e., natural and built environments shape student experience at Middlebury. These socio-ecological dimensions are coupled with the notion of the total institution: a place of work and residence where a great number of similarly situated people, cut off from the wider community for a considerable time, together lead an enclosed, formally administered life (Goffman 1961).

The total socio-ecological nature of Middlebury breeds a certain type of intimacy, which we coin 'total intimacy' on campus. Typically, intimacy is conceptualized as a vulnerability of people within social groups, typically located in close relationships, such as family and friendships (Gerschiere 2013). Intimacy differs from the Middlebury experience of total intimacy; total intimacy is is the potential of judgement or betrayal by others (students), exacerbated by the totality of the institution, where there are limited spaces to eat, work out, study, and socialize on campus, due to the small residential nature of Middlebury. Thus, the experience of total intimacy for Middlebury students is different than the social intimacy of family and friend networks. In many ways, the social distance in total institutional intimacy makes this type of intimacy more difficult to navigate (Gerschiere 2013).

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[1] In late modernity, individuals form complex relationships to institutions, which serve as windows to understand the complexities of society (Giddens 1990). Institutional forces and norms often supersede individual action and thought, resulting in fixed, culturally constructed categorical identities (Giddens 1990). These identities then influence how an individual interacts with the world, how they negotiate their ideas of norms, which are then internalized and mapped onto the self (Bourdieu 1984).

The experience of total intimacy is related to the experience of trust, as unpacked by Peter Gerschiere, who believes that there is a triangular relationship among intimacy-witchcraft-(dis)trust, where "everyday life is still haunted by the tension between…the fear of intimacy that can give you the ones who are close a dangerous hold over you...the need to establish...some form of trust with...intimates in order to collaborate" (Gerschiere 2013:101). Intimacy, like trust, is never self-evident. "All we can hope for is to indicate certain factors or settings that make for a possible suspension of doubt as a condition for a trust that is never a given" (Gerschiere 2013: 32). If total intimacy is related to trust, we can conceptualize Middlebury as an institution with its own triangular relationship: total intimacy-trust-surveillance.

The **surveillance-habitus dialectic** is the negotiation of surveillance, as the simultaneous action of seeing and being seen, as informing students' behaviors and conceptions of the 'norm' at Middlebury, and vice versa. Pierre Bourdieu explores the relationship between institutions and individuals, identifying the process of informal institutional norms, i.e., a norm that emerges from behavior without anyone's intention, naturalizing individual taste, judgment, and other mental categories such as conceptions of a "good body". Institutional norms, such as the "good body" are then recapitulated societally through the individual's behavior, which we can call the **habitus**. The habitus creates a supposedly objective structure, i.e., a hierarchy of attractiveness, and operationalizes it through choice and action based upon these judgements (Siisianen 2003: 195). The normative body - one that is "athletic and thin" - at Middlebury is difficult to achieve and maintain, yet pervades as a social fact. This normative ideal creates feelings of isolation for many categories of students at the total institution of Middlebury. From experience and conversations, we assert that about 30% of students fit normative ideal, while 70% of students do not in some way or another.

The institutional context of total intimacy serves to magnify larger social issues of disordered eating and body image problems. These issues become more intense at Middlebury because of the institutional context. The total institution exacerbates these issues to such a point where some students feel like they cannot have the 'full' Middlebury College experience, whether due to feelings of surveillance in the dining hall and gym, or not feeling as if the College provides mental and medical support services. We will use survey data and interviews to support our claims.

Due to the overwhelmingly female demographic of survey respondents (60.6%), an entirely female set of interviewees, and our own gender identities as cisgender women, this work will generally address the female experience of body image at Middlebury. This is not to undermine or discount the male experience of body image, but to instead create a more concise and accurate argument.

Part 1: Theoretical Underpinnings
<u>Striving Towards an Ideal: Operationalizing the Habitus</u>
Individuals unconsciously shape themselves to accommodate categorical identities through the habitus. We examine how Middlebury students perform **body work**, which is the

management of one's looks and physical wellness, to cultivate the "good body" (Foucault as cited in Pylypa 1998). We have found that the process of identifying norms can be a window to understand the ways in which certain normative identities are negotiated by generations of students. One student voices,

> Ever since I arrived at Middlebury, it's been glaringly obvious that the standards of thinness and beauty are extremely amplified and unrealistic, causing a lot of anxiety, espeically [sic] among girls in addition to boys. The standard of beauty here causes a lot of self-image problems. There's an obsession with fitness on campus, and those things feed off each other (Fessler as cited in Agsten 2014).

Two key spaces in which the negotiations around 'thinness' and 'beauty,' two key dimensions of the body, occur at Middlebury are the gym and the dining hall. Another student highlights the pertinence of the gym and dining hall as negotiated spaces, where students' obsession with body image is a byproduct of competition, and becomes ever more apparent when food and fitness dominate many conversations (Agsten 2014).

As evident, the negotiated-essence of the gym and dining hall works to define these spaces as facilitators of surveillance as a social process, which influences the malleable, unconscious habitus (Foucault 1975). At a small residential liberal arts college, surveillance as an ongoing event is the simultaneous action of seeing and being seen in such a way that is at times, conscious, and at other times unconscious, but works to inform an individual experience of a group habitus. Surveillance exists not just because surveillance 'is,' but because we are a residential college, i.e., the experience of being here greatly affects why and how surveillance exists at the total intimate institution.

The repetition of the habitus by Middlebury students, based on social facts coupled with surveillance, in turn strengthens the habitus and can be considered a surveillance-habitus dialectic. For example, students engage in body work at the gym to cultivate the Middlebury socially-defined "good body." In this space, students not only surveil other students, but also are simultaneously being surveilled by other students. For example, one survey respondent reported, "I run five days a week, but I feel like I am not as lean or as muscular as other girls." This shows the pressure she feels to perform body work to be as "lean" and "muscular" as "other girls" at Middlebury. The interaction of body work and surveillance not only influences individual students' habituses but recapitulates these habituses as the norm at Middlebury.

Surveillance as an Event

The surveillance-habitus dialectic is the negotiation of surveillance, as the simultaneous action of seeing and being seen, as informing students' behaviors and conceptions of the 'norm' at Middlebury. The normative body type at Middlebury, according to our survey data, is average to very skinny. Almost 80.5% of respondents identified themselves as being between an "average" to "very skinny" body type. Only 18.3% identify as "larger than average", creating an

in-group and out-group on campus where average to thin bodies are normative. Comparatively, in 2018, 36.5% of adults in the United States were considered obese (CDC 2018). As voiced by a student in our student-wide survey who considers her body "average globally but larger at Midd", the norm at Middlebury is not in line with the national average, entrenching the distinction between the "ideal" or "good," and "deviant" body types (Foucault as cited in Pylypa 1998).

Our research reflects the distinction at Middlebury between the ideal community of body types and the "deviant" body types, i.e., students who do not fit this mold. For example, in the student-wide survey 40.7% of respondents who identify as having an "average" body type believe that "thin" bodies are the "good body." As evident in the data, there is a discrepancy between how students identify and what students believe is the "good" body. This data is corroborated by 74.1% of survey respondents reporting the "good body" at Middlebury to be toned and athletic. These statistics can help to explain why Middlebury students conduct body work to cultivate the "good body" at Middlebury. Furthermore, 70.7% of survey respondents report that being "skinny" constitutes having a good body, whereas only 40.7% report that "average" is a good body at Middlebury.[2] Thus, "athletic," "toned" and "skinny" are three key characteristics of the "good body" at Middlebury.

Foucault & the Production of the "Good Body"

Foucault provides a framework to understand the intersection of political power and the human body. Foucault argues that political power is maintained through the continuous manufacturing of 'docile bodies' which are "passive, subjugated [by the state] and productive individuals" (Pylypa 1998: 22). Applying Foucault's concepts, Middlebury College acts as the modern 'state,' bringing all aspects of life under scrutiny, creating total intimacy. The creation and recapitulation of norms is both top-down and bottom-up, meaning that the individual's conformity makes the norms much more powerful and normative, upholding the institution. In this way, the process of normalization is "totalizing," controlling all aspects of life by creating pressure to conform to societal norms, and "individualizing," as it deems those who fall out of the norm as 'deviant' (Pylypa 1998: 24). In the context of bodily discipline, power operates to cultivate desires to achieve the "perfect body" through physical fitness and monitoring of body weight to evade the overweight, deviant body (Pylypa 1998: 25).

Foucault coins the term **biopower** to further explore the tensions that arise between larger power institutions and the individual. Biopower "focuses on the body as the site of subjugation… [highlighting] how individuals are implicated in their own oppression as they participate in habitual daily practices such as the self-regulation of hygiene, health, and sexuality" (Pylypa 1998: 21). The theory of biopower locates choice and agency as forces outside of the individual, where individual action is a product of societal pressures, and decisions, for example, to diet or exercise, do not stem from individual agency. As such, Foucault's theory can be considered post-

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[2] Note, these options were non-binding, meaning that survey respondents could elect to report more than one descriptor as "good."

structuralist, where agency and action only exist as responses to domination, and in the end may not matter anyway.

Biopower redefines and locates 'culture' as an oppressive force acting upon the body, where the body is the individual, i.e., the Western definition of personhood. Thus, individuals voluntarily control themselves by self-imposing conformity to cultural norms through self-surveillance and self-discipline. The self-regulation of health takes form in the individual regulation of food and exercise to cultivate the 'docile body' (Pylypa 1998: 22). For example, 57.9% of respondents reporting as skinny say that their perceived body image influences eating habits, while 76.9% of respondents who are larger than average say that their perceived body image influences their eating habits. As demonstrated by the data, both categories feel the pressure to cultivate and maintain a docile body, but those who identify as larger than average feel this pressure to more severely. Thus, biopower is a useful term to understand students' experiences in and with their bodies at Middlebury.

Part 2: Historical Narratives of Body Image at Middlebury

Middlebury College brokers connections between students and to the organization of Middlebury, in effect, linking students to other students, to smaller organizations within the College, and to the resources of both (Small 2009: 5). Within the formal 'macro' college organization there are informal, unplanned networking opportunities where individuals negotiate norms that reflect underlying structures of power, privileging certain body types or qualities over others. For example, the gym is a place that privileges those with the "good body" at Middlebury, especially athletes, and marginalizes those who do not fit this mold ("Melissa," personal interview, April 6, 2018). The process of privileging certain individuals over others perpetuates a lack of trust and feelings of surveillance, which become even more pertinent in an environment that is characterized by a total institution. The total intimacy of Middlebury College results in feelings of isolation by students due to the unequal distribution of organizational capital, as conceptualized as the resources of the organization of the College.

Historically, lack of trust and intense-, or hyper-surveillance at Middlebury have had negative effects on students'- especially female-identifying students' - perceptions of their bodies. The process of fit bodies being depicted as "good" bodies is not a new anxiety for students, and dates back to the early 2000s at Middlebury. As voiced by a student in a 2006 *The Middlebury Campus* article, "Middlebury College has a serious problem with eating disorders" (Jou 2006). This trend is one that many students noted in the 2008 report of the "Task Force on the Status of Women at Middlebury" (TFSW). In TFSW students expressed concerns about the cultivation of the 'perfect' body at Middlebury. In the section dedicated to Health and Wellness on campus, students highlighted internal conflicts with the body stemming from external social facts at Middlebury that perpetuate the thin and athletic body as the "good body."

The TFSW discussed the ways in which disordered eating and distorted body image were campus-wide issues, as opposed to issues solely affecting student-athletes (TFSW 2008 Data Set). A student nodded to the student-consensus that, eating disorders and distorted body image

are "the most serious problems on campus" (Report of the TFSW at Middlebury College 2008). The dining hall and gym culture promote an "ideal" body type that makes many women feel marginalized and insecure", contributing to feelings of isolation for many students at Middlebury (Report of the TFSW at Middlebury College 2008: 28). Students' isolation may lead them to cultivate a strong 'work-hard, play-hard' ethic; one student voices, "I see far too many people who are hyper-athletic and who eat nothing but salad, then go out and party extremely hard on Friday and Saturday nights" (Report of the TFSW at Middlebury College 2008: 26). This comment supports another student who believes that "many women on the Middlebury campus tend to control academic and social pressures by not eating or not taking care of themselves" (TFSW 2008 Data Set). As evident in TFSW, issues as related to the body are not a new issue on campus, and are related to other issues on campus, such as academic and social pressures.

The body-isolating issues discussed by students in the Task Force on the Status of Women in 2008 were echoed by members of Feminist Action at Middlebury (FAM) who provided comments in TFSW. FAM underlined the lack of communication between the Health Center and students regarding available resources. One student voiced her dissatisfaction with the disconnection between Parton Health Center and students. This student said she spoke for many when she stated that she was often hesitant to go to Parton because she did not know if her problem would get solved, or if the health center could provide the services she felt she needed (Report of the TFSW at Middlebury College 2008). Even in the present, as mentioned in our interviews and personal conversations, many students at Middlebury do not believe that Parton or the counseling office have adequate resources to support issues as related to the body (Personal Interview with Mayopoulos 2018).

These comments from TFSW incited us to explore, through the use of case studies, how surveillance and habitus interact to create negative body image and self-discipline in the dining hall and gym in the present day. Further, we look at the way in which students are actors in perpetuating norms as related to the body. We are interested in examining how subtle negotiations of the body in spaces on campus influence students' perceptions of themselves and their behaviors.

Part 3: Gathering Data from Middlebury Students through Interviews

To explore the ways in which social capital is an actor-oriented negotiation of power we interviewed two Middlebury College students. From an actor-oriented point of view the experience of being in a total intimacy institution is how individuals struggle with these relationships of power in the social system. As such, the navigation of the system is a negotiation of the surveillance-habitus dialectic. We conducted two semi-structured in-depth interviews to delve into the individual negotiations of power, institutions and the individual body, i.e., biopower, for Middlebury students. The data we gathered from the interviews confirm the social consensus of the themes of *The Middlebury Campus* articles, TFSW, interview with Katie Mayopoulos (Class of 2018, founder of student organization Every Body), student-wide survey data and countless conversations with students and faculty; thus, the interviews are a way discuss

issues that are plaguing many Middlebury students. These in-depth interactions during the interviews also demonstrate how the larger institution of Middlebury brokers relations between individuals, founded on social capital and a level of trust.

The interviews illuminate key recurring themes in our data and research: the "good body" and the tensions that arise in the negotiated spaces of the gym and dining hall. As cited in a 2015 *Middlebury Campus* article, Abbie McCeney '18 states,

> Middlebury, in particular, is a very fit school...People are really active and really 'healthy' or it appears to be that way...It's true most college dining halls don't have all-natural peanut butter and homemade granola; YouPower spin classes are so popular at the College, there is now an online pre-registration system (McCeney as cited in Kim 2015).

Furthermore, according to our current student-wide survey, 58% of respondents believe that others "take note of what [they] eat," while 46% believe that others "take note of how often [they] work out." As evident, the gym and the dining hall are two highly-negotiated spaces, so we chose to investigate these spaces specifically in our interviews.

We have split the Interview section into four sections: Background, Case Study Overview, Case Study 1: Dining Hall as a Dialectic and Case Study 2: Gym as a Dialectic.

Background

We chose to interview two female students, Sarah, who belongs to the Class of 2019, and Melissa, who is graduating with the Class of 2018 (both pseudonyms). These two women racially identify as white. However, one of the females, Sarah, is a thin ex-athlete, and the other female, Melissa, identifies as "fat" and has "made it part of [her] personal brand to say, 'I don't eat healthy, I don't work out'" ("Melissa," personal interview, April 6, 2018). The sharing of personal experiences during the interviews shed light on the experiences of the "good body" and the "deviant body" at Middlebury.

One of the key questions we asked Sarah and Melissa is how they conceptualize body norms at Middlebury, and what they deem to be "good bodies" at Middlebury. Sarah and Melissa both came to similar conclusions about the ideal body type at Middlebury as thin and athletic, which emphasizes the cultural norms at Middlebury to be fit. Sarah believes that the ideal body at Middlebury is one that is not only skinny, but also toned and fit. Melissa acknowledges similar qualities, arguing that "[she] would wager...70 plus percent [of women at Midd] fit that norm of being pretty thin, athletic" ("Melissa," personal interview, April 6, 2018). Melissa believes that "the biggest thing about Middlebury and body is that [she has] always been made to be hyper aware[3] [through microaggressions] of it, there very much is an idealized and normalized body"

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[3] It is unclear from our interviews whether only the non-conforming people are 'hyper aware' of their body, but our student-wide survey data set suggests that many Middlebury College students are hyper-aware of their bodies. For example, 46% of respondents said that they believe other people take note of how often they work out, and 58% of respondents believe that other people take not of what they eat. These statistics are highlighted by student responses that emphasize the 'good body; as someone who appears "naturally skinny...but shouldn't look like [they] [are]

("Melissa," personal interview, April 6, 2018). We are defining microaggressions as a term that encompasses both Foucault's theory of subjugation to form docile bodies and Long's actor-oriented theory.

The hyper-awareness that Melissa addresses in her interview has become more apparent to Melissa as she has gained weight throughout college. Melissa has recently began to identify as a 'fat person,' which is exemplary of the surveillance-habitus dialectic at work, as Melissa has not only gained weight and acknowledged her gaining of weight, but also self-identifies as 'fat,' a title she believes other students also ascribe to her. Melissa's identification as a nonconforming individual has been an empowering experience for her, especially as she begins to view the body as an "abstract idea" ("Melissa," personal interview, April 6, 2018). Melissa's identification as 'fat' - although perhaps accompanied by negative stigmas at Middlebury - has allowed her to identify with a new in-group, which has brought her closer to other individuals who identify as fat, possess more loosely defined ideas about the body, and/or reject body norms at Middlebury ("Melissa," personal interview, April 6, 2018). Melissa's acceptance and embracing of the category 'fat' is **cultural capital** that she has converted into **social capital**; although this capital conversion can be viewed as a form of homophily, it required social work as Melissa had to branch out to new people (Small 2009). Melissa's experience demonstrates the ways in which bonding social capital can create a new habitus of a **body image fraction**, where she transformed her 'negative' cultural capital, i.e., her 'deviant' body at Midd, to positive social capital. A body image fraction is a way to assert a different habitus that deviates from the monolithic "good body" at Middlebury. Thus, Middlebury has different fractions of bodies along a gradient, from the dominant "good body" to the "deviant body." Melissa's experience demonstrates how it is possible to negotiate a new social group by means of her new body image fraction, which bonds social capital and creates a new fraction of "good bodies."

This section works to provide an overview of how Sarah and Melissa conceptualize body issues at Middlebury. The following sections will discuss Sarah and Melissa's body experiences as they relate to the dining hall and the gym on campus.

Overview of Case Studies

The ideas of intimacy and trust are critical to understanding how the dining hall and gym function as dialectical spaces on campus. For the purpose of our study, we will be defining **dialectic** as a "constantly changing reality with a material basis" (Dictionary.com 2018). Leveraging this definition, we will be analyzing the dining hall and the gym as dialectical spaces, where the spaces (of the College) and students (of the College) interact in top-down and bottom-up ways. Through this interaction, the 'spaces' of the dining hall and gym are converted to socially recognized 'place' by the struggle among social forces at work.

Trust and intimacy in the dining hall and gym intersect with ideas of power it relates to institutions, social capital and bodies on campus. The concept of intimacy is pertinent to

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trying too hard." To do so, students control their appearances, weight, eating, workout habits to cultivate the "good body" (Pylypa 1998).

Gerschiere's conceptualization of trust as a set of delicate contingencies. Gerschiere's notion of trust juxtaposes Robert Putnam's idea of trust as an objectively real and robust 'thing,' as opposed to a network of relationships (Putnam 2011). However, in the dining hall and gym, the opportunity to choose whom one has intimacy with is suspended by the nature of the institution and the open architecture of the space. Thus, the dining halls and gym, in their total intimacy, are spaces in which there is a pervasive feeling that "the most dangerous [forms] of aggression come from inside," from other students as actors in the institutional system (Gerschiere 2013: 32). For Gerschiere, he conceptualizes trust and intimacy as within the family or neighborhood, but for Middlebury students, trust and intimacy are relevant to the nature of the total institution.

The dining hall and the gym are sites of self-monitoring on campus, which corroborates the dialectical nature of these spaces. Self-monitoring is achieved through two interactions, practice and discourse; individuals feel compelled to regulate their bodies to conform to norms, but also to talk about what they "should" and "should not" do and to "confess" any deviation from these norms (Pylypa 1998: 24).

We will introduce the places of the gym and dining hall through our interview analysis, provide data from the student-wide survey, and offer some analytical conclusions about these micro-institutions at Middlebury.

Case Studies 1: Dining Hall as a Dialectic

The dining hall removes eating from the 'closed' family into an 'open' public affair where hundreds of people can see what one eats for every meal (Personal Interview with Mayopoulos 2018). In our conversation with Katie Mayopoulos, founder of student group Every Body, we discussed how the dining hall serves as an institution where students engage in surveillance and self-discipline in order to maintain an outward appearance of being hard-working (Personal Interview with Mayopoulos 2018). Symbolic meaning and moral value are attributed to different kinds of foods based on their healthfulness in the collective consciousness. From our interviews with Katie, Melissa and Sarah, as well as our personal experiences, students will often judge and comment on others students' food choices, most often criticizing foods that are 'unhealthy' or fail to promote an ideal body type. For example, conventionally healthy foods, such as salad, are perceived to be positive, and unhealthy foods, such as dessert or soda, are deemed negative by others.

In this way, the culturally-defined Middlebury "good body" drives students to manufacture docile bodies, which are, in great part, possible (of course, depending on body type) by consuming culturally-defined 'good,' i.e., healthy foods, and straying from 'bad' or unhealthy foods. When students consume these 'bad' foods, such as ice cream, they are going against the cultural dining norms at Middlebury. In the dining hall, many of the comments that students - most often friends - make to one another are playful, yet negative, such as "you're really eating that?" For many students, even these small comments are destructive, as they perpetuate a Middlebury culture does not have room for choices that support the cultivation of the "deviant body." In this way, Middlebury, as a total institution, and students promote a culture that

perpetuates surveillance and prevents the normative cultivation of the deviant body as a valid body image fraction. For example, women often waffle over whether or not they should get dessert and seek permission and validation from their friends for their perceived indulgences (Personal Interview with Katie Mayopoulos 2018). Thus, in many ways the phrase, 'you are what you eat' epitomizes the Middlebury dining experience: indulgence translates to laziness, deprivation translates to morality. As demonstrated by this anecdote, even when students are with close friends, the nature of the dining hall as a 'micro' total intimate space makes individuals choices' evermore apparent. In this way, the total institution serves to isolate students based on small, individualized choices, such as food-choice, which can lead to an overall lack of trust among students.

Sarah and Melissa took different approaches to the ways in which the dining hall operationalizes the body. However, they both relay an awareness of tensions in the dining hall as relating to eating habits. Sarah and Melissa both emphasize the positive or negative stigmas attributed to certain types of foods, i.e., conventionally health foods and beverages, such as salad and water, are deemed positive, and conventionally unhealthy foods, such as dessert and soda, are deemed negative. Beyond these larger categories, Sarah's experience about dining hall trends focused on general social interactions, whereas Melissa's anecdotes spoke to her personal experiences grappling with others' comments and insinuations about her food choices. For example, Sarah asserts that in the dining hall,

> [It] all comes down to your friends. I feel like I do see people in the dining hall that do have those things [i.e., conventionally unhealthy food] on their plate and they're all sitting with their friends and that's what they are all eating, but at least with our friends I think people give you a judgmental look or say something judgmental or say 'oh I wish I could eat like that' or make a comment that makes you uncomfortable [or] is rude ("Sarah," personal interview, April 7, 2018).

Sarah noticed these trends, but explained that she has refrained from letting the opinions of others interfere with her own eating patterns, which to mention, are primarily 'healthy' ("Sarah," personal interview, April 7, 2018). Sarah's focus on the intimate setting of friends individuals are more likely to openly judge one another. Thus, these intimate statements build an oppressive system without anyone's intent, and are are product of the intimate space of the dining hall as a micro-institution of Middlebury College.

On the other hand, Melissa discusses the intensity of surveillance in the institution of the dining hall, where she feels as if others - her friends and other diners - ascribe morality to her based on what she eats. She states, "I definitely feel surveilled in terms of my food choice" and thus does not feel accepted in the ideal community of body types at Middlebury ("Melissa," personal interview, April 6, 2018). For example, Melissa feels as if she cannot hold a chocolate milk in one hand and a dessert in the other without others believing that she is disgusting and unhealthy ("Melissa," personal interview, April 6, 2018). This anecdote demonstrates how the

surveillance in the dining hall informs the self-disciplined habitus that was voiced in our student-wide survey. 57% of survey respondents who identify as "larger than average" body type believe that other people take note of what they eat in the dining hall, supporting Melissa's experience of surveillance. For example, one student shares that the "good body" at Middlebury is "someone who eats salads and drinks water 95% of the time." Another student corroborates these pressures, conceptualizing the good body as one that "runs a lot and only eats salad."

Furthermore, these comments on the "good body" shed light on a dichotomous system of food classification as healthy/good and unhealthy/bad. Comments from our student-wide survey and personal interviews with Sarah and Melissa highlight students as mediators of choice, promoting the idealized body type as one that eats good, healthy food and is thin, fit and toned. Melissa's experiences of surveillance and insecurity in the dining hall lend themselves to Bourdieu's notion of taste as a means to demonstrate and justify class distinction (Bourdieu 1984: 188). The body and the ways in which individuals regulate the body reflect a materialization of class taste. Food choice can be interpreted as a show of cultural capital: knowing which foods are healthy and which ones are not, and then choosing to consume moral, healthy foods can be a sign of class distinction between upper and lower class peoples (Bourdieu 1984: 188). Tastes in food depends on different classes' ideas of the body and the effects of food on the body, on its strength, health, and beauty (Bourdieu 1984: 188). This also applies to the previously introduced concept of biopower, which examines how individuals regulate their bodily hygiene and health in accordance with dominant power structures, such as food system classifications as healthy/good and unhealthy/bad (Pylypa 1998).

This section captures the pertinence of understanding the dining hall as a dialectic space, where every meal is a struggle to control both the body and social position. The total intimacy of the dining hall contributes to the ways in which the body - in a Bourdieuian way - is simultaneously constructed by individuals and by others as a symbol of class status.

Case Study 2: Gym as a Dialectic

The gym is another place on campus where the nature of total intimacy unevenly contributes to feelings of isolation for students of different body image fractions. The gym serves as a site to perform discipline of one's body in a public space, i.e., a place to publically police one's own body while surveilling others policing theirs. The cultivation of the slender, 'docile' body not only grants students privileges in the gym space, but also nurtures a sense of belonging for these students in spaces Middlebury. In our student-wide survey, respondents that identified themselves as "skinny" were more likely to respond "yes" to the question "does your body image affect your workout habits?" Furthermore, a survey respondent identified a "good body" at Middlebury as "likely too thin to be healthy, [having a] thigh gap, toned arms, butt, legs etc. but not super muscular," and "athletic with ease." This response correlates with the survey data that indicates over 80% of athletes identifying themselves as "attractive." The athlete at Middlebury is often most akin to the standard beauty in America, as the "skinny, white, blonde woman,"

which affects the way in which notions of body image intersect with themes of race at Middlebury ("It's a White Woman's World After All" 2014).

In contrast, to the sense of belonging that many athletes experience, many survey respondents who are not white and who are not of high economic status, struggle with feelings of 'attractiveness.' This finding is relevant to the chapters on Race and Economic Status as driving factors in students feelings of isolation. 56.6% of black-identifying students believe that others do not perceive them as attractive, while 71.9% of those who identify as white do. Even further, a survey respondent said that "European features" are considered the most conventionally attractive at Middlebury. Furthermore, students' class also affects their perceived attractiveness. 77.3% of respondents to the survey that never feel economically isolated report that they feel attractive at Middlebury, while only 57.1% of those who do feel attractive often feel economically isolated. Our data upholds the idea that body image and body discipline are intersectional issues. White people at Middlebury are not only privileged in racial category, economic status, as other chapter show, but also in their feelings about their body. The least isolating Middlebury experience as far as race, economic status, and body image is the white upper-class experience. Thus, the distribution of isolation at Middlebury is inherently linked to ideas of students' racial and economic privilege.

Isolation is also relevant to the discussion of body discipline as a form of body work that is considered both attractive and productive by students, as discussed in interviews and survey responses. The athletic center, or gym, is the site of most body work on campus. However, the space of the gym privileges bodies already perceived as disciplined or "docile," i.e., athletic, skinny, over bodies perceived as undisciplined or "deviant," i.e., fat. In this way, 'docile' becomes synonymous with 'normative' at Middlebury, and 'docile bodies' - cultivated by power and coercion as methods of control - are symbols of cultural capital on campus. However, students abilities' to convert gym time into cultural capital is not evenly distributed among students. This demonstrates how the gym is not a level social field: different body image fractions are able to accumulate social and cultural capital differently, where 'deviant bodies' do not have the same social and cultural potential, and thus experience microaggressions.

Performance of exercise serves to perpetuate a dialectic of performance and surveillance, where those who are exercising perform a habitus of self-discipline, while seeing and being seen performing the habitus of self-discipline. As such, the gym is an institution on campus that is a site where anxiety around body type manifests. Survey respondents said that their perceived body image does affect their workout habits. However, the distribution of this pressure is unequal: 56.7% of "skinny" identifying responded yes, while 82.7% of "larger than average" identifying responded yes to this question. Sarah and Melissa provided personal accounts that may explain this data. Sarah and Melissa both discussed the ways in which working out is considered productive at Middlebury, but their responses differ in their relationship to the nature of productivity at the institution of the gym.

As a someone who fits the ideal Middlebury body image fraction, Sarah believes that taking time out of her day to go to the gym is "definitely productive" ("Sarah," personal

interview, April 7, 2018). When Sarah was prompted with a question about her internalization of the workout culture at Middlebury, she first relayed that she does not work out more at Middlebury than she would otherwise, as she was brought up in a very active household and used to be a student-athlete. However, during the interview Sarah qualified her statement by adding, "Middlebury exacerbated [her] desire to work out] a little bit" ("Sarah," personal interview, April 7, 2018). Sarah's experiences corroborated her sense of belonging in the gym setting, while also lend themselves to the ways in which the pressures to be thin and fit impacted Sarah's decisions to workout. Our survey responses confirmed Sarah's experience of the gym as a place for productivity. Athletes, by virtue of having practice at the athletic center, spend the most amount of time in this space on average. Interestingly, 82.1% of people who identified as varsity athletes say that they feel attractive to others at Middlebury. This could correlate with their time spent disciplining their bodies, and contributes to the space of the gym as the site to cultivate the 'good' or 'attractive' body at Middlebury.

In contrast to Sarah's experiences, Melissa, who has a 'deviant' body, feels alienated and unwelcome in the gym; this contrast highlights the dialectical nature of the gym: society and, or versus, the individual. Melissa's own story intersected with how she perceives other to view her in the space of the gym, which in itself, expresses the gym as a negotiated space on campus. Melissa believes that at times, others are disgusted by her body and think to themselves, "does she really think that she's making a difference [about how fat she is]?" ("Melissa," personal interview, April 6, 2018). The insecurities that stem from Melissa's experiences extend beyond the physical gym space and to interactions she has with friends about her decisions to workout. Melissa states,

> Whenever I start working out regularly…something I've noticed is that oftentimes people will comment like, 'yeah, I noticed that! That's SO good! I'm really proud of you' and be condescending or patronizing, and be like oh, how great they think it is... I don't think people mean it negatively, but it's kind of a policing, it's patronizing...thin people don't get that, if a thin person eats healthy [or goes to the gym], it's not seen as this miraculous thing they're doing, but for me, it is. It's really bothered me, the condescending congratulations, but conversely, people being like 'your habits could be better…' ("Melissa," personal interview, April 6, 2018).

Melissa experiences **upward-leveling pressures**, which are microaggressions that work to encourage deviant bodies to discipline themselves in such a way that might result in their eventual mobility into the normative, or ideal bodied class. Melissa encounters upward leveling pressures from her friends in the thin-bodied community (based on Portes and Landolt 1996). Melissa's friends encourage her "healthier" behaviors in a well-intentioned way because they want to uplift her into the dominant, ideal body class, and thus not suffer ostracization any longer. Although it is unclear from the interview, because the dominant, ideal body class is indexed to status and class at Middlebury, Melissa's friends may promote her healthier behaviors

to secure Melissa a higher class status. Unfortunately, this shift between body communities can only be achieved by material change in weight, which is not possible for Melissa due to medical circumstances. This highlights the fallacious nature of ascribing other qualities, such as class status at Middlebury, to body types and norms.

Perhaps because of the ways in which different qualities get mapped onto body types at Middlebury, students with deviant bodies, as opposed to skinny bodies, feel more pressure to perform body work. Based on our survey, 24% of "skinny" respondents say they do tell people they want to work out even when they really do not want to work out, compared to 35.8% of "larger than average" respondents saying they perform this behavior. However, there is no difference in "skinny" versus "larger than average" respondents believing that others take note of how often they work out, which is a trend that is dissimilar to the ways in which "larger than average" respondents felt more policed in the dining hall in regards to their food choices. This discrepancy shows how 'docile' bodies are privileged more than 'deviant' bodies in the dining hall as opposed to the gym.

From our research, the gym is a space where body type is negotiated, maintained, and surveilled, although to a lesser degree than in the dining hall. Further research might explore this disparity and investigate the different ways in which food intake versus physical activity plays into notions of body type and surveillance.

Part 4: Student Responses: Taking Agency Through Forming Student Groups

While the habitus is unconscious, people have the capability and agency to recognize social issues and work to change cultural norms, and thus the habitus. For example, by talking about microaggressions, students have the ability to change the habitus of power at Middlebury. Many students recognize body image as a pervasive issue on campus, and have taken initiative to stimulate conversation, build a campus community of support around disordered eating and feelings of surveillance, and thus bring attention to the importance of changing students' habituses.

The leading student-led response today is the student organization, Every Body, which was founded in Spring 2016. Katie created Every Body as a part of her journey to find peace in her own skin. Upon arriving at Middlebury her first year, Katie's preexisting insecurities about her curvy figure were heightened as she felt largely out of place not fitting into the ideal body type. Katie's anxieties led her to Middlebury's counseling office where she began to meet with a therapist to understand and work through and her newly-acquired, hyper-controlled eating habits. At the same time, Katie began to open up to her friends and realized that she was not the only one facing these issues, which prompted Katie to begin Every Body in the face of the lack of campus-sanctioned resources to deal with and support students surrounding body image.

After many months, Katie was able to formally establish Every Body as an official student organization at Middlebury. The members of Every Body demonstrate how students desire to civically engage in small group settings, i.e., bottom-up agency, which is a trend Putnam noted in his longitudinal study of trust in social capital in the United States during the

20th Century (Putnam 2000). Furthermore, Every Body functions as a safe, confidential space in which students can share personal feelings and experiences without judgement. The 'safe space' created by Every Body club meetings negates the dangers of total institutional intimacy by creating a new type of intimacy among students. Further, the new type of intimacy engenders a new type of surveillance-habitus dialectic, where students are redefining new norms, or habituses, at Middlebury. Being a member of a club founded on sympathizing and empathizing with others around a shared issue can serve to build trust and social capital on campus.

This past February Every Body hosted an event called "Talking Bodies" which invited students to share stories of their experiences in and with their bodies. Talking Bodies is not the first event focused on student experiences of the body at Middlebury. In 2005 the Feminist Action at Middlebury group (FAM) organized an event, "Hope," for students, faculty and community members to promote awareness of and celebrate hope for those with or recovering from eating disorders ("Eating Disorder event brings hope Students share their experiences" 2005). In 2014, two students spearheaded a similar event, known as "Let's Start the Conversation: A Story-Telling Event Focusing on Body Image, Eating Disorders, and Wellness at Middlebury College" to spark meaningful conversation and bring awareness to body image- and eating disorder-related issues on campus (Agsten 2014). Events like Talking Bodies, Hope and Let's Start the Conversation are important steps to admit that body image is a "'serious problem'" at Middlebury (Fessler as cited in Agsten 2014). Further, the sharing of stories and subsequent conversations at these events created a "open platform[s] for dialogue and conversation", thus demonstrates the ways people who share a common ground interact in these spaces, foster trust in their exchanges, and thus, a habitus of trust (Agsten 2014; Misztal as cited in Hosking 2014: 41).

Unfortunately, the discourse that aligns with Every Body's empowering mission is in the minority based on our student-wide survey. The following are the sole responses - 1.5% of total 607 student survey responses - that express any inkling of body-inclusive views:

- "I see a lot of other people who look similar to me. I feel like I have a good body shape. It is not as fit, strong, or athletic as it should be (especially in comparison to the multitude of athletes here!) but I am a good weight and do not feel like my body type is rejected."
- "A good body *should* [sic] be everybody's body!!"
- "[I] checked all because I believe all are good? but the majority opinion is probably skinny, toned, or buff :-/ [sic]"
- "One that can walk on two feet without pain, one that can run on two feet without pain, one that can climb mountains without pain. One that can take exams within the designated period of time for most Middlebury students without the ADA office's approval for extended time."
- "anything. i dont [sic] feel pressured by my surroundings to have a certain body here."
- "Every body is a good body"

- "All bodies are 'good' in their own way, but a 'good body' at Middlebury belongs to someone who is active and healthy."
- "Everybody is beautiful but I have a hard time seeing it in myself. Middlebury needs to work on teaching self love."
- "I don't want to encourage unhealthy eating habits with the 'very skinny' and 'overweight.' If your life is at risk due to your body type, then that is not a good body temporarily speaking. A good body is a good mind so regardless of what your body type is, if you have a healthy state of mind, that is the most important."

As evident by the small percentage of students who presented body-inclusive views in the survey, there is room for improvement by the institution. Although students conceptions of the 'good body' are not solely products of the institution - the media, upbringing etc. also play a role - in many ways, the institution seems to exacerbate issues as related to the body.

It is our hope that this project will demonstrate the need for institutional support to increase the number of students who harbor body-inclusive views, which is contingent on changing the surveillance-habitus dialectic and social facts at Middlebury. This section demonstrates how students *can* work to resist the surveillance-habitus dialectic and redefine social facts of the "good body" at Middlebury by sharing personal experiences to prove that there is not just one "good body." It is critical that many students already recognize issues as related to the body as pertinent topics at Middlebury, as demonstrated by our interviews and survey, even if they do not formally engage in groups or events, such as Every Body and Talking Bodies.

Despite student recognition and some participation, the ways in which negative body image and feelings of isolation can negatively affect student mental health calls for an institutional response from Middlebury College. Students have created their own support networks, but it is not enough without adequate counseling and nutrition resources, as well as good communication about resources already available to students. These institutional arrangements would provide students with greater opportunities to explore their issues with the body, or begin to think about their relationships to their own bodies with new educational and support avenues. In doing so, students will hopefully begin to recognize that every body is a good body, which, in the long run, will change the way in which the surveillance-habitus dialectic functions at Middlebury. Students may become less concerned about feeling watched, or watching others, as well as become less focused on constantly striving to cultivate the "good body" at Middlebury.

Part 5: Recommendations: Coupling Student Resistance and Institutional Change

In the negotiations discussed in this paper, the unequal distribution of organizational capital, i.e., resources of Middlebury as a total institution, takes the form of privileging students who fit the idealized norm of the "good body;" this tension refutes Coleman's assertion that all norms have positive impact (Coleman 1990: 301). Despite the limitations of the total institution, there is potential for students to redefine the social facts - through resistance - that unconsciously

perpetuate distinct habituses on this campus as they relate to the "good body." For example, Melissa, as a student who embraces her 'deviant' body, and the Every Body organization are two forms of institutionalized resistance.

Resisting 'normative' habituses will work to foster inclusivity as opposed to isolation and alienation for students. For example, one of our survey respondents identified the norm, but at the same time, resisted the norm through discourse. The respondent asserts, in order for women to be attractive at Middlebury, they must be "almost disturbingly thin, white, athletic, with large control over appearances/weight/eating [sic]." However, this student goes on to say that they do not endorse the normative "good body" at Middlebury. This respondent demonstrates how students are capable of identifying and talking back to power.

Student "resistance," through the redefinition of social facts, should not work against the total institution of Middlebury. Instead, the institution has a responsibility to support students and to provide them with resources for their health and wellbeing. Issues arising from body type isolation are exacerbated by the structure of the school itself, in the dining hall and gym configurations, as well as the racial and economic configurations, as evident by our data. Many students are aware of the ways in which negative body image and disordered eating can negatively impact their lives, self-esteem, and schoolwork, and are responding to these pressures through organizations like Every Body. It is imperative that Middlebury create a preventative model - a new type of dialectic - to deal with disordered eating that can arise from negative body image and body type isolation.

We have labeled the recommendations based on our perceived need for space, money and/or building relationships.

- *Relationships, Money, Space.* Middlebury seek to make more resources, particularly staff (human capital), educational, and social resources, available to all students, not just varsity athletes. The way in which the institution allocates these resources should be a joint institution-student effort. 80.7% of our survey respondents were not varsity athletes and expressed issues with cultural norms at Middlebury, especially as they relate to body image. Institutionally-provided resources - whether directly from the institution to students, and/or from the institution through student organizations, such as Every Body, to students - can work to support students with appropriate care. These resources may take the form of, but are not limited to, official staff members designated to helping students with issues as they relate to the body, bringing speakers to campus to raise awareness and open the dialogue, and providing additional safe spaces on campus for students (perhaps to discuss issues as related to the body or to eat a meal outside of the surveilled dining hall). These resources can work to increase trust and social capital among students, and between students and the administrative institutions at Middlebury.

- *Relationships, Money.* Middlebury should employ a nutritionist at Parton Health Center. This nutritionist should be available to all students. Peer institutions, such as Babson College and Dartmouth University, have nutritionists available to their broad student body, so there is precedent for this recommendation. Furthermore, as of the 2008 Task Force on The Status of Women, students were concerned that Middlebury did not have a nutritionist on staff due to the prevalence of eating disorders and body image issues on campus. For example, a student stated in 2008,

  I truly believe that eating disorders are a problem not only for Middlebury College specifically, but for society as a whole We are taking a step in the right direction with Helath [sic] Center sponsored woekshops [sic] over Winter Term. We can do a better job by employing a nutritionist on a part time basis. Currently, students may arange [sic] through the Health Center to see a nutritionist in Burlington which is problematic if the student does not own a car. Contrary to what many people think, disordered eating is not limited to student-athletes (Report of the TFSW at Middlebury College" 2008).

  As examined in our analysis, according to historical data, current data and interviews, even a decade later there is still a need for nutritional counseling resources and support around body image. The availability of a nutritionist can decrease students' feelings of isolation by providing students with information about how to best navigate highly-negotiated spaces, such as the dining hall and gym.

- *Spaces.* Middlebury should create more safe spaces on campus - such as supporting student groups such as Every Body, bringing in speakers focused on student health and wellness, or even just creating more physical spaces on campus dedicated to health and wellness - to continue to open the dialogue around the often taboo topics of disordered eating and body image issues. This will work to increase trust and social capital on campus by mitigating the surveillance-habitus dialectic that often times makes students hyper-aware of the "good body" at Middlebury, and how they need to look and what they need to do in negotiated spaces, such as the gym and dining hall.

- *Spaces, Money.* Middlebury can reconfigure the space of the dining halls to make it so that students feel less surveilled by their peers. This may take the form of changing the configuration of the food lines and/or creating more intimate spaces to eat such as the lounge, the booth room, etc. Furthermore, the College can give students more of a choice in meal plan, e.g., go off the meal plan, do half meal

plan etc. This would grant more agency to students to choose where and how they would like to eat, and even cook for themselves in their living spaces.

- *Spaces, Relationships, Money.* Middlebury can work to make sure that (especially) non-athletes feel comfortable using all of the spaces in the gym, i.e., weight room, cardio floor above weight room and cardio balcony. This can take the form of doing tutorials of how to use the equipment or having more exercise classes available to students. Although there are yoga and spin classes available to students, there is more opportunity to hire local instructors and/or certified students to teach other classes such as pilates and crossfit. These classes can work to bridge and bond social capital by bringing students - athletes and nonathletes alike - together in inclusive spaces. Furthermore, the College can support the institution of a workout buddy system, perhaps through student organizations, such as Every Body (as the organization has supported programs in the past), to pair students together to go to the gym, so that they feel less isolated.

These recommendations capture the importance using space, money and relationships to socially recognize other ways of having a body beyond the normative, "good body" at Middlebury. We believe these recommendations are critical to redefine 'normative' habituses at Middlebury to be more inclusive, as well as normalizing other habituses. The dialectical nature of the habitus grants students opportunity to redefine and normalize the habitus to work against isolation and alienation.

Concluding Remarks

Our top-down and bottom-up theoretical and analytical approaches work to understand the institutional influence on Middlebury students' experiences, i.e., Foucauldian approach to power, and student agency in resisting or recapitulating norms, i.e., the bottom-up actor-oriented conception of individual agency, as theorized by Norman Long. These inductive and deductive approaches explore the networks of power that function at the socio-ecological institution of Middlebury. Based on our analysis, total intimacy on campus has proven a limiting factor in fostering body type inclusivity. However, on the flipside, total intimacy is an opportunity - through the use of institutional resources - to increase inclusivity through the bonding social capital at the institution. In doing so, the bonding of social capital can reconfigure networks of power to debunk the current normative "good body" at Middlebury and promote body inclusivity, as oppose to isolation.

The re-networking of power would inherently shape the nature of the surveillance-habitus dialectic, which is experienced and perpetuated - overtly or inadvertently - through spaces, faculty, staff and resources at Middlebury. If the surveillance-habitus dialectic - that allowed students like Melissa to use bonding social capital as a means to legitimize connections - was altered, then the thin and toned bodies would no longer be the normative, and would just be a

body fraction, as opposed to THE Middlebury "good body." Thus, debunking norms redefines static ideas of the norm as social processes, able and apt to change. The debunking of the current surveillance-habitus dialectic will only have long-lasting effects if there are ample institutional resources to support body inclusivity as opposed to body alienation and isolation at Middlebury College.

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2008   Restricted data set provided courtesy of Middlebury College.

Chapter 6: Conclusions

The projects evaluating racial, socioeconomic, LGBTQ+, and body image discourse at Middlebury have concluded that while there is discord among the student body, solutions are attainable. Creating more spaces that reduce feelings of isolation and increase trust within minority communities are likely to support bonding and unity. Additionally, engaging with students by providing greater and equitable access to resources would develop a more inviting environment – including a nutritionist.

Three key themes that emerged in our discussions of trust and social capital that are pertinent to the resilience of Middlebury as an institution include:

1. All four case studies focus on the idea of spaces as arenas in which differently-empowered people - as actors in the system - negotiate, and even play, with identity, power, status, etc.
2. It is critical for students and the administration to recognize the importance of debunking norms. In this way, members of the institution can work to redefine static concepts of 'normal' or 'the norm' as social processes and sites of struggle.
3. As part of a liberal arts education, Middlebury can advocate for the personal education of students beyond their formal academic education. For example, Middlebury can advocate for vulnerability, honesty and owning privilege as key skills to a liberal arts education. This can benefit the college, as Middlebury can be known as an institution that propagates these larger transformative goals and skills.

Moving forward, we hope our research will incite student-driven change, which President Patton believes is most authentic and effective in promoting institutional change. We believe that our research can be useful to other organizations on campus such as the Student Government Association and the Community Council, as well as current psychology research on stress spearheaded by Professor Robert Moeller.

Although our research focuses on the broader themes of trust and social capital, it is also evident that the themes of race, socioeconomic class, LGBTQ+, and body image are intersectional issues pertinent to the entire Middlebury community and beyond. Though the Middlebury student body confronts the systemic issues in American society related to our core topics, the data collected during the course of Spring 2018 indicates how institutional research within a course framework can open up possibilities for positive action and change. Through a combination of top-down measures, such as the growth and creation of new programs at Middlebury or the expansion of inclusionary spaces, and bottom-up actions taken by the student body, the campus can become a space that facilitates the growth of trust and social capital among students, faculty and staff of all backgrounds. The fostering of trust and social capital is critical to the personal growth of students as key elements of a fulfilling liberal arts education.