

‘Love is Messy’:
On Value-Laden Rescue Institutions as Transformative Services

by

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ABSTRACT

This research is particularly concerned with organizations' advocacy of value-based change aimed at improving consumers' well-being. This work contributes to the Transformative Services Research area and presents a conceptualization of the value-laden service organization (VLSO), which I define as organizations that advocate for specific value-based behaviors from consumers both within and beyond the particular service setting.

In a VLSO, consumers are expected to act in accordance with the values of the organization. If the consumer's pre-existing value system is not aligned with the values of the service organization, the consumer may experience a sense of psychological disequilibrium, which can lead to unintended decrease in well-being. This research explores how value conflicts are managed by both the organization and by the consumers.

This work emerges out of an interpretive study of a Catholic-based homeless shelter for pregnant women. From it, I identify the practices of consumers and the service organization and explored their interactions. This has resulted in a theoretical conceptualization of a Rescue Institution, which combines aspects of both a Total Institution and a Reinventive Institution in a unique way. Further, I conceptualize a cycle of agency and authenticity that maps the dynamics of the consumer in a VLSO as they negotiate the structure/agency duality.

In gathering data, I used an interpretive approach over the course of three years' of direct involvement with a service organization, St. Mary's House. My methods included participant observation, collection of artifacts, and one-on-one in-depth

interviews. I interviewed a total of 30 participants, whose transcribed interviews resulted in over 1500 pages of text. Analysis of themes and concepts occurred as a result of repeated examinations of both existing theory and data.

My findings reveal key organizational and consumer practices that negotiate the tension between structure and agency. Organizational practices include rules and social norms, as well as two forms of hierarchy. Consumer practices, often in response to organizational practices, include a cycle of agency and authenticity and participation in a shadow structure. These practices collectively influence consumer's interpretive drift, which is their adoption of the organization's values that creates internalized change.

I conclude with implications for theory and service organization management. First, value priorities mean that tradeoffs must be made, which can cause unexpected and painful conflict. The experience of change, from both the consumer and service provider perspective, can be very messy. This process includes a dynamic and individual negotiation of authenticity and agency, which will be of interest in future studies. The service providers must be open to this process, carefully navigating their responses to the consumer's dynamic authenticity, agency and values. Service providers should expect and acknowledge the conflict in consumers' experience in order to foster their long-term perspective and perseverance.

Dedicated to my loved ones

&

to the moms.

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INTRODUCTION

“I’ve been down that road and...no matter how deep or far you think you’ve gone and you can’t go back, you can! You can stop right now and start mending things. Some people think that they’ve just gone too far, it’s just over. Well, it’s never over. That’s what I thought: it was over...but it’s never over.” (Erin, alumnae mom from Saint Mary’s House, a shelter for pregnant women)

Rescuing is described as the act of saving from a dangerous or distressing situation. It is synonymous with releasing, liberating, and freeing (Oxford Dictionaries, n.d.). Consumers can feel trapped by their choices and circumstances in a myriad of ways that reduce their power, as illustrated by the initial quote above. At other times, organizations may perceive that consumers need to change, regardless of consumers’ own perception. In response, certain organizations strive to ‘save’ consumers from their adversities, including unhealthy lifestyles, crushing debt, unproductive relationships, abusive habits, addiction, or not reaching their full potential. This research is particularly concerned with organizations’ advocacy of value-based change aimed at improving consumers’ well-being. Although certain value-laden service organizations have been the subject of research, the focus has not been on the value-laden aspects in an attempt to accomplish value change in consumers.

I situate this research within transformative service research (TSR), which is defined as the service research that “strives to create uplifting changes and improvements in the well-being of both individuals and communities” (Anderson, Ostrom, and Bitner 2011). I theorize that value-laden service organizations exist on a continuum; the present research focuses on an organization whose mission specifically centers around creating

consumer change. Other value-laden organizations can be found in education, for example, that strive to instill in students/consumers values (such as integrity, respect, equality, creativity, learning, innovation, continuous improvement and competency) though encouraging specific practices (such as critical thinking, good citizenship, effective communication, providing equal access to resources, knowledge assessments, and goal setting). This value system includes a particular vision of consumers' well-being and the methods to achieve it. To this end, such organizations impress their values upon the service participants through the structure of the service.

In this paper, I will explore the underlying ideas, experiences, and practices of a transformative service aimed at enhancing consumers' well-being through value change. My contribution to this literature is a conceptualization of value-laden service organization (VLSO), which I have defined, through my research and immersion, as organizations that advocate for specific value-based behaviors from consumers both within and beyond the particular service setting. Previous research has demonstrated that the consumers are more likely to transition to self-sufficiency when they remain longer in the transformative service experience (Sung and Chu 2013). Given this definition of a VLSO and in light of previous research in this area, my research questions include the following:

1. How do value-laden service organizations encourage consumer change toward their specific value-based definition of consumer well-being? What practices do they use?
2. How do consumers respond to the structures of the organization and the advocated changes? What practices do consumers engage in within a value-

laden service organization and how do these practices impact the experience and outcomes?

3. What tensions arise within the value-laden service organization between the organization and consumers? How are these tensions negotiated and what is their impact on the experience and overall change efforts?

This research emerges out of an interpretive study of a Catholic-based homeless shelter for pregnant women, which will be referred to as St. Mary's House hereby. I will use the terms and language used by the organization in an effort to convey their perspective. The consumers (referred to as 'moms' within the organization) and the service providers ('staff') share a residential home and commit to upholding community rules and striving for self-improvement. The goal of the organization is to improve the well-being of these mothers and their children, both within and beyond the shelter. This is accomplished by providing value-based structured living while concurrently teaching the moms about the resources available to them and developing the life skills needed to enhance their self-sufficiency. Specifically, St. Mary's provides housing and "ongoing support to help pregnant and parenting women in need reach their goals, and welcomes them into a community filled with love and dignity" (organization website). This research setting provides a vivid example of a VLSO and allows a close examination of a transformative service with a rigid value system where the organization's specific vision of well-being may conflict with that of the consumer. This setting permits insight into how co-creation occurs even with the hierarchical structure of the transformative service and misaligned value systems.

In gathering data, I used an interpretive approach over the course of three years' by direct involvement with the service organization. My methods included participant observation, collection of artifacts, and one-on-one in-depth interviews. Participant observation involved immersion as a weekly volunteer within St. Mary's House in addition to regular involvement with alumnae mom activities. Depth interviews and interactions included both past and present service participants who acted in various roles within the service.

A key finding emerging from this examination is how VLSO's deliberately balance the tension between value-based social structure of the service with their desire to cultivate consumers' agency as an important part of consumers' well-being. This duality of agency and structure, a foundational concept in sociology, is an important consideration in designing human-centered services (Bourdieu 1990). Structure is defined as the rules and norms that confine and define opportunities and social interactions (Ostrom 1986). I use the definition of agency referring to the efficacy of human action, and the ability to put into effect one's preferences (Sewell 1992). As I will discuss further, consumers' agency is seen as a prerequisite for their well-being, yet it can also be utilized by the consumer to the detriment of their well-being. In their effort to increase consumers' well-being, VLSO's use structure (e.g., rules, social norms or hierarchy) to guide and strengthen consumers' agency toward options that are consistent with the foundational values of the organization.

While much research has focused on how organizations influence and address the preferences and needs of consumers, little is known about how organizations assist consumers whose present needs and preferences are believed to be detrimental to their

well-being. Building on Anderson et al.'s (2012) definition, the term transformation implies an individual consumer's change, including value-congruent practices, directed toward a particular vision of well-being. The process of championing consumers' change can be quite complex and idiosyncratic; within St. Mary's House, this means "helping them set up their goals and...be independent and to be the best person they can be" (Maryn, Staff Director). Heidi further clarifies that this process is not identical for each mom:

"Different moms like different things and need different things... We're there to be in tune to that and to give them that. That can be in the form of correction or in the form of a helping hand." (Heidi, staff member)

This idiosyncratic process has great potential to meet the diverse needs of the service organization's consumers, but also complicates the appearance of justice and fairness in comparing the 'corrections versus helping hand' offered to different moms with different needs and wants. Consumer perceptions of fairness and justice have been shown to impact emotional responses (Schoefer and Ennew 2005), and consumers' co-creation intentions within a service (Bolton and Lemon 1999). Negative emotional responses, associated with perceived unfairness, negatively impact consumers' intentions to remain in the service (e.g., loyalty; Schoefer and Ennew 2005). As mentioned earlier, evidence has shown that remaining in an organization is directly correlated with consumers' successful goal-attainment and transformation (Sung and Chu 2013).

Within the organization, this complexity has a catchphrase: "Love is messy." Authored by one of the founders of St. Mary's House, this expression represents an understanding necessary to work effectively within this institution, where a liminal experience can impact the well-being of these women for the long-term. This phrase

highlights both the deep concern of the organization in addition to the complexity of accomplishing value-laden change.

To more fully understand value-laden services, I next provide a conceptual background, utilizing insights from the extant literature and identifying knowledge gaps that this research will address. First, I define and trace the origins of the term ‘value-laden.’ Additionally, I explore the transformative potential of organizations’ value advocacy. Specifically, I examine how an organization’s value-laden structure, evidenced by its practices, can impact the change in consumers’ practices and, subsequently, their values and well-being. This conceptualization relies on knowledge from the marketing literature on values, and integrates a more institutionalized understanding of the roles that value systems play in creating consumer change.

Foundational Conceptualization: Value-Laden Service Organizations

This research provides a conceptualization of the value-laden service organization (VLSO), which is currently insufficiently recognized and understood in the marketing literature. I present this conceptualization now as a framework that underlies this research and defines the scope of this work. I developed my conceptualization of VLSO in conjunction with extant literature over the course of this research.

The term ‘value-laden’ indicates that a personal value system is applied in the marketplace, such that characteristics beyond the usual price, product, and brand become important (Nelson 2004). Building on this definition, I characterize VLSO’s as those organizations that seek to persuade consumers to apply their organization’s value system,

with the intent that these changes will improve consumers' well-being. In this effort, these organizations tackle issues of morality and social responsibility, and these become the important distinguishing dimensions of the organization beyond the traditional price, quality, and brand image (adapted from Nelson 2004). As such, a service organization is value-laden to the extent that participation in the service (for both service providers and customers) and the successes of the service experience are contingent on value-laden behaviors. For example, I find that within a VLSO's, voicing diverse opinions with regard to sacred, foundational values is discouraged (for example, questioning the benefit of a university degree as a college professor might create dissonance). From both extant literature and my research, to change or ignore the underlying values of the service organization would dramatically change the service offering and the organization's unique identity.

While many organizations explicitly position themselves on their values, many others are value-laden without sufficient disclosure of this underpinning. In this conceptual framework, value-laden organizations tend to be services, and thus are fundamentally shaped by co-creation between service providers and consumers. Because of the central role that co-creation plays, the practices of both the consumers and the organization must be considered in conjunction. Additionally, in a VLSO, the organization often has more power relative to the consumers. Because of this, a VLSO can lay out a specific vision of consumers' well-being and the associated practices with the expectation that these dictates will be followed, regardless of possible conflicts with consumers' current practices and goals. Therefore, I propose that conflict is often a part of these types of service experiences for consumers.

This research was initially motivated by my interest in values-oriented services, in part because of the pervasiveness of these types of organizations. In many instances, the value-laden nature of these organizations is not acknowledged, which contributes to the lack of study in this area. VLSO's can be found in education, healthcare, social work, professional development, correctional facilities, and therapeutic programs among others. In a VLSO, the transformative potential of the service is based around the organization's advocacy for a specific value system and associated behaviors. As such, a VLSO desires that consumers' individual changes be congruent with these foundational values.

Core values are outwardly manifest in the pursuits (Vinson, Scott, and Lamont 1977) and goals (Nelson 2004) that both individuals and organizations seek. Naturally, similar values between organizations and consumers make for a smoother experience; extant literature demonstrates plentiful benefits of value congruency. First, value congruency creates a perception of trustworthiness, increases the ease of communication, and deepens friendships (Edwards and Cable 2009). Additionally, value congruency increases service effectiveness (Chan, Yim, and Lam 2010), and positively impacts the outcomes of a life-changing service experience (Arnould and Thompson 2005). Value congruency is an extension of a basic marketing concept: select consumer segments or products that most closely match with the firms' capabilities, goals and, in this case particularly, values.

Given these compelling arguments for value congruency, conflict may be inherent in those services that strive to alter consumers' underlying values and practices. Value systems are deeply entrenched in the consumer psyche (Nelson 2004), and changing these underlying values—often a goal of a VLSO—can be extremely difficult. In their

efforts, a VLSO may purposefully select consumers they deem in greatest need of change, trading off the benefits of value congruence for potentially greater impact.

Because they prioritize affecting change, a VLSO may purposely *not* avoid value conflict, contrary to the recommendation of most marketing literature. Importantly, this value conflict, as a result of mismatch between consumers' value and the organization's values, may be counter to the goal of increasing consumer well-being in the short term. Higher levels of well-being are positively correlated with the congruency of ones' values with end-goals (Carver and Baird 1998). However, within a VLSO, a paradox exists such that in the process of personal change (aimed at increasing well-being), consumers are likely to experience value conflict that decreases their well-being in the short term. In the findings, I will shed further light on this counter-intuitive process.

A few studies have identified how consumers react to services' efforts to inculcate specific values and behaviors. Often these studies further endorsed avoiding or de-emphasizing conflict (e.g., Barnhart and Penaloza 2013). For example, because consumers can be influenced through both active and heuristic processing (Shrum, Burroughs and Rindfleisch 2005), the consumers' value conflicts do not need to take precedence over the organization's practices. By side-stepping value conflicts, both overt and more subtle forms of influence may come to bear on the consumers, which will be further discussed in the findings.

Additionally, there is some evidence that a change in behavior results in a change of belief (Luhrmann 1991, Bem 1965), whether that results from social pressure, social norms, or modeling the desired behavior (e.g., Goldstein, Cialdini, and Griskevicius 2008; Nolan et al. 2008), or from more drastic measures. The assumption of beliefs

preceding behavior may be fundamentally flawed (Bem 1965); the two are dialogical, each informing the other, with actions giving rise to beliefs and beliefs giving justification for actions. I will look more closely into this process as I explicate the practices that consumers use within VLSO.

One of the challenges faced by a VLSO (and any organization that cannot eliminate conflict) is retaining consumers in the face of differences that may drive them away. The desired change (in line with the goals of the service) is more likely to be achieved by consumers who stay longer in a service (Connors et al. 2006). However, in critical moments, consumers are likely to turn back to coping mechanisms that they have relied upon in the past, leading to repeated challenges and little change (Cuthbert et al. 2011). Given that a value-laden service organization is limited in its willingness/ability to compromise, consumers often must be the ones to bend to the organization's structure or break away from it. The extent of consumers' willingness to align their values with the values of the service organization impacts consumers' longevity within a transformative service experience (Sung and Chu 2013), but also requires consumers to give up much of their agency/power, a process that will be discussed more later. Therefore, one contribution of this research is explicating these organizational practices to both retain consumers and mold them.

Thus far I have introduced the fundamental concepts that underlie transformative VLSO's. In defining the VLSO, I have identified the contributions of past research and the gaps in the literature specifically pertaining to this type of service. Next, I will look at how this conceptualization of a VLSO fits with extant literature.

CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND

Based on the emerging interpretive research, I find that it is important to look at the extant research on immersive services as institutions in order to provide a foundation. My research context shaped my research questions, which in turn influenced the literature upon which I relied. Because of this, I provide a nod to my findings here, although they will be discussed in richer detail later. Through this research, I contribute to an understanding of service institutions, transformative services, and the balance of structure and agency within these institutions. Keeping this in mind, I address relevant extant research on immersive services, service institutions, practices, and consumer well-being.

Immersive Service as Community

An immersive service removes the consumer from his or her usual circumstances (often to decrease distractions and temptations) and involves consumers' around-the-clock presence in the servicescape. This service context is transformative because it strives to build skills and attitudes that enable more self-sufficiency and independence when the consumer returns to their usual circumstance. Furthermore, this particular context combines the more traditional service structure, with its attendant clear delineations between providers and consumers (e.g., Lee, Ozanne and Hill 1999), and a community-centered social structure that relies on the co-creation of resources (e.g., Thomas, Price and Schau 2013).

Past research demonstrated that immersive services have transformative potential (Arnould and Price 1993). Immersive services have proven effective in eliciting consumer change because they provide consumers with a separated environment (Lönnqvist, Jasinskaja-Lahti, and Verkasalo 2013) and a different social network. Immersive programs are often more effective than their ‘out-patient’ counterparts for various issues, including childhood obesity (Kelly and Kirschenbaum 2011) and heroin addiction (Day and Strang 2011). For example, the research of Zhang and colleagues (2006) demonstrates that the complete removal of delinquents from the ‘at-risk’ population had the biggest impact on reducing recidivism. Furthermore, an immersive institution may be particularly appropriate for value-laden services; Schwartz and Bardi (1997) suggest that because a consumer’s immediate environment constrains their ability to pursue particular values, consumers become more open to a new configuration of values in new environments. In line with the goals of the VLSO, consumers find their values aligning with their new environments (Bardi et al. 2009).

Additionally, this research further explores the impact, creation, and structure of consumers’ communities (i.e., Muniz and O’Guinn 2001). These communities provide an opportunity for consumers to support each other through information sharing and emotional connection/empathy, as well as furnish a forum for discussion (Moiso and Beruchashvili 2010). In this research, the community within the service organization will prove to be important to consumers’ transformative experiences. However, formation of a community depends on the characteristics of the institution. Accordingly, I next review insights from the extant conceptualizations of institutions and their varying power structures.

Total and Re-inventive Institutions

Immersive service organizations can correspond to Goffman's (1968) conceptualization of total institutions (TI), which Foucault (1984) descriptively calls "complete and austere institutions." Goffman specifically defines these institutions by "their encompassing or total character," in which a physical "barrier to social intercourse with the outside" is a corporeal manifestation of the institution's isolating essence (Goffman 1961). Both Goffman and Foucault used prisons as the archetype of this type of service design, which emphasizes participants' powerlessness and limited agency (Hill et al. 2015). In a TI, consumers are put through a process of de-individuation, stripping them of the unique identities they maintain outside of the service. Total institutions are heavy on structural characteristics, and absolute conformity is expected. The (desired) outcomes of a TI are relatively standard across consumers. Rules are central to the TI structure, and infractions have specific and substantial consequences. Because consumers often enter total institutions under duress of a situational crisis (Aguilera 1990), the alignment between the values of the TI and the consumers is not relevant to the organization. In many cases, immersion in a TI may be somewhat involuntary, as consumers here often perceive few other options. The social boundaries between staff and consumers within the TI are reinforced through physical separation and rules. Mental hospitals and armed forces 'boot camps' are typical of this type of compliance-inducing institution, with a rigid hierarchy structuring the community.

Scott (2010) proposed a parallel institution for encouraging individual change: the re-inventive institution (RI), which is more voluntary and egalitarian in its community in

contrast to the TI. These institutions revolve around consumers' shared self-improvement motives and fulfilling individual's unique goals within a shared context. Examples of RI's include academic 'hothouses,' therapeutic communities, and utopian retreats. Re-inventive institutions emphasize characteristics designed to enable agency; as such, the structural characteristics are subtler than in a TI. The RI community is voluntary and egalitarian, unified by participants' shared goal-seeking behaviors and values. Rules in RI's are often unwritten and result in understated social consequences. Community expectations take the place of rules; these "performative regulations" are enforced by mutual surveillance rather than through the hierarchy of power as found in TI's. Because the goals of the institution and the goals of the individual are more likely to be aligned in RI's, participants often perceive the structural elements as enabling and necessary rather than restrictive.

RI's and TI's represent two ends of a spectrum, two different organizational designs with regard to balancing agency and structure. However, I find that neither of these two institutions can fully account for the transformative value-laden service organization I explored. I use the conceptualizations of TI and RI as a foundation for proposing a third type of institution, the rescue institution, which I will expound on in the findings section.

Practices and Practice Theory

One of the ways that the rescue institution demonstrates the mutual influences from both TI and RI is through its practices. Practices are a patterned way of doing things

that constitutes social life (Arsel and Bean 2013). The concept of practices is derived from practice theory, which is briefly referenced here. For this research context, I distinguish practices as belonging to either the service consumers or the organization as embodied by the service providers.

Practice theory views consumers as social agents bounded by various social world practices who are neither completely rational, nor purely reactionary (Arsel and Bean 2013). This perspective aligns well with the structure/agency conundrum (Giddens 1984). More specifically, practice theory accounts for both consumers' pre-existing practices (which may be incongruent with the values/behaviors expected in a VLS), and consumers' practices developed in response to the VLISO, which may be an embryonic form of what Foucault refers to as 'discipline.'

According to practice theory, the analysis of ongoing routines, engagements and performances is essential to understanding consumption (Arsel and Bean 2013). Practices play an important role in shaping the way that individuals understand the world. These practices are bundled together to create means to an end (Arsel and Bean 2013). Thus, in this research, I will explore the negotiation of different practices within a VLISO: bundled practices from the dominant culture of the organization versus bundled practices from the separate cultures of the service consumers. Furthermore, this research contributes to an understanding of how practices impact value change (as compared to the usual study of how underlying values come to be reflected in practices). This process is essential to understanding the practices within VLISO's and their impact on consumers' well-being within and beyond the institution.

Well-Being and Value Misalignment

I return to this concept of consumer well-being here, to more fully explicate its known dimensions and central role in transformative services. In the literature, well-being is an all-inclusive concept, that may involve happiness, access, better decision-making, literacy, harmony, power, respect, support, decreasing disparities, and improving health outcomes (Anderson et al. 2012). A VLSO may target and measure consumer well-being using any or all of these factors.

The relationship between values, value change, and well-being is of concern in transformative services. As discussed previously, value conflict can diminish consumer well-being in the short term. In a VLSO, consumers are presented with a set of values and expected to act in accordance with these values. If the consumer's pre-existing value system is not aligned with the values of the service organization, the consumer may experience a sense of psychological disequilibrium. As this discomfort, or psychological tension, extends over time, it decreases consumers' sense of well-being (Burroughs and Rindfleisch 2002). Thus, it seems that a VLSO may contribute to consumers' decreased sense of well-being. Yet, it seems that consumer change would not be possible (or lasting) without this internal conflict. I propose that the path to increased well-being may not be uninterrupted improvement, and I explore further in this research how consumers cope with this complex experience.

This tension between structure and agency is not a new concept (e.g., Bourdieu 1990), but is particularly poignant here in light of transformative services' goals of consumer well-being. Specifically and unsurprisingly, consumer agency and well-being

are connected (Sen 2001), such that those with greater agency have the capacity for greater well-being. However, when consumers are coping with a crisis, their individual processes and preferences (and thus, agency) often become subservient to the processes and structures of the service that is providing a way to cope with the crisis. Thus, in a VLSO, consumers are likely to experience reduced agency. Given that long-term well-being requires agency, it is less clear how this process, that includes reduced consumer agency, can result in well-being. This research will demonstrate how a value-laden transformative service takes away consumers' agency in order to increase their agency in the long term.

METHODS

To investigate how a value-laden service impacts consumer transformations, I conducted a multi-method, emergent, interpretive study. This ethnographic approach entailed data collection in consumers' natural setting utilizing participant observation and multiple data sources in order to produce credible interpretations (Arnould and Wallendorf 1994). I collected data over the course of three years. Interpretation arose from analysis of interview transcripts, artifacts of the service (such as handbooks for rules and norms within the service), and personal observations. Additionally, information provided by the service providers to consumers, volunteers, and donors, such as volunteer training, marketing materials sent to donors, and email requests from staff, was also utilized.

Participant Observation

Observations and reflections were meticulously documented to maintain a record of interactions, reactions, and patterns emanating from the experience. I volunteered at one of the three shelter locations at least once a week for three years as a substitute for staff. This enabled observations of three ‘generations’ of service providers (the staff commit to one year at a time), and multiple cohorts of moms. My participant observation provided critical ‘backstage access’ (Arnould and Wallendorf 1994) that would not usually be available to institutional outsiders.

Collection of Artifacts

Artifacts are the props and cues that communicate the organizational values to those living in the service social world and provide physical evidence of service activities (Bitner 1992). I focused on gathering such artifacts as evidence of the service values and structure.

In this research setting, a key artifact included the guest-training manual titled “The Secrets of a Super Mom.” This three-ring binder is a collection of readings and worksheets organized into a program for each of the moms to complete during her stay at the shelter. Progress through this program is monitored one-on-one in a contact person relationship with a staff member. Topics included in this program include goal setting, adoption, dignity, birth, manners, budgeting, child care, employment, health, parenting, and finding and using other resources beyond the service institution. This manual reflects

the values of St. Mary's as a VLSO in its topics and exercises.

Other key artifacts include a book about the formation and history of the organization, external marketing and public relations materials (e.g., donation requests, newsletters, emails, newspaper articles, website), and photographic evidence of other artifacts found within the shelter. These artifacts will be discussed further as I relied on them for interpretation of the values and tensions within the shelter.

Interviews

In addition to the ongoing informal interviews that were a part of the participant observation, formal in-depth interviews were conducted with informants in different roles. These verbal reports (Arnould and Wallendorf 1994) provide another emic perspective that complements the other data collection methods.

I included informants from multiple shelter locations and at various stages of involvement with St. Mary's House. Formal interviews were conducted with 22 moms and eight staff members, as detailed in Table 1 found in Appendix A. These interviews ranged in duration from 60-120 minutes, and were loosely focused on tensions, value conflicts, roles, and practices within their experience at St. Mary's House. The inclusion of both staff and mom interviews permitted direct and indirect comparisons among values and practices, and provided a more holistic understanding of the experience. Interviews took place at the alumni moms' homes, in public spaces, or at one of the St. Mary's locations. Informants chose or were assigned code names, and the recorded interviews were transcribed, resulting in over 1,500 pages of text.

Consumers of this service were offered a \$25 gift card as an incentive to participate in an interview both during and after their time at St. Mary's House. These consumers' experiences varied widely: some lived at a St. Mary's shelter for a relatively short time, while others were veterans who lived there for over a year and became the parent of a toddler before graduation. Similarly, some of the moms were parenting for the first time, while some had multiple children that had either been removed from their care or they had placed with a friend or relative. Moms ranged in age from 18 to 40, although it was more common for the moms to be in their early 20's. Regarding the alumni moms who no longer lived at St. Mary's House, their prior experiences ranged from moving out one week ago to 12 years ago at the time of the interview. Note that several of the moms were interviewed twice, and many of the moms permitted informal follow-up via Facebook. This data provided direct longitudinal data and permits comparisons between former and current service participants.

Beyond the informants listed in Table 1, this research also benefitted from alumnae moms' participation in larger group discussions conducted by the first and second authors. At an alumni mom event provided by St. Mary's, I was able to hold two group discussions, as well as recruit many of the initial informants. These group discussions were conducted early on in the data collection process, and contributed to the generative process prior to conducting individual interviews. Of particular note, these discussions showed the general consensus (or lack thereof) regarding the structures at St. Mary's House and their experiences of change both within and beyond the service.

Analysis

Analysis was an iterative process with data collection that enabled comparison of data with existing theory to reveal points of overlap and departure (Spiggle 1994). Given the theoretical lens I adopted, as my work progressed my attention focused on understanding the value-laden service organization and its consumers. A hermeneutical approach was used to analyze the interview data and artifact texts, and interpretations developed over multiple readings (Thompson 1997). First, the intratextual coding and analysis explored the individual experience of a value-laden service organization and their experience of change over time. Second, the intertextual analysis looked across interview transcripts for patterns and themes across consumer practices and perceptions of organizational practices within the value-laden service experience. This analysis was iterative, requiring movement back and forth between the emergent themes in the data and the extant literature.

CONTEXT

In this section, I will provide greater detail into the research setting of St. Mary's House. Specifically, I examine here the foundation of this organization and how the goals and visions have been translated into a potentially transformative experience.

In a letter crafted during the embryonic stage of St. Mary's House, one of the founders articulated the initial concept and core values that guided their efforts.

“Drawing from the philosophy of Mother Teresa and the Catholic Worker Movement, the role of the hospitality house would be to minister and serve any person that shows up on the doorstep as if they were Christ. The House would primarily be a shelter, but it isn’t difficult to imagine additional projects being connected... The idea would target some of the root causes of our social problems. Extreme individualism would be countered by living in community; materialism would be countered through choosing a simple lifestyle. The lack of love and disregard for human dignity would be addressed by loving each person that comes in the door and doing all that is possible to uphold their dignity. The world’s inability to recognize ‘sacred’ would be countered by our example and dependence upon the Sacraments, the Bible, and prayer.”

Note the tentative tone in the beginning of the quote, with open and lofty goals of “serv[ing] *any person* that shows up on the doorstep” (emphasis added), and the willingness to take on additional projects. Yet, in this quote above there is an unyielding commitment to specific value practices of living in community, material simplicity, demonstrated love and unequivocal devotion. VLSO’s, like St. Mary’s House, are built on specific values; here, these values are pointedly contrasted as an alternative their perspective of “the world” more generally.

As I will explore more in the findings, the finalized structure of the St. Mary’s House was the result of a process full of struggles between different perspectives and values. Progressing from the initial value-laden concept to the specific actions aimed at creating lasting change for a specific group required intense negotiation. These value negotiations will be explored in more depth later; next, I will provide a glimpse into the experience of living at St. Mary’s House.

Pathways to Well-being

From the values and ideals identified early on, the founders of St. Mary's House determined that serving the local homeless and pregnant population would best fit their early capacities. These young founding women drew from a value-based vision of well-being and motherhood. Carrie, one of the staff members during the early days of the shelter, reveals her goals for the moms and her definition of success:

“I envisioned her walking out of [St. Mary's House] with a degree in one hand and a healthy baby in the other arm, prepared to face the world. In my vision, success...would be to have the mother leave...with at least a job, an apartment, and a day care arrangement.” (Carrie, early staff member, founding book p. 215)

However, achievement of consumer well-being in a transformative service is complex, and the pathways that are preferred by the organization do not always parallel those used by the consumers. Continuing her story, Carrie reveals that a particular mom that she worked with unexpectedly left the house with her baby and little else.

“She had run out the door in the cold air with her baby wrapped in a blanket, refusing to tell anyone where she was going...The expectations and dreams I had for [this mom] went out the door as quickly as she did. Leaving behind all the possessions she had accumulated, she never returned to the house.” (Carrie, early staff member, founding book, p. 216)

Based on the definition of success Carrie outlined earlier—the mom having “*at least* a job, an apartment, and a day care arrangement” (emphasis added)—this mom's experience at St. Mary's was a disparaging failure. However, the story took an unexpected turn as Carrie and this mom cross paths again at a bus stop nearly a year later. Healthy mom and baby and a job had been achieved, just not in the way that Carrie expected. Even though the staff members tirelessly tried to inculcate the values of St.

Mary's and guide these women to their vision of success, sometimes those efforts seem to fail. At this point, the staff members rely on their foundational values: trusting God, in the words of another staff member, "to separate the ministry from the viewable results."

St. Mary's House is not the moms' only experience with a VLSO and opportunities to make changes. Often the individual transformation within a VLSO is a cumulative result of interactions with many organizations. For example, Tiffany found St. Mary's House after rehabilitation from addiction to methamphetamine and heroin at another organization focused on addiction recovery. Her success was shared in a flyer from St. Mary's:

"Today [Tiffany] lives on her own with a stable job and says with full conviction that [St. Mary's] was her turning point. She attributes her ability to raise [her daughter] to the confidence and skills learned while living at [St. Mary's]."

Structure of the Service: Relationships between Staff and Moms

Within each of the St. Mary's House shelters, the staff members and the moms are socially separated. Staff members are called Corps Members: the staff member in charge of the house is the Director General, and each staff member has specific responsibilities called Directorships, including Director of Volunteers, Director of Guest Ministries, and Director of House Operations. These militaristic terms, borrowed from the organization that supplies many of their staff members, indicate that individuals have a unique and specific role within the organization. In addition to the distinct titles, the social hierarchy also comes into play as staff members reprimand moms. Written "strikes" are given for

major rule violations, which can cumulatively end the mom's tenure at St. Mary's, and consequences are given for more minor violations, which can be redressed more easily.

As outlined in the founding documents at St. Mary's, creating a sense of community is important in each of the shelter's homes. All bedrooms are labeled with the occupants' names, and the moms share rooms and bathrooms with other moms, while the staff members share rooms and bathrooms with other staff. Chores are assigned on a rotating basis to both moms and staff members. Competitions are held on a regular basis to regulate the use of common resources. These competitions include things like saving energy for a month (turning off lights, not using fans) or increasing the cleanliness of the shared space. Winners can be awarded with a day off of chores, a day to sleep in, or similar privileges, without regard to their position as a mom or staff member.

The formal association between a mom and a staff member, called a 'contact relationship,' is an essential part of the experience at St. Mary's House. The contact staff member supervises the mom's productivity and successes as well as managing the front line with any disciplinary actions taken against the mom. As such, this one-on-one relationship is crucial to the moms' success within the service. For many of the moms, this formal, assigned relationship with a staff member may feel inauthentic, especially given that the mom and staff member often have little in common. As a result, the mom may choose not to fully confide in her contact person, instead turning to the other moms for informal support. Although the moms lack the power to help each other in ways that the staff would be able to help, their informal relationships may feel more genuine as they are rooted in the moms' similar life experiences. From the moms' perspective, the staff

lack significant real-world experience; one of the moms explained that the staff were “just textbook.”

“These people here don’t have a really great understanding... We have one staff here that’s been to school, she’s a graduate student. She thinks she knows everything about a baby ‘cuz she done did all of these classes. I mean, she’s right, she does know some. But she knows the textbook, not reality... we is different... a book can only teach you so much.” (Jasmine, current mom)

Some of the organizational practices, discussed later, are intended to address these issues.

The careful balancing act between hierarchy and equality is not unique to this particular institution. In various service situations, service providers must attempt to gain compliance from consumers utilizing a mix of supportive friendship and expert authority. For example, expert services such as addiction cessation, behavioral counseling, health rehabilitation, or services for captive consumers (Rayburn 2013) similarly require careful negotiation between the goals of the service organization and the goals of consumers. In this research context, I quickly learned that a VLSO depends on its frontline workers to walk the fine line between honoring and enabling consumers’ agency while simultaneously enforcing the rules and structure of the service.

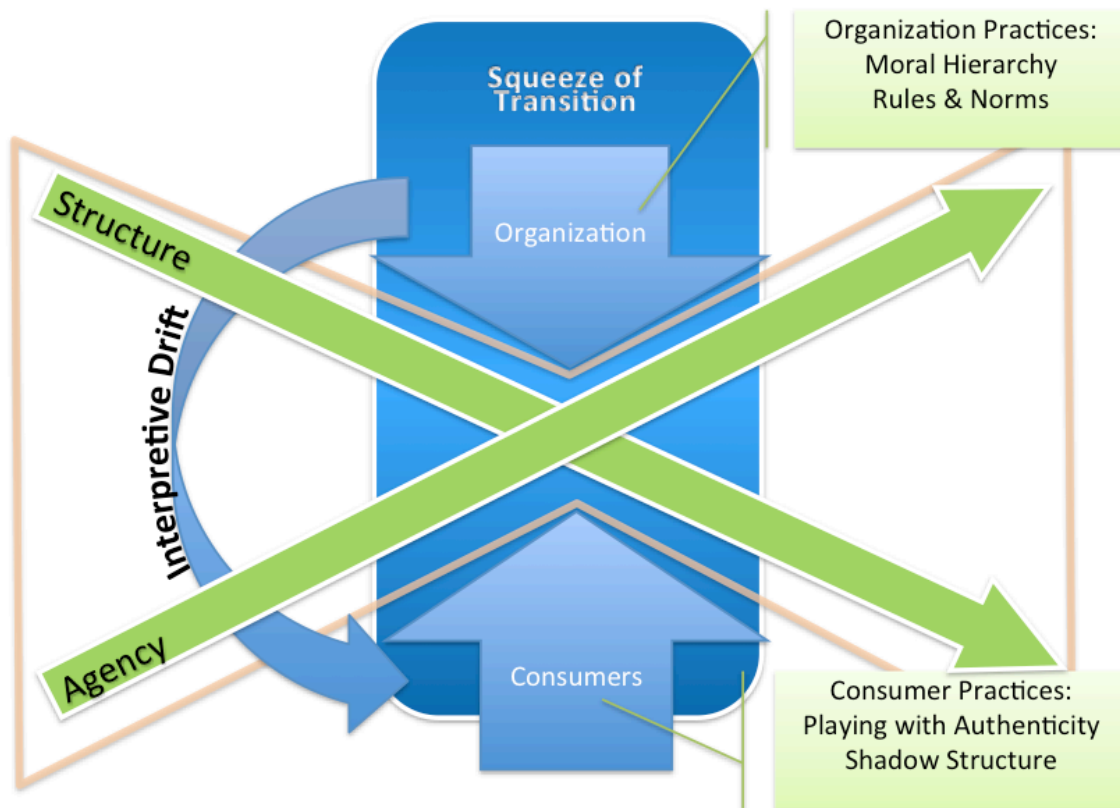
CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT AND FINDINGS

The conceptual framework, as seen in Figure 1, guides the discussion of my findings. This framework introduces a third, blended alternative design to total institutions (TI, Goffman 1968) and re-inventive institutions (RI, Scott 2010), referred to as rescue institutions. As such, the rescue institution must walk a fine line to negotiate its

own identity between the rigid structural forces of TI and the agency-maximizing forces of RI. I find that a rescue institution dynamically balances the agency of its consumers and limitations of its structure through specific institutional practices. After overviewing these practices, I will incorporate the concept of interpretive drift into the conceptual framework. I find that interpretive drift aptly describes the process of the consumers' change through gradual adoption of the values and behaviors advocated by the rescue

FIGURE 1.

CONCEPTUALIZATION OF RESCUE INSTITUTIONS



institution over time. I next identify the practices of the rescue institution and subsequently the consumers within the institution. I find that the rescue institution's rules and social norms as well as its moral hierarchy of saints and sinners, are characteristic of

the institution's practices. Additionally, I explore the organization's practices in transitioning the consumers out of the service. Then I discuss the consumers' practices in response to the organizational practices. Specifically, the consumers' practices are often inauthentic to some degree, and additionally constrained by a shadow structure. I conclude with my findings regarding the focal point for consumers' change during the transformative VLS experience as a culmination of the organization's and the consumer's practices. Implications and conclusions subsequently follow.

Rescue Institutions: A Negotiation between TI and RI

In this research, I find a type of institution that fits into neither the parameters of re-inventive nor total institutions, but is rather a third type of institution. I introduce here my findings and conceptualization of this third type of institution, which I call a rescue institution. I find that these rescue institutions are 'messy' because they adhere neither entirely to the structure of a TI nor entirely to the freedom of the RI. Instead, rescue institutions walk a fine line between TI's and RI's. This requires a balance of the characteristics of the TI, which emphasizes top-down structure and conformity, as well as the RI's focus on personal agency and decreased explicit direction from the organization.

While many data-collection methods contribute to these findings and conceptualization, one of the key resources is a particular artifact, a book written about the creation of St. Mary's House from the perspective of the founders. Many experiences are encapsulated in the self-published founding book, from the initial discussions of such an organization in the late 1990's and into the opening years of the first shelter in the

early 2000's. To ensure anonymity, I keep the book title confidential, and use pseudonyms in quoting from it. This book illustrates the perspectives, meanings, and value negotiations that evolved with the organization and among multiple participants. I analyze this book in considerable depth because of how vividly it highlights the values and tensions of a rescue institution.

Establishing the Identity of the Organization in Terms of RI & TI. This research context, a VLSO that provides accommodation for homeless pregnant women, is a particularly vivid example of a rescue institution. Rescue institutions have the goal of creating individual change in a specific way based on the foundational values. Its desire and chosen method to enable change within St. Mary's Home is revealed by the organization's chosen name-sake, Mary Magdalene. In the words of one of the founders:

“Our knowledge of St. Mary Magdalene was vague. Was she a prostitute? Was she wealthy? Was she the woman who anointed the feet of Jesus? What seems certain is that she was a woman who, through her love for Jesus, changed her life dramatically. In that burning love, she had the courage to stand at the foot of the Cross and witness profound suffering...[She is] a great model for the women we would be serving.” (founding book, p. 87)

This woman from the Bible would serve as a model at St. Mary's House for change based around a particular value system. Regardless of Mary Magdalene's previous life, she transformed and exemplified a value-based life that both the staff members and the moms should emulate. In her life, Mary Magdalene embraced suffering, which the organization views as a necessary part of transformation and further contributes to her quintessence. Additionally, Mary Magdalene can be seen as both a saint and a sinner, and thus is a vivid example that foreshadows a key tension experienced within this service between the moms and the staff members.

“Our community is blessed to have Mary Magdalene, Christ’s beloved friend, as our patron. Having stayed at the foot of the Cross when others fled, she is a model of remaining in the presence of suffering. Perhaps not unrelated, Mary Magdalene was also the first to celebrate the mystery of the Resurrection, the one who Christ asked to go and tell others that He had conquered death. In Mary Magdalene, we have a very strong patron to look to as an example and to implore for prayers.” (founding book, p. 286)

Although St. Mary’s House is founded on a shared value system, in practice, these values still conflict with one another and tradeoffs have to be made. I present this conflict as an enduring characteristic of rescue institutions. Negotiation and compromise among values is inevitable and ongoing as the rescue institution balances the characteristics of RI’s and TI’s in addition to its multiple values. In particular, I look at the early founding years at St. Mary’s for examples of the negotiations and value conflicts within the organization. Two of the foundational values of St. Mary’s are outlined in the following quote:

“This work gave us an opportunity to combine two vitally important aspects of our Catholic faith: respect for life from conception to natural death and a willingness to live in solidarity with poor and marginalized people.” (Gretchen, founding book, p.112)

While these two values are compatible in many ways, the prioritization between values created conflict. Facing this value conflict (and other similar conflicts) was vital in determining the organization’s identity in the balance between strict Catholic doctrines, such as respect for life, and creating an open community of acceptance to live in solidarity. These negotiations impacted the institution’s practices, specifically including “decisions regarding staff recruitment, our position on birth control, the manner in which

we would provide advice and direction to the moms about their decisions, and more” (founding book, p. 100).

This early process of establishing this organization’s identity illustrates the tensions within rescue institutions. I find that the rescue institution does not entirely dictate values and practices top down as a TI does, nor does the rescue institution have the individual flexibility for different values and practices to co-exist as in an RI. Thus, the conflicts among values and practices within a rescue institution must be negotiated constantly at many different levels. In this particular case, the five founding members of St. Mary’s established themselves in different camps that reflected two different institutional perspectives. First, the concern for life was based on adherence to Catholic doctrine (more akin to a TI), which stipulates that sexual activities are only for marriage, and the use of contraception is prohibited. Second, living in solidarity prioritizes community (akin to an RI), which accepts individuals in their various states and focuses on social justice. This conflict and the two camps are best understood in the words of Rachel, one of the founding members:

“What it boiled down to was that some were from a ‘rightist,’ saving babies, pro-life spirit and others were from a ‘leftist,’ homeless person’s advocate, Catholic Worker spirit. With opposing viewpoints, conflict arose, as it does with countries, with churches, with government. Suffering and pain arose from the disconnect and strife, as it does in our world on a larger scale. However, life goes on and good is still done.” (founding book, p. 241-242)

As seen in the above quote, it is not necessarily a difference in values but rather the specific priority of values that causes tensions in rescue institutions. Additionally, Rachel highlights that these tensions are not unique to their organization, or even to rescue institutions more broadly.

Because the founding group of St. Mary's chose to operate under a consensus model, the various perspectives and resulting tensions could not be ignored. In their efforts to create a community united around supporting homeless pregnant women, they brought together differing perspectives on the specific approaches, priorities, and practices of the institution. The priest who served as a chaplain in the early days of the organization provided this analysis:

“One significant issue was the fact that the mission of providing shelter to homeless pregnant women appealed to people of widely different temperaments and politics. To some, it went without saying that this mission was part of the religious pro-life movement. But even those ambivalent about abortion politics could be attracted to helping poor women make the choice to have their babies, given a safe environment in which to do so. Early on, people on opposite side of the contentious abortion debate could find common ground in supporting the [St. Mary's House] mission.” (founding book, p. 241)

Furthermore, preventing abortion was not originally considered the primary foundational value of this organization. Thus, the intense value conflict surrounding the role of the organization to respond to abortion was unexpected, although not necessarily unwelcomed:

“Many people think of [St. Mary's House] as the front line in the battles surrounding abortion, and in a sense, we are. But preventing abortion was not our battle cry, our source of motivation, or the primary societal ill we wanted to correct...It was a Christian response to offer hospitality and love to people who are scared and alone. It is that simple. To be able to offer a practical alternative to the pain of abortion, however, was icing on the cake.” (founding book, p. 72)

While abortion was a key point of contention in the early stages of St. Mary's House, other rescue institutions face important and similarly unexpected quandaries in defining themselves. Often these issues come to a head early on, as the differing priorities

and perspectives hold large implications for the organization and its identity. At St. Mary's House, these differences resulted in conflict that felt deeply personal:

“In the midst of the difficult questions about the identity of the organization, we kept finding ourselves looking at things from fundamentally different perspectives. We did our best to keep a unified front...but our staff meetings were constantly riddled with tension...It was a season of trying to articulate and to define central issues and approaches. While seeking common ground had served us well in the early stages...now we were posing questions that had either/or answers.” (founding book, p. 77)

I find that balancing the key issues that raise tensions typifies a tightrope that rescue institutions must walk. Many of the tensions at St. Mary's House were a result of alternating between characteristics of TI's and RI's (although the founders of St. Mary's did not explicitly consider these organizational designs).

I find that value conflicts within rescue institutions tend to be between camps that prioritize doctrine/compliance values and those that prioritize community/agentive values. Within the group of founding members of St. Mary's House, the different camps of thought became evident in the priority of specific practices. For example, some of the founders prioritized clear boundaries and expectations (i.e., rigidity and compliance, judgmental characteristic of TI), while others emphasized equality and diversity of perspectives (i.e., community, relativistic characteristic of RI). In working out these differences, these founders were also addressing how the institution would balance these fundamental tensions in their practices.

“We had some real problems at the outset as we went about turning our vision into reality. At times, we even realized our vision wasn't unified. We had to figure out how the house would run, establish norms and expectations for both staff and moms, and delineate roles to determine who would do what and how we could hold each other to accountability...this is a process that happens over time,

and often involves a painful dying of self on the part of those participating.”
(founding book, p.135)

In this research, I find two different ways for a rescue institution to establish balance: either the institution can strive to be representative of the differences, or a choice must be made to prefer one practice (and its underlying value) to another. In representing the different viewpoints, conflict must be embraced as part of the institution. A key example of the first option, embracing conflict, is determining the composition of the St. Mary’s House board of directors. On the one hand, some wanted board members with expertise in organizations addressing homelessness, mental health, or domestic violence; however, others wanted board members who were especially supportive of the unique vision and Catholic faith of the organization. Typical of a rescue institution, St. Mary’s struck a balance by selecting a proportion from each group, thus bestowing the challenges of the differing viewpoints onto the board of directors.

However, equal representation is not always possible in cases where unity is needed. Specifically, practices within the shelter would usually need an ‘either/or answer,’ which would determine whether St. Mary’s was to be primarily identified by its advocacy for the Catholic faith or by its solidarity with the homeless moms that they served. In the early years, the process determining these practices was difficult. Although the conflicts revolved around values and priorities, the group’s ideal of dispassionate discussion was often unrealized:

We were engaging in discussions that gave shape to this new community, struggling to make decisions that kept the good of the entire community, as well as the good of individuals in mind. Since all of us were investing the entirety of our beings into the work at hand, the issues often moved from theoretical, objective dialogue and into intensely personal, subjective conversations about deeply held beliefs and ways of doing things.” (founding book, p. 174-175)

Determining the values and priorities for the organization often involved ‘a painful dying of self,’ as once cherished ideas had to be abandoned as they proved to be untenable in practice.

One such example of forming unity out of conflict is from determining the balance of the RI or TI structure for St. Mary’s House. For example, some of the founders initially wanted to create a more RI-type structure that emphasized equality:

“Passionate about living in total solidarity, some of the co-founders believed that the house should be run with the moms and staff on equal footing in all issues. That meant moms and staff having to abide by the same rules and expectations, all having keys and the same freedom to come and go as we pleased. We spent countless hours discussing who would have a curfew. And who would have keys? Who had rules to follow?” (founding book, p. 131)

With this perspective, the agency of each member of the community—both moms and staff members—was to be honored equally. However, in order to achieve the community of change, they recognized that “authority and trust are essential to the preservation of community life” (founding book, p. 105), and required more formal structure than initially anticipated. Specifically, having the moms and staff on equal footing would give the staff no authority and would make them equally subject to the preferences of the moms in community practices. This communal structure presents tensions in a value-based organization aimed at creating specific value change. However, the founders also struggled to reconcile some of their ideals with the other option of more-TI rules and hierarchy. A counselor, originally contracted to work with the moms, provided her perspective to the staff:

“It was not condescending to have different rules and expectations for the staff and the moms. As staff, we had independently and freely chosen this work, when

many other options were available to us. The moms, on the other hand, needed help to gain their independence, and until they gained independence, they had to abide by the rules we established.” (founding book, p.131)

The counselor helped the staff members to recognize that the differences between moms and staff members were inherent; thus, by taking less consideration of these differences, they would be unable to resolve the issues caused by the differences. In following this advice, the staff members were able to achieve the institution’s value-laden goals through explicit recognition and use of these differences to create authority and trust. This is one example of how rescue institutions balance the structural characteristics from both TI’s (hierarchy, authority, rigid rules) and RI’s (flexibility, equality, individualism).

Even after a particular balance is established in a rescue institution, the pull from both sides continues to impact participants. At St. Mary’s House, I find that this tension between equality and hierarchy continues to be relevant, as participants attempt to simultaneously maintain friendships and serve in their hierarchical roles. One of the staff members outlines her belief that this struggle is an integral, although difficult, part of the job:

“My least favorite part of being a staff...it’s this feigned expectation that you live and can be [a community], and then there’s also this weird dynamic...where you also have to enforce the rules on the moms...I feel like [the moms] should almost be on this equal, level playing field. Yet, they’re not. It’s hard when you’re friends with a mom, and then they do something, and you have to enforce the rule...it was just so frustrating!” (Claudia, current staff)

In the above quote, the closeness and solidarity between Claudia and the mom made enforcing the structure of the service challenging. Specifically, their comfort with the RI characteristics (equal agency for all participants), made it difficult to practice the TI

characteristics (heavy structure and hierarchy). As demonstrated here, many of these tensions that were fundamental in the establishment of the organization continue to be negotiated within the institution. Next, I will explore how these tensions are mediated through the institutional practices.

Practices Reflecting Tensions of Structure and Agency throughout the Rescue Institution. Previously I highlighted how the structure of the Rescue Institution is a compromise, with characteristics of both RI and TI. I also find that the balance of RI and TI characteristics evolves over the course of the consumer's experience.

Prior to moving in to St. Mary's, moms are asked to agree to both RI and TI characteristics of self-driven improvement and structure respectively.

“One of the things that we do in order just to have a healthy environment is live by established rules. We ask them if they're willing to live by established rules. Everyone says yes... We ask them if they're willing to work on self-improvement. I think those are two big values.” (Rosemary, current staff)

As seen in the above quote, the rules and willingness of participants to conform to the structure of the service are characteristic of a TI, while the recognition of the level of community well-being and participants own self-improvement goals are characteristic of an RI. As moms enter the shelter, they perceive a high degree of structure and very low agency—more akin to a TI. To ease this transition period into a more structured environment, St. Mary's allows the moms two weeks where any rule breaking results in verbal reminders with very little weight of consequences. After their first two weeks, the moms are expected to follow the structure of the service or receive more severe consequences that at the extremes can result in the mom being asked to leave.

As the moms progress through this rescue institution, their perceptions of the balance between structure and agency change. Initially, moms perceive that their freedom and agency are greatly reduced compared to their prior experiences. However, some moms recognize that the structure at St. Mary's House also provides them with new opportunities:

“Just going from how your life was before [St. Mary's House] and then coming here with all the rules: that you have to get productivity done, and you can't watch TV and go on the computer as freely as you might have, and just curfew. Just simple stuff...you didn't even realize you take for granted until you move in here and you realize how much freedom you had. But also, too much freedom can lead to distractions.” (Hillary, current mom)

Within a rescue institution, consumers are exposed to new socialization forces, but also shielded from other outside influences, consistent with TI's. Here, moms are shielded from influences that the service organization believes are negative, such as over-consumption of television, drugs, and sex. Other elements of structure are intended to create a 'normal' schedule that St. Mary's believes is particularly beneficial for single moms, including a community night, dinners, and counseling.

The benefits from the increased structure often are protective of the moms. For example, within the shelter the moms are able reduce particular influences, since those who visit the house are subject to the same social norms as the moms. Because of this organization's social structure, there is someone else who is able and willing to uphold the values and practices at the risk of social disapproval, which can thereby empower the moms. For example, one of the moms, a former heroin addict, found strength to deal with a roommate's drug use without relapsing precisely because she was in the service structure. In her own words, she was able to “run, tuck and roll,” by informing a staff

member of the problem rather than confronting the other mom herself or backsliding into addiction. In an interview, Tiffany recounted: “I feel really, really bad, cuz I know how hard it is [to be addicted]. It’s hard! It’s really, really hard...But I can’t [ignore it]—she’s jeopardizing my sobriety.” In this example, Tiffany’s agency was protected by the structure of the service; that is, she was able to invoke the rules of the institution that are more powerful than she is alone. Her agency was preserved by the service’s value structure.

As mentioned previously, the balance of TI and RI within the rescue institution seems to evolve with the consumer. I find that as the moms conform to the values of the institutions, their perception of the restrictiveness (characteristic of TI) feels reduced, and it becomes more about achieving their individual goals (characteristic of RI). However, what I find particularly interesting is how the individual’s goals and practices become more aligned with the organization’s values over time. I next discuss the influence of the institution’s structure on consumers’ agency through the process of interpretive drift.

Interpretive Drift

Interpretive drift is defined as “the slow, often unacknowledged shift in someone’s manner of interpreting events as they become involved with a particular activity” (Luhmann 1991, p. 312). Instead of a sudden conversion, I find that consumers in a rescue institution experience a slow change in the way they interpret past and present events that becomes increasingly colored by the values of the organization. In the words of one of the moms, living at St. Mary’s and obeying the rules was like being on a diet:

“Once you start eating right, you start craving those things. You start being positive, you’re gonna start wanting to be positive” (Tiffany, current mom). Tiffany describes the changes she has experienced as increasingly positive, indicating her alignment with the organization’s values.

As consumers learn and use the vocabulary and unique terminology used in the rescue institution, they also begin to adopt the underlying value structure (Luhmann 1991). I find that interpretive drift is the result of a unique blend between the TI and RI found in a rescue institution. The hierarchical TI characteristics are tempered by the sense of community (RI) that allows individuals within it to feel more like they are a part of this community rather than forced into compliance. I find that a consumer’s negotiation of these opposing forces within the rescue institution can result in interpretive drift.

In this research, interpretive drift became evident through my interactions with the moms over time and noting their changing responses to the rules of the organization. For example, the shelter promotes “appropriate” media, language, dress, and so forth. At the beginning of their stay, the moms are often annoyed as they are constantly censored by the phrase “That’s not appropriate!” However, the moms’ perspectives change over time. Initially, they categorize certain behaviors as inappropriate only at the shelter; later, the moms extend this perspective to their life in general:

“I remember when I started noticing...I was like I just don’t wanna listen to that music anymore, I don’t know why, but I just don’t wanna talk like that. I don’t wanna cuss anymore. I don’t want to do this. At first I was like I can’t cuss?!...Well check this out, I didn’t care...[Later on] my sister comes in the door ...as soon as she walks in the door: “What the fuck?” I’m like, “Oh my gosh, get

out, get out, get out, get out! Let's go outside. Get out." It was so embarrassing."
(Tiffany, current mom)

In the above quote, Tiffany was embarrassed by her sister's foul language, although it used to be normal for both of them. Her embarrassment indicates that she has (at least somewhat) taken on the values of the service with regard to appropriate language. She suggests that it was not an immediate transformation, but that she started noticing changes in herself and the things that she valued. Thus, the process of interpretive drift slowly distances consumers from their prior practices and guides them to transformation consistent with the values of the immersive value-laden organization.

Overall, I find that consumers in rescue institutions experience interpretive drift as they adjust to the rules and vocabulary of the service. As the consumer's behavior aligns with the institution's structure, they may begin to adopt the underlying values as far as what institution says is good and desirable. Both the organizational practices and the consumer practices can contribute to this process, which are discussed next.

Organizational Practices

I here explore how rescue institutions balance characteristics of TI's and RI's by identifying the various aspects that contribute to their specific method of advocating for value-laden change. In Figure 1, the top half of the figure identifies the activities that are primarily attributable to the rescue organization's efforts. I identify two practices of the organization and two consumer practices, discussed later, that I find characterize a rescue institution.

Rules and Social Norms. The rules of a rescue organization require the consumer to exhibit value-congruent behaviors, a characteristic akin to total institutions. This practice means that the staff members ensure that the moms to get up at a certain hour every day, complete assigned chores, and use appropriate behavior (corresponding to specific values of diligence, work, and temperance). Certain rule infractions come with consequences, but many of the rules are social norms without severe consequences. The justification for the rules and norms is that they make community living easier, which is more characteristic of the re-inventive institution.

In a rescue institution, the rules and social norms are part of evolving practices regarding the institution's structure and agency of the consumer. Compared to total institutions, where structure is used to reduce agency and increase compliance, the rescue institution's structure is more complex. Specifically, I find that rescue institutions use these practices of enforcing rules and social norms toward the goal of increasing consumers' agency later. However, these particular practices often temporarily reduce consumers' agency.

The goal of St. Mary's House is to instill in the moms habits of structured living, aligned with certain values (such as self-sufficiency, physical and emotional health, priority of children), that the organization believes will increase consumers' well-being beyond the service. One of the practices at St. Mary's House that contributes to this goal is the open discussion of underlying values. Understanding the underlying values and purposes of the organization is intended to help the moms think about their required and advocated behaviors, rather than merely relying on the authority through power of the institution. As the moms are exposed to the rules and social norms and the logic behind

them, the moms' perspective shifts:

“If you look outside the box...if you look at the spiritual things about [the shelter], then you will see why...“Oh, we think moms shouldn't be like this. They shouldn't smoke, they shouldn't curse.” It's all for a benefit for your child. You don't want your child to be in that environment. We don't understand that when we first get here, because we come from drugs or violence. We all have our own little story to tell, but it doesn't start off like this.” (Jasmine, current mom)

This quote is indicative of how many of the moms evolve through their experience. Note in the above quote how Jasmine transfers the values of the service (specifically what moms should and should not do) to a mom's personal values (“You don't want your child to be in that environment”). The rules aspect of the rescue institution, characteristic of a TI, is used to accomplish the goals of an RI through the practice of being concerned not only with the behaviors manifest in the institution, but also the values that underlie these behaviors. This concern influences and enables the consumers' interpretive drift.

I find that interpretive drift begins at different points in the rescue institution for different consumers. At the beginning, different moms agree with different rules at the shelter: for one mom, having a curfew made a lot of sense, or to another, the requirement to save 70% of their money was indicative that this organization was really looking out for her best interest beyond the shelter. The rules that the mom agrees with serve as a starting point for value alignment. As the moms continue in the institution, they gradually begin to understand how the other rules also contribute to the new environment.

The contested practice of allowing the moms to smoke cigarettes on the campus of the shelter is an example of how the rules and social norms interact within the shelter. Although second-hand and third-hand smoke is unhealthy for infants and adults, smoking is officially permitted but discouraged through extensive regulations. Catherine, an older

mom at the shelter, explains the rules around smoking:

“When you’re outside smoking, you’re not allowed to be drinking coffee or eating or talking or on your cell phone...Out of five of us [moms], three of them smoke. I know that the one girl will sit at the table, and the other girl will like stand near the building...the other girl will like go stand somewhere else outside...The reason for this is...to discourage smoking, and that it’s not like out there ...fraternizing...Because they want to discourage smoking...I’m surprised they even allow smoking here at the house. That’s surprising.” (Catherine, current mom)

As Catherine mentions, the fact that cigarette smoking was permitted was a compromise, with other social benefits of smoking removed. Like Jasmine’s quote above, note that Catherine easily verbalizes the reasoning behind the rules (“The reason for this is...to discourage smoking”). The moms generally comply with these regulations, although many of the moms believe the specific rules around smoking are excessive.

The staff further explained that allowing moms to smoke cigarettes at the shelter prevents moms from being kicked out prematurely; often smoking can be calming and substitute for illicit substances. However, moms are offered courses and information on smoking cessation. Although the rules officially permit the moms to smoke, the social norms against it are clear to the moms.

The social norms play an important role in the consumer’s self-evaluation and process of change (particularly in the mother role) both within and beyond the institution:

“They thought because I smoked cigarettes that I was a bad mom. I didn’t smoke cigarettes around [my son]. I did one time...I was having a very stressed day. But I had the blanket all over him and I wasn’t blowing smoke on him or around him...That’s the only time I’ve ever smoked around [my son]. I didn’t thought that I was such a bad mom because I smoke cigarettes.” (Bonnie, alumni mom)

In the above quote, Bonnie struggles with the difference between her concept of herself

as a 'good mom' and the norms of the rescue institution. Although at the time of the interview, Bonnie was not living at the shelter, she (like many others) remains cognizant of where she stands in relation to the ideals of St. Mary's. This illustrates how a rescue institution navigates as a compromise between TI's and RI's, and how values are set forth to consumers utilizing both rules and social norms.

Smoking and drugs were not the only issue where social norms and rules impact the moms' self-concept. Other aspects that were pivotal for the moms included the restrictions on dress, media and language, saving money and limiting requests for donated items. This appeal to become a 'good mom' was evident throughout the interviews, although, as seen in the above quote, interpretations of the meaning of a 'good mom' could be contested between the organization and the consumer.

In a rescue institution, the rules are intended to be applied beyond the service setting, rather than being relegated to only the service experience as in a TI. The practice of staff members at St. Mary's helping the moms understand the logic behind the service structures is evidence of this. In line with this practice, rule infractions in a rescue institution can be treated more mildly than they would be in a TI. For example, after a loud late-night argument with a roommate, as a consequence one of the moms was required to write out the definitions and give examples of specific values that are fundamental to the institution, such as respect, community, and kindness. The writing activity had to be completed to the satisfaction of a staff member, including the use of concrete examples of living these values within the shelter. In practices such as these, the service institution's goal of long-term impact on consumers' well-being becomes evident.

In contrast to consequences for breaking rules, the institution also rewards

consumers as they achieve goals that are congruent with the institution's values. Through recognition of consumers' unique achievements, rescue institutions encourage the individuality of the consumers and the 'appropriate use' of their agency, characteristic of an RI. For example, a 'fun contact meeting' happens once a month, where the mom takes the lead in choosing an activity to do with her staff member. Often this means that the mom and her contact staff member go out to eat together, within a budget provided by the institution. However, this option is only available to those in 'good standing,' meaning that the moms have no unresolved consequences. While some of the rewards at St. Mary's are private, such as this one, public rewards are also provided and valued by the moms.

An additional example of rewards at St. Mary's included public acknowledgment of the moms' personal progress at weekly dinner meetings, which the moms are required to attend. Specifically, for each accomplishment the mom received another hand-drawn bubble added to her name-sake fish in the paper aquarium. Thus, as the moms become 'more accomplished' and report back to the community, they gain additional public recognition in the mounting bubbles the fish possesses. This method of tracking individual progress recognizes the consumers' agency in taking initiative and while simultaneously reinforcing the rules and social norms of the service, including the moms' subordinate status.

Furthermore, these rewards can encourage consumers' interpretive drift toward adopting the values of the service. During community dinners and other similar events at St. Mary's, the moms are presented with opportunities to reinterpret their behaviors in the terms of the organizations' goals. For example, the moms received a bubble for

‘surviving’ a bus driver strike that created a major inconvenience via reduced transit hours. Rather than censoring the moms for complaining about the bus strike, the staff members helped the moms to reinterpret their experience. This helping behavior is characteristic of the staff members’ multi-faceted relationships with the moms, which I discuss in the next section.

The complex combination of rules, social norms and rewards is a bundle of practices that rescue institutions use to navigate their place between total institutions and rescue institutions. It is the intention of the institution, through these methods, to only temporarily decrease consumers’ agency in order to increase their agency beyond the service. Next I will present my findings on the practices reflecting of the hierarchy of the rescue institution.

Managing Children: Role Inversion. In addition to the rules and rewards, my findings suggest that a rescue institution reduces the responsibilities and agency of consumers while within the service. In some ways, this makes service consumers like children, with service providers acting as guiding parents, with power and stewardship over the consumers within rescue institutions. However, the consumers’ dependent status is not intended to be permanent, and consumers are often expected to become completely independent in their future as a direct result of the service experience.

At St. Mary’s House, staff members are expected to embody the values of the service. As such, the staff members act as mentors to the moms, despite having never been parents themselves. This hierarchy is reminiscent of a family, with the staff acting as parents and the moms as children. Within the shelter, staff members play a parental role (e.g., application of rules and consequences for moms, non-reciprocal relationships

with the moms, having privacy, privileges, and responsibilities that the moms do not have), while the moms play a more child-like follower role (e.g., financially dependent, resistant to rules, squabbling with each other, less authority, self-focus). This can be particularly challenging, as often these roles are inverted from the reality beyond the service of the mom's place in her own family. However, the goal of St. Mary's is for the moms to be able to fully take on their role in their family as leaders and providers.

Specifically, the practice of managing the moms as children can be particularly difficult for the moms as they want to exercise more agency and be recognized for their experience and authority:

“They acknowledge us more as children, if anything... The way they talk to us, the way they tell us how to talk... We're grown! I have three kids; are you serious, you're gonna tell me how to talk?” (Jasmine, current mom)

Whereas the staff members generally have less life experience and no mothering experience, they have authority over the moms within the house in enforcing the service structure. This further exacerbates the tensions between moms and staff, given that the moms need to develop into being 'in charge' of their own children, and yet feel like children themselves within the institution.

Moreover, the differences among the moms and staff, both in motive and circumstance, contribute to this role paradox. Specifically, the focus of the staff is on managing and redirecting the moms' choices and independence, much like a mother might focus on her child's individual development.

“Our focus for our moms is kind of just getting back on their feet. We encourage them to think a lot about themselves and not others... Don't worry about anyone else's problems! You're here for you. [My focus is] helping them set up their goals and ... [to] be independent and to be the best person they can be... I didn't

come for me, my focus isn't me: my focus is the other staff, and my focus is the moms and the babies.” (Maryn, current staff)

Just as parents socialize their children, the staff members attempt to rescue the moms through re-socialization and modeling. Re-socialization efforts focus on helping the mom to make better choices (according to the values of the service) often by decreasing her available choices. Specifically, the shelter temporarily reduces the moms’ financial, emotional, and mental responsibilities; in the meantime, the moms are encouraged to make ‘fixing’ themselves a priority. The upward trajectory of the service participant, starting out as a ‘child’ and progressing into increased self-sufficiency is one more way that a Rescue Institution offers a third alternative to the organizational practices found in the TI and RI.

At the end of their tenure at St. Mary’s House, the moms are reminded how the program has helped them change and become independent, iterating the inverted parent/child relationship that characterized much of their time within the organization:

“If your stay...was similar to most of our Moms, be aware that you may go through a period of separation anxiety...It is quite normal. Your child goes through a stage of fearing to be separated from you...but learns that you go and come back, and their fear goes away...Your feelings may be similar to this. If the staff has done their job well, you are prepared for the task ahead and have the self-confidence and self-reliance you will need in the coming weeks.” – Workbook: Secrets of a Super Mom, “A Life in Transition”

Note in the above quote the straightforward parallels drawn between the women in the shelter to their child, again reinforcing the parent/child relationship. However, the expression of confidence in the moms’ progress is intended to increase their sense of agency. In addition, although the moms cannot live in the house again, a strong alumni

program helps provide in times of need and keeps the moms connected through activities and events. In this way, the moms never really stop being children, but become grown-up children, expected to be independent, but can ask for help from the parental VLSO.

Moral Hierarchy: Saints and Sinners. Within this research context, I find a moral hierarchy embedded in an operating metaphor that I call ‘saints and sinners.’ This metaphor illustrates the tensions between the more formalized and structured TI and the more community-of-improvement RI. The ‘saints and sinners’ label comes from an interview with one of the moms, who described feeling like a sinner at St. Mary’s House:

“[The staff] kind of insinuate, because you do have a child and you're not married, that you are a sinner....Since you're a sinner, you don't have the morals and you don't have better judgment and.... we're gonna treat you like you're ignorant and....I'm gonna talk to you like you're five years old even though you're older than half of us.” (Abby, alumni mom)

I find that this metaphor of saints and sinners was particularly adept at representing the experience of hierarchy and social differences within St. Mary’s, and emerged as a consistent theme from multiple sources. This metaphor of saints and sinners describes a hierarchy of relative social distance and moral authority. The staff, as saints, have more expertise (compared to the moms) in making moral decisions congruent with the values at St. Mary’s.

This moral hierarchy is a third alternative to the TI and RI, and combines aspects of each. A TI typically has strict hierarchy that separates and defines each person’s position and role within the institution—often to the point that one’s status is indicated by clothing and individual’s titles (e.g., military), and certain social distinctions are always maintained. Conversely, the hierarchy of an RI is more subtle (almost to be non-

existent); here, although individuals may be given different roles, the roles are mutable, and the organization is relatively flat (e.g. Alcoholics Anonymous meeting facilitators shift for each meeting). Within the Rescue Institution, I find that this hierarchy combines elements of both TI and RI by having both a hierarchy while promoting a sense of equality within the community. In the debates from the early years of St. Mary's regarding hierarchy and solidarity, both the more-TI and more-RI structures found supporters.

All participants in a rescue institution are expected to contribute to a sense of community and fellowship. In this way, socialization between the 'ranks' is not only encouraged, but it is required by the structure of the service, which is reminiscent of an RI. However, there is also a hierarchy is determined by 'worthiness' or an individual's value alignment with the organization, and thus this organization is also characteristic of a TI in this way. This moral hierarchy of a rescue institution often has more subtle cues than in a TI; for example, at St. Mary's it was not uncommon for any of the women to be asked if they are a staff member or one of the moms. Despite this, the hierarchy is quite palpable to the moms and staff and in their social interactions, which I will illustrate with several examples.

At St. Mary's House, the staff members are often seen as aspiring saints: like Mother Teresa, choosing to live in solidarity with the poor and sacrificing many of the comforts that their education and economic status would normally assure. As part of their role, staff members conform their appearance to the values of the organization: no drinking, no profanity, no uncontrolled emotions both in person and in their online presence (e.g., Facebook). Such aspects are important in maintaining emotional stability

within the organization as well as providing an example to the moms.

The socialization efforts of the staff members also focus on empowering the moms to think more positively. Not only are the moms not permitted to speak negatively of themselves or others, but also the way staff members approach the moms is framed positively, again reminiscent of their distinctions as saints or sinners. This is reflective of the underlying values of the organization. In the words of Maryn, a staff member:

“Our mission is taking care of the immediate physical and emotional needs of our moms. So...unconditional love is huge... constant love. I think a lot of our moms haven't been shown love in the past, or they've been shown love, but it's been conditional. So, "I'll love you if you do this for me," or "I'll love you if you do that." But unconditional love in regards to, "I'm gonna love you even if you yell at me," or "I'm gonna love you even if I have to give you a strike because you did something wrong. I'm gonna love you regardless of whatever happens."

Maryn explicitly recognizes that this practice is different from how the moms have been treated in the past, and that it is part of her role, as a staff member, to demonstrate this unconditional love.

As a result of this practice of unconditional love, the moms view themselves differently. One of the alumnae moms explains how her view of herself changed because of her experience at the shelter:

“Everyone thinks that my depression, my mental illness, I'm a stupid person. After [St. Mary's House], it changed me a lot. My way of thinking: I'm a smart person!” (Corie, alumni mom)

While Corie's challenges because of her mental illness and depression have not been swept away by her experience at St. Mary's, her self-image has changed dramatically. Because she thinks of herself as a smart person, she has been able to raise her children single-handedly and get the occasional assistance she needs through St. Mary's. The socialization from the experience of many years ago is still influencing her life.

The staff members are aware of their impressionable audience and carefully manage themselves, again maintaining their role of saints. For example, the staff, on their day off, may go out to a bar and have drinks with friends. However, none of these types of activities are spoken of in front of moms, and staff members have been asked by the organization to remove Facebook pictures with alcohol in them. The intent of the service is to portray a healthy lifestyle through the saintly examples of the staff, further contributing to the social norms of the rescue institution.

One of the benefits of living in a community is to see how others exercise their agency and choose to structure their own lives. At the shelter, role modeling by the staff members ensures that the values are not just spoken of, but can be seen in action. Within St. Mary's House, individuals held up as role models, such as staff and volunteers, are vetted and trained. This training for the volunteers includes instructions on addressing abortion with the moms, keeping conversations positive, and appropriate clothing.

Additionally, staff members are intentional about the behaviors they model for the moms, for example, remaining calm even in disagreements:

“I try to model good communication skills even when it's hard, even when I'm frustrated with them or I know they're frustrated with me. The other day one of the moms was complaining that [the shelter] was too conservative for her...I was like, "Well, that's okay! It's okay for us to think differently about that...I'm sorry you're frustrated," ...I try and model disagreements don't have to be fights. You can just agree to disagree and you can talk it out, but it doesn't have to be a, "We've gotta yell about this." It's okay to have different opinions.” (Melissa, current staff)

In the above quote, Melissa is mindful of how her communication with the moms serves as a model that the moms can choose to emulate. To this end, service providers in rescue institutions align their public behavior with the values of the service in an effort to further

inculcate the values into consumers' lives. Akin to the re-inventive institution, agency can be gently shaped in rescue institutions to be more in line with the values of the service while still honoring the agency of the consumer.

This role modeling is designed to provide an opportunity for the moms to observe and mimic the attitudes and behaviors that reflect the desired value systems. However, according to Bandura's social cognitive theory (1977), role modeling is more effective when the model is perceived as similar to the self—for example, when the moms perceive that the staff is similar to themselves. Specifically, the moms, as 'sinners,' often struggle to relate to the idealized image that the staff portrays and the values they uphold. I find that in order for the staff to serve as effective role models for the moms, the staff must walk a fine line to balance their moral authority with their humanity and imperfections. The moms, in turn, try to see more into the personal lives of the staff:

“The moms try and get a lot out of you. Like, "How many boyfriends have you had? What'd you do with them?" All that... girlfriend gossip, I feel like we don't need to get to that level.” (Melissa, current staff)

In the preceding quote, not 'getting to that level' indicates that while some forms of fraternizing between moms and staff as a form of community building are welcome, other forms, such as gossip, are not. This social distance is often purposefully set and maintained through the boundaries of the staff; in this area, staff members have the power here that the moms do not have. The staff carefully negotiates their distance and differences from the moms, maintaining that hierarchy of saint and sinner so as to retain the institution's transformative authority. To the moms, staff members appear to be untouched by the forces of sex, drugs, and violence that pervade the lives of the moms.

At St. Mary's House, the moms respond differently to the hierarchy of the institution as embodied by the staff. Specifically, I find that the internalization of the transformative change was reflected in the way that the moms relate to the staff, that is whether they see the staff as role models and friends or as flawed dictators and dullards. While every mom could find fault with the staff in some way, the moms' fundamental view of the staff becomes clear in the interviews and observations, especially with regard to their contact person. While the specifics of their complaints are unique to the setting, my findings indicate that the consumers' underlying attitudes toward the moral hierarchy of the rescue institution is an important factor in whether the mom completes the program.

In looking at specific examples of the moms at St. Mary's House, a quote from Tiffany represents a positive view of the hierarchy, that the staff members are people that she would like to be closer to, which distances her from the other moms:

“When I'm hanging out with the moms sometimes I don't really get along with them. I don't connect in some ways and I don't want to talk about what they want to talk about. Sometimes I'd rather go talk about what [the staff are] talking about....I bet you anything [if the staff] were one of my friend's friends and we were all hanging out...we would end up being friends.” (Tiffany, current mom)

This quote comes from an interview that is relatively late in her experience at St. Mary's House. In an earlier interview, Tiffany had characterized the staff as authority figures that she wouldn't be able to joke around with, whose life experiences were drastically different from her own. However, even in the beginning, the underlying perspective saw value in their help:

“We have to be great role models for my kids, and that's good that they're here so we can learn those things. I don't think that [the staff] know how to handle it

sometimes... They're just like, "Uh, what? What did you just say? I've never even heard that before. What does that mean?" How do you even not know what I'm saying? Did you grow up in a box?" (Tiffany, current mom)

Similarly, Cassandra emphasized how she was learning so much from the other moms and staff. Anna characterized the staff and moms as good people who want to be there, even though she acknowledges that they aren't perfect.

On the other end of the spectrum were moms who thought the staff has little to offer them. Alexandra explains, "They're all younger than us, so they're more naïve," and went further as to how the staff has much to learn from the moms. Rachel concurs, "They're the staff, and they know nothing about anything. They have double standards on everything." As mentioned earlier, Jasmine describes the staff as 'textbook,' meaning that they can't empathize because they don't actually emotionally understand her experiences and the experiences of other moms. These moms feel judged by the staff, an unintentional effect of the practice of moral hierarchy.

Thus far, I have discussed the organizational practices as outlined in the upper section of Figure 1 to account for the structures set up by the service organization. Not only have I shown how the service as a rescue institution balances aspect of RI and TI, I have also provided insight into how consumers within rescue institutions perceive these characteristics. In the next section, the consumers' perspectives will be given prominence as I examine the consumers' practices within the rescue institution. These patterns of behavior further contribute to the unique nature of a rescue institution as a balance of RI and TI.

Consumer Practices

Consumers' practices contribute to the transformative experience of a value-laden service in concert with and in reaction to the organizations' practices described previously. This can be seen in the lower section of Figure 1. Consumers in rescue institutions are often in various stages of crisis when they enter and as they proceed through the rescue institution; for example, many of the moms at St. Mary's are focused on survival and meeting basic needs. Coming to St. Mary's and agreeing to the rules, (thereby demonstrating submission to the structured social world of the VLSO) is their first step in their effort to survive. This survival motive is particularly powerful in shaping the practices that the moms demonstrate within St. Mary's Home.

Throughout the data collection process, two themes became evident in consumers' practices: specifically, negotiation of inauthenticity and participation in an informal shadow structure. I will here explore each of these in greater depth and provide examples to connect these with other conceptual aspects within my framework. Each of these consumer practices, in parallel to the organizational practices, strives to find a balance in the dynamic interplay of consumers' agency and the organization's structure.

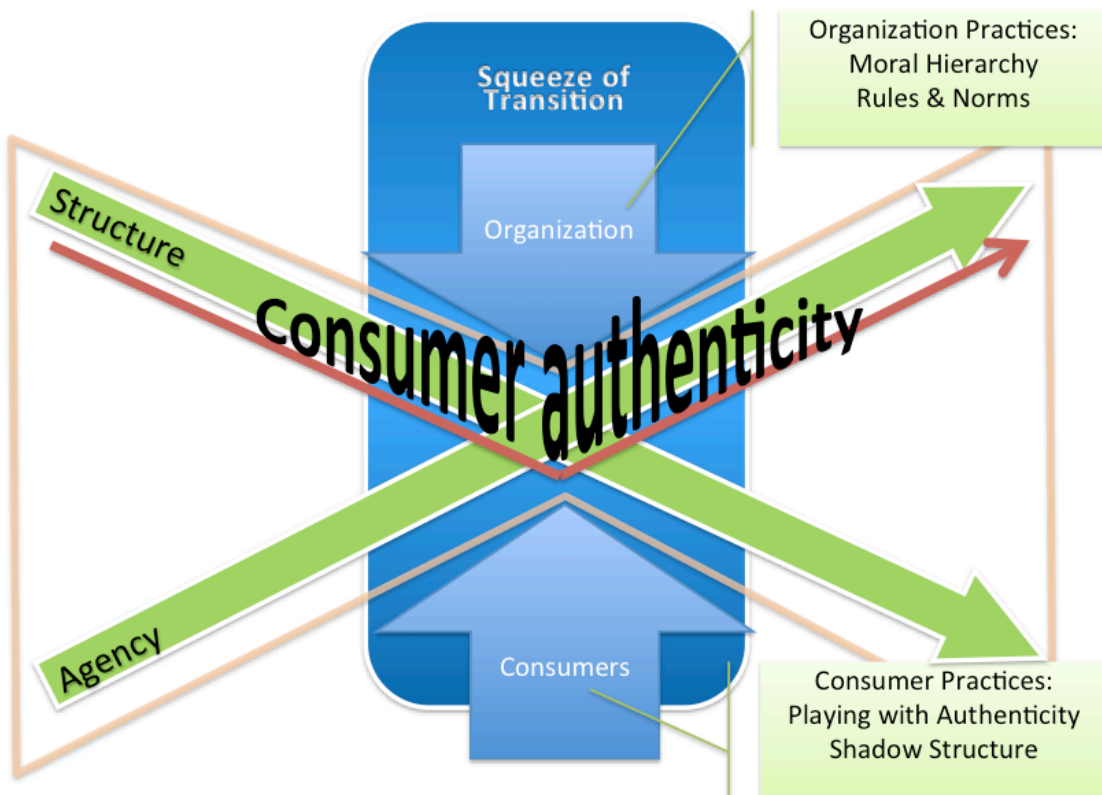
Playing with Authenticity.

“First you're really not gonna like this place. You're gonna find this place really strange. Everybody's really happy and when we all come here we're not very happy. This is not what we wanted.” (Tiffany, current mom)

Value alignment within rescue institutions is initially lacking with consumers, creating the 'strange' experience that Tiffany explains. The highly structured service and required value-laden behaviors initially decrease consumers' authenticity, as seen in

Figure 2, Rescue Institutions and Consumer Authenticity. In this figure, authenticity is overlaid on the initial Figure 1, first declining and then rising over time. I find that consumers quickly learn that their usual authentic behaviors are ill-suited to this new environment within the rescue institution, and thus their degree of authentic behaviors rapidly decreases. Throughout their experience, consumers experiment with various inauthentic and unfamiliar behaviors. During a key period, consumers are able to slowly increase their authenticity as the desired behaviors are adopted and they gain increased agency and independence. This change is possible as values are adopted into the consumers' authentic self through the process of interpretive drift.

FIGURE 2.
 RESCUE INSTITUTIONS AND CONSUMER AUTHENTICITY



Authentic behavior, by which I primarily mean *authentic living*, has been defined by Wood and colleagues (2008) as behaving and expressing emotions in such a way that is consistent with one's awareness of the experience of such emotions (p. 386). Inauthentic behavior, then, is not behaving consistently with one's experienced emotions. Within the shelter, the moms' termed this inauthentic behavior 'faking it.'

“If I'm not happy, pretend to be happy. If you have an attitude, pretend like you don't just to make things slide a little bit smoother. You do it to keep it to yourself. Keep it to yourself.” (Abby, current mom)

In the above quote, Abby repeats 'keep it to yourself' for emphasis and uses the word 'pretend,' rather than actually advising that the 'attitude' be discarded. Abby, like many of the moms, does not initially intend to adopt these behaviors.

I find that, in reaction to the rescue institution's agency-reducing structure, consumers often chose to behave inauthentically, to camouflage their usual behaviors and feelings. Such inauthentic behavior has been linked to decreases in well-being, as the experience of inauthenticity creates psychological tension (Harter 2002). In contrast, I find that consumers can increase their well-being through (initially) inauthentic behaviors. Consistent with research on service providers' emotional labor, these inauthentic behaviors (as a form of emotional labor) can be draining (Ashforth and Humphrey 1993). Emotional labor—meaning emotion management—in the context of service co-creation means that consumers also engage in emotional labor (Tumbat 2011). Researchers have shown that as individuals begin to identify with the values underlying the required behaviors, this emotional labor can ultimately increase well-being (Ashforth and Humphrey 1993). I find that consumers similarly undergo emotional labor that results in interpretive drift as they negotiate between inauthenticity and agency.

Inauthenticity may be a key to achieving well-being for consumers in value-laden rescue institutions. While past research has demonstrated that the authenticity is sought after and inauthenticity is avoided in the pursuit of well-being (Lenton et al. 2013), I find that consumers in crisis have additional challenges in the journey to well-being. Specifically, I find that being willing to ‘fake it’ and endure the discomfort of emotional labor is an important practice for consumers in rescue institutions. This emotional labor enables the consumers to ‘make it,’ navigating both the rescue institution and their individual changes.

“Us that do make it is because we stick it out, and we fake it, or we are just that kinda person that they can fit in with that.” (Tiffany, current mom)

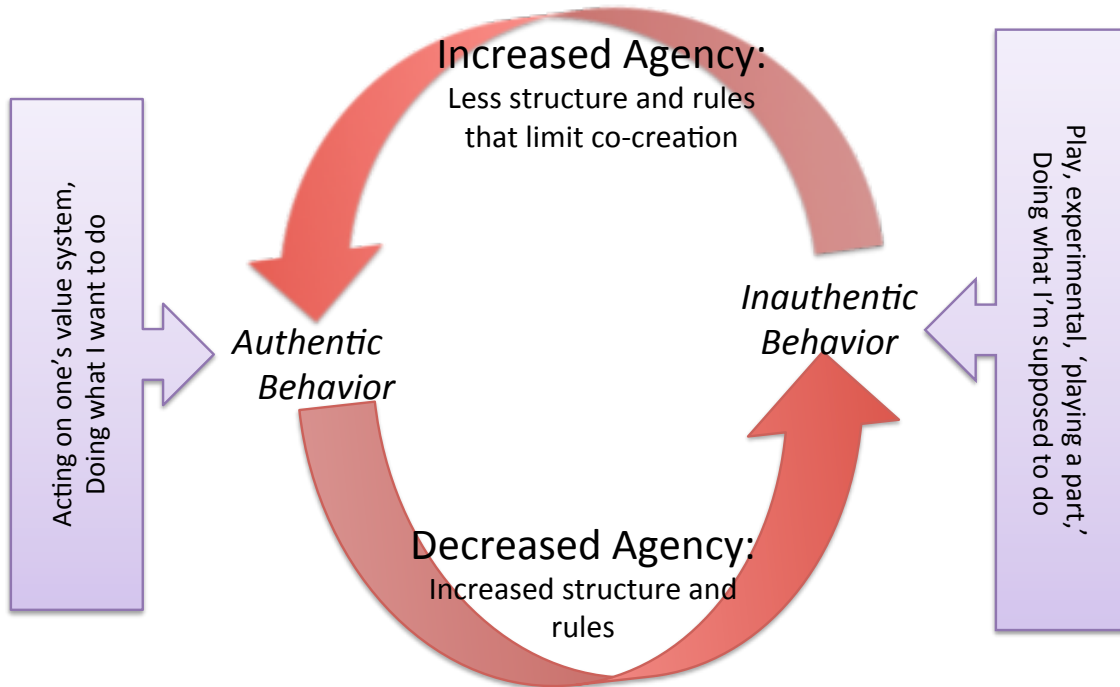
As Tiffany states above, consumers’ discomfort in the form of inauthenticity may be necessary initially to achieve the desired well-being. In line with research on changes in consumers’ identification with religious institutions (McAlexander et al. 2014), I find that consumers in transition may evolve in their authentic living in a piecemeal fashion, often trying things out that initially feel inauthentic and uncomfortable. I find that this piecemeal trial and adoption of the values and behaviors begins a cycle that I outline in Figure 3, the agency and authenticity cycle.

The agency and authenticity cycle begins as consumers submit to the rescue institution as a way to cope in their crisis. Once there, consumers quickly learn that their authentic behavior only serves to further decrease their already limited agency. Faking it, on the other hand, results in increased agency. For example, in reaction to receiving a disciplinary note (called a strike), one of the moms behaved inauthentically to be in line with the expectations of the service organization.

“If I wasn't here, I probably would've reacted in a whole other way: grab the paper, tore it up, like that. I probably would have gotten another strike for it. I chose not to. In my head, I was thinking: “Calm down. Keep it cool.”...They're smiling and being polite and stuff, but they still gave you a strike... You just have to smile and nod...Anything just so they'll walk away...Basically playing my part, really.” (Abby, current mom)

FIGURE 3.

AGENCY AND AUTHENTICITY CYCLE



Abby chose to suppress her authentic reaction in recognition of the greater benefits received by playing her part. Her playing a part was a purposeful balance between her authenticity and the structure of the service that would have given her a strike. I find that these internal negotiations result in improvisation or trying new behaviors, which has been shown to increase authentic adoption of values (King and Janis 1956; Briñol, McCaslin, and Petty 2012), through interpretive drift and thus contribute to individual change.

The benefits of consumers' inauthenticity within the institution can be generally characterized as increased agency. Increased agency is a result of both perception and the actual mechanics of the organization that enable the consumers to more fully participate and direct their experience. Within the shelter, this increased agency is experienced as the moms have more say in the content of individual meetings with staff, take initiative in directing their own education and employment, and experience social benefits from apparent value alignment. Further, as the end-goals and methods of the moms and the institution move toward alignment, these women see the long-term benefits on their personal well-being, and are more willing to trust the institution, particularly when facing differences.

As this process of authentic value adoption continues, consumers often want to prematurely exercise more agency or independence than the institution allows. Consumers still find incongruencies between their own desires and the structure of the institution. For example, one of the moms, Monique, gained employment at a gym that wanted her to work at times that clashed with the shelter's schedule. Monique's desire to meet the needs of her employer at the expense of her participation in the shelter resulted in conflict with the staff. This conflict negatively impacted Monique's relationship with the staff, and it seemed to her that the institution was acting as a blockade to her immediate employment and overall independence.

I'm pretty sure that our whole goal here is to get a job and keep the job... You guys are going to have me lose my job... I already told them I can't work Tuesdays and Wednesdays; now I have to tell them I can't work 3:00 a.m. because you guys say no. It's not going to be like that in the real world. In the real world, I'm going to find somebody to watch my daughter, and I'm going to ask them if they can take me to work, which my best friend would clearly do." (Monique, current mom)

Monique felt that her agency was decreased at this point compared to the ‘real world,’ and faced a renegotiation of her agency and authenticity. At this point in the Agency and Authenticity Cycle, consumers can either again submit to the structure of the service (and exhibit inauthentic behavior) or escalate their authentic behavior and risk being asked to leave the rescue institution.

I find that consumers who refuse to submit to the norms of the institution fail to benefit fully from their experience and often felt neglected or even ostracized. One of the moms, Rachel, describes her experience as one who did not ‘fake it’ but was authentic and expressive within the shelter.

“I thought, being that they were of religion, that they would treat me nice and listen to what I have to say...Each time I brought up an idea, it was shut down: ‘It’s not gonna change, it’s not gonna happen.’ ...What’s the purpose of continuing, then, if life is not gonna get better?” (Rachel, alumni mom)

Rachel’s commitment to changing her world could not be realized within the rescue institution because she was unwilling to submit to the institution’s values and social structures. She did not progress in the agency and authenticity cycle. The rescue institution consistently has more power than the individual, and so the individual must be willing to participate on the terms that the institution sets. Without being willing to ‘fake it,’ Rachel did not experience the transformative power of the institution.

In contrast to Rachel’s experience, many of my participants did experience this cycle of agency and authenticity, negotiating their independence and value-laden behaviors and subsequent adoption. Through this cycle, these moms experienced some degree of interpretive drift. In the following quote from an alumni mom, I can see the

interaction between the mom's agency and the structure of the service that resulted in her change:

“I wish I coulda stayed there longer because of how much help they gave us. You really couldn't lay around, and sit around, and stuff like that. We had to do something. We hadda motivate ourselves....[or] we would get kicked out. They don't play! These new moms think, “Oh, yeah. I'm just gonna sit around and not do nothing.” No, it does not work that way. You have to do something in order to better your life.” (Corie, alumni mom)

Corie's experience at St. Mary's taught her that action—her agency—was necessary to create the change she wanted. Her actions and motivations intertwine with the values of the organization as to become indistinguishable in her advice to and characterization of 'new moms' in need of change from their laziness. As Corie said, the institution's structure did not allow her to just 'lay around,' which she characterizes, in retrospect, as being helpful. The threat of being kicked out was a sufficient catalyst for her to motivate herself. Given that many of the new moms do not characterize the productivity requirements as “being helpful,” I believe this provides evidence of both interpretive drift and the underlying cycle of agency and authenticity.

Playing with authenticity is one way that consumers contribute to the transformative experience of rescue institutions and contribute to their own well-being. Next I look at another role consumers take on within the rescue institution as a part of the informal shadow structure. Like the agency and authenticity cycle, this informal shadow structure enables consumers to exercise personal agency and try out roles and values that may be new to the individual.

Creating an Informal Shadow Structure. Within the structure of the rescue institution, I find that consumers create their own, more covert, social structures. These

informal shadow structures consist of social roles and relationships among consumers, within a cohort of consumers. This is consistent with research in other institutions (e.g., women's informal networks in financial institutions, McGuire 2002). Of particular importance, while the rescue institution may not explicitly recognize this shadow structure, I find that front-line service providers do become cognizant of its existence. The shadow structure can further the transformative goals of the service, but also challenges the organization's total authority within the service. I find that consumers co-create their transformative service experience in ways that are separate from and possibly subversive of the intended structure.

Within St. Mary's, I find that the moms create a shadow structure that establishes social stratification. This shadow structure consists of many different social roles and positions that create a network of informal power and influence. While there are many parts to this ever-evolving social structure, I will here explore one of the roles, the Alpha Mom at St. Mary's.

At St. Mary's, the Alpha Mom is the social and cultural director of the mom cohort and an acknowledged leader among the moms. I find that both moms and staff explicitly recognize this role and assign it to the mom who has seniority within the shelter. Because this mom has the longest tenure, she is familiar with the institutional practices, both of the rescue institution and other institutions that work with this population (e.g., Child Protective Services, food stamps, transitional housing, employment assistance). The other moms often rely on the Alpha Mom for advice and knowledge. One of the moms described her role as the Alpha Mom:

“I wouldn't say I was a favorite. At one point, I just became...the alpha mom in the house because I was there longer. You just be honest. Be straight to the point...When [I] know more information than the new staff does, then they're even asking you to ask [me]...it becomes weird for me. Especially when it comes to moms who already have children and been living out here [in the state] longer than I have, because they should already know the situation and how to do things.” (Abby, alumni mom)

As outlined by Abby above, the Alpha Mom re-enforces the social norms of the rescue institution, assists in maintaining the structure and consistency of the service (which is particularly important during staff turnover), and advises or mentors other moms in how to navigate the tensions that arise in this rescue institution. Abby says she wasn't a ‘favorite,’ which indicates that becoming the Alpha Mom does not depend on having the most positive relationship with the staff.

Unlike the staff, the Alpha Mom is not required to advocate for the values of the institution in her interactions with the other moms. Rather, the Alpha Mom must be sufficiently aligned with the rescue institution's values to remain within the institution as a participant. Because of this, the shadow structure may introduce additional different norms within the official service structure. These norms shape how the consumers use their agency effectively within the transformative service and contribute to the consumer's adoption and practice of the institutions' values.

The shadow structure within rescue institutions aligns with Giddens' 1984 theory of reflexive agency, which states that agents reproduce the social conditions to which they are accustomed. In the shelter, I find that much of the shadow structure reproduces norms and practices from the moms' previous social worlds. These norms include not tattling on one another to the staff (not being a snitch), not being ‘too good’ or ‘too Catholic,’ and the formation of cliques within the shelter. Moms brought with them

concepts and practices such as “fake it ‘til you make it,” which I discussed previously, and “peep the scene,” which also relates to managing one’s image. Abby, in her role as the Alpha Mom, advises other moms to use similar practices within the shelter that they would use at work, specifically taking into account the preexisting social norms and relationships:

Peep the scene means check out the scene. Instead of jumping in and having a whole bunch of conversation, sit back, watch everybody interact with each other. Peep everybody out, see how everybody is ... It's almost a game...if you're gonna play that game ... don't be genuine. Be just like if you are at work, you know not to get on the boss's nerves and you want to be on your boss's good side. (Abby, current mom)

The rescue institution must carefully navigate their interactions with this shadow structure. On one hand, the organization can legitimize the shadow structure and thus make participants more powerful, which can be problematic. One particularly vivid example comes from an incident at the shelter where one of the head staff members tried to co-opt the shadow structure to manage the moms’ behavior outside of the service structure. Knowing the relationships and influence that existed among the moms, a staff member wanted to ensure that promiscuous behavior was not occurring. However, her efforts backfired, as the moms subsequently felt that they had equal power to the staff within the shelter and tried to call a house meeting on behalf of the community. Although the moms were unable to successfully take on that authority to create a new meeting, the moms spoke up at a later existing house meeting and criticized the staff’s actions. This undermined the hierarchy of the service, and staff subsequently increased their social distance from the moms to reestablish the power differences.

If the shadow structure is not well-aligned with the rescue institutions' values—and often it is not—consumers face the dilemma of balancing between the two different value systems. For example, moms leaving St. Mary's often have a farewell community meeting called a candlelight. At the candlelight, each person—both moms and staff members—is given the opportunity to speak. St. Mary's wants these parting messages to be uplifting and positive, regardless of how difficult the mom's experience has been. However, the moms value honesty and “being real” with one another, which becomes difficult when their honesty is not particularly kind. Often the moms negotiate the two value systems by saying very little:

“I barely knew any of them, when I first got here too, so I really had nothing to say.... I don't know why the hell they do that [hold farewell candlelights]... I know you're leaving, okay? I'll say bye to you when you leave... [Instead] we can all have an awkward moment of silence when I probably don't even like you anyway” (Tiffany, current mom)

Provided that the two structures—the shadow structure and the organization's official structure—continue in their intended power difference, role modeling can occur as well. Specifically, as the moms observe the hierarchy of the service (for example, that the Director General is in charge of the other staff members), they replicate it in their own social circle (allowing moms various roles and increasing levels of influence with their seniority). For example, the Alpha Mom may take it upon herself to manage the other moms, to make sure they are aware of the rules and structure of the service. Although the rescue institution does not sanction the Alpha Mom's socializing behavior, it can be particularly helpful in navigating the day-to-day transitions that moms experience within rescue institutions.

Squeeze of Transition

Until now, the focus of this paper has been on the practices and pressures from the service structure in conjunction with the consumers' social structures and practices. I find that in the process of seeking increased well-being, the consumer initially has little desire for immediate agency due to the crisis they are experiencing. Thus, the consumer's initial submission to the structure of the service is uncomplicated by conflicting agendas. However, with the passage of time, the consumer (re)gains her sense of self and is willing to exercise more agency, but feels constrained by the structure of the service. At this point, it is difficult for the consumer to remain in the rescue institution because she often sees other options as more attractive and more immediately rewarding. According to my findings, this point, where the consumer wants to exercise more agency than the structure of the rescue institution can allow, can prove to be critical.

During this critical transition period, the conflicting pressures from both the structure of the service and the consumers' personal desire for agency can be challenging. Navigating this key transition time, aptly termed as a 'squeeze point,' is difficult. Many of the participants in my study left the shelter at this point, often by 'striking out' through repeated non-compliance with the rules. However, I find that participants who persevere within the service eventually experience a reduction in conflict between agency and structure.

The squeeze point is illustrated in Figure 1 as a boxed section around the middle of the conceptual framework, although I find that its occurrence (both location and duration) varies with the individual consumer. Many of the initial interviews with moms

were conducted during this critical time, and I observed striking differences in the follow-up interviews and observations of the participants.

My findings suggest that in rescue institutions, the consumers' initial child-like dependence and lack of agency intuitively enables actions that enhance their future well-being as they are able to focus on developing the skills of self-sufficiency while their current needs are being met by the VLSO. As illustrated in the conceptual framework and detailed in the findings, the distinct roles and importance of agency and structure reverse priority as consumers progress in the VLSO. During the key transition time, consumers feel 'squeezed' while trying to mature into independence and still submitting to the community structures.

Consumers who exit the service prematurely, prior to successfully navigating the "squeeze point," are often unable to foresee the benefits of remaining in the incubation of a VLSO. These differences between those who traverse the squeeze point and those who do not are illustrated hereby, based on my examination of two moms at St. Mary's, Jasmine and Tiffany. These two moms became close friends at St. Mary's. Both experienced similar difficult circumstances prior to entering the shelter, and shared an initial struggle to align with the values within the institution. Jasmine and Tiffany are formerly drug addicts and felons who struggled with employment and found the staff members' lives very foreign to their own experiences. These participants entered St. Mary's with the explicit goal to make major changes in their lives, but also brought with them internal doubt as to their ability to succeed. Despite all of these similarities, it was the moms' differences that emerged during the "squeeze point" that determined the success of the transition.

I begin with Jasmine's experience at St. Mary's Home. Jasmine described her commitment to changing in an interview:

"I didn't want to take the opportunity for granted...I told myself, if I had one more chance, I would do it all different, no drugs, no nasty stuff, and I'll really try hard to carry this baby and my other kids, too."

Despite this commitment, Jasmine left the shelter immediately after giving birth to her child in hope that a new living situation with the baby's father would prove successful. Jasmine was committed to 'making it' by any means necessary, with the specific values at St. Mary's as a secondary consideration. This precipitated a failure to fully integrate the values of the service into her life; her desired transformation was incomplete and thus she returned to her former lifestyles and habits. Subsequently, Jasmine lost custody of her child (because she broke the safety plan she set up with the Child Protective Services) and is currently serving time in prison for parole violations. After visiting her in jail, I received this postcard: "I just wanted to let you know I'm going to prison and that I wish I would have stayed at [St. Mary's]."

In comparison, Tiffany eventually internalized the values of St. Mary's and excluded certain aspects from her previous life to more fully align with the values. Tiffany remained at St. Mary's longer than Jasmine (6 months after her child's birth). Tiffany reflected on her relationship with Jasmine while at St. Mary's:

"Every other way I look at it, I think I still would have been her friend. ... I've learned from that, I grew from that. I realized that's not what I wanna be like. I was in a bad spot in my life. I just did whatever, you know? I probably wouldn't of changed it."

After leaving the shelter, Tiffany lived independently with her child and was employed as a receptionist at a boutique salon. Within a year after leaving the St. Mary's,

Tiffany hosted an event at the salon to pamper the moms at St. Mary's with haircuts and manicures. This vividly demonstrates the major changes in her life that has made it possible for her to give back to the institution. Since she successfully navigated the "squeeze point," Tiffany's experience and level of independence after St. Mary's was dramatically different than Jasmine's. Tiffany sensed the consequences of her association with Jasmine and their contrasting authenticity and motivation for change.

"I would not see that going anywhere good if she was still here. She'd be like oh let's move in together... No! Then you're gonna do drugs and then I'll be with you and then I'll go down the drain"

Consumers' initial compliance is a necessary but insufficient condition for success within the rescue institution. While Tiffany and Jasmine were inauthentic in their compliance with the standards at St. Mary's House, the outward compliance was not enough to create lasting change. Rather, it creates a consumer who is moldable by her environment, somewhat like high self-monitoring (Bem 1965). If the consumers' state of dependence and pliability continues beyond the rescue institution, they may remain 'too' pliable and easily influenced by other forces. Within St. Mary's, this is framed as 'floating,' and associated with a lower level of personal well-being. Those who float tend to 'go with the flow' of the surrounding social structures, taking the 'path of least resistance.' I find that these 'floating' consumers often view themselves as powerless and merely go along with the predominant value system. Not surprisingly, any change made tends to be temporary, and like Jasmine, these moms often find it easier to leave at the "squeeze point." On the other hand, there are moms who 'blossom,' fully taking root in the value system to make changes and grow, even beyond the rescue institution. This "squeeze point" is a defining moment as consumers in rescue institutions either float

along or blossom.

CONCLUSION

This paper contributes to transformative services research by identifying, conceptualizing and exploring a rescue institution as a type of value-laden organization. In this concluding section I will look at how each research question was addressed, examine key implications, and raise questions for future research.

This research successfully addresses each of the initial research questions. First, how do value-laden organizations encourage consumer change toward their specific value-based definition of consumer well-being? What practices do they use? I find that value-laden organizations encourage change through balancing the various forces that are part of rescue institutions: the rigidity of rules and more subtle social norms that decrease consumer agency in order to increase it later, creating a child-like state of dependence in consumers in order to re-direct subsequent independence, and a moral hierarchy of saints and sinners that contributes to interpretive drift.

My second research question asked how consumers respond to the structure of the VLSO and the advocated changes. Specifically, what practices do consumers engage in? This research finds that consumers respond to the structure of a rescue institution by alternating the authenticity of their expression within the institutions as well as by contributing to a covert consumer-based social structure. It is these behaviors—particularly balancing authenticity—that contribute to consumers' successful navigation of the squeeze point and subsequent authentic adoption of new behaviors.

Lastly, what tensions arise within the value-laden immersive service between the organization and consumers? Given the differing experiences of service participants, how are these tensions negotiated? How do they impact the experience and overall change efforts? I find that key tensions in the value-laden service revolve around the temporary decreases in consumer authenticity that are seemingly in contrast to the rescue institution's intention to increase the consumer's well-being. The agency and authenticity cycle provides a perspective into the continuous negotiation of these tensions as structure and agency integrate to create interpretive drift.

This research provides a unifying framework for discussing and researching service organizations that strive to create internally-motivated and long-lasting (value) changes in consumers. Value-laden service organizations (VLSO's) can include among others, financial expertise services, behavioral and addiction counseling, and health services that strive to build well-being beyond the service experience and through individual change and/or transformation. Because of the purpose of these service organizations, the ideal of value congruence between providers and consumers may be less feasible, both in the overt practices and in the underlying principles that they advocate. How these subsequent value conflicts are navigated is an essential part of value-laden services organization's efforts to 'rescue' consumers.

While value laden service organizations are under-researched, their exploration has much to contribute to our understanding of how consumers are impacted by powerful institutions. In particular, the cycle of agency and authenticity deserves further consideration as a conceptual framework in examining vulnerable consumers' experiences with transformative services. This research brings increased relevance of

marketing to organizations that don't seek out the top socioeconomic echelon of consumers and for consumers whose access to the market is more limited (Hill and Martin 2014). Additionally, this research demonstrates that consumers go through a process of change and alternating authenticity over time within the organization, which encourages organizations to see their consumers in a more complete, more complex way.

The idea of a transformative value-laden service is full of apparent contradictions that require such services to walk a fine line, balancing short-term needs with long-term goals to pursue consumer well-being. On the one hand, transformative services strive to empower consumers, but this effort has the potential to cause unintentional outcomes. In empowering consumers—in encouraging an independent and strong self-concept—service organizations may be creating a paradox: either motivating consumers to become powerful enough to reject the values proffered by the service, or denying the very empowerment they are striving to endow upon the consumers due to the hierarchical design of the service (e.g., having consequences for non-compliance doled out by service providers). Maintaining this delicate balance between structure and agency is an essential part of transformative services, and applies broadly to many service contexts.

Another key managerial implication is that rescue institutions must maintain a long-term perspective for individual consumers. Because these value-laden services have a vision for the service consumers' lives beyond the institution, it is important that the service providers help consumers to see long-term while in the service. This perspective is especially instrumental for the service consumers as they navigate the squeeze point. Many times, consumers look to the rescue institution to be a solution, a new beginning to their own 'happily ever after.' However, the institution should know and convey to

consumers that their liminal experience within the institution may become more difficult before it gets easier. This perspective will be important in acknowledging the difficulties consumers experience in achieving their well-being and the important role that personal struggle plays in creating a new independent self. Additionally, the institution needs to understand that because change is an iterative process, mistakes must be permitted while still retaining the integrity of the program and protecting the well-being of other consumers.

This research demonstrates how the specific understanding of well-being adopted within the institution is foundational to the structure of said organization; however, this question leads to examining more closely these definitions. For example, future research should examine more closely the practices, rhetoric, and narratives through which a VLSO conveys to their (potential) consumers their specific vision of well-being. From a marketing standpoint, all actions of an organization should be customer-centric (Sheth, Sisodia, and Sharma 2000); in a VLSO, these actions are centered around the customer's wellbeing. However, the unit of analysis in seeking consumer well-being is worth further study. The values and priorities of an organization reflect whether well-being is conceptualized as on an individual basis or higher group-level (such as relationship dyads, families, communities, etc.). How do consumers integrate their concept of well-being with the organization and view their individual role in creating collective well-being?

From both a managerial and research perspective, the pressures placed on service providers in rescue institutions are worth further consideration. Much of the negotiation between agency and structure relies on the daily discernment of front-line service

providers. Such pressures and the impact of service providers' decisions on the lives of consumers require a sufficient support system from the organization and either training for or hiring for the skill set to manage the challenges. Of particular interest for future research is how 'service failures' in rescue institutions might be successfully redressed. Given the value-laden nature of the organization and the need to maintain social distance and a hierarchy of power, many of the usual practices would seem ineffective or counter-productive.

In being a value-laden institution, it is important that the values and their priority are made clear to both the service providers and consumers. Value tradeoffs are often unpleasant, but necessary. Future research should look at how these tradeoffs are determined within the organization and their impact on consumers' experience and transformation. Additionally, there is an opportunity to explore the long-term impact of these services on consumers and their social worlds. Specifically, future research looking at the long-term impact of transformative and value-laden service experiences will contribute to greater understanding of consumers' well-being and how value and behavior adoption or rejection occurs beyond the reach of the institution.

Change is a messy process. The transformative experience can be unique to the individual and may not fit with preconceived ideas of what 'change' should look like. Although often neither the consumer nor the organization can predict the end result of the rescue institutions' impact, the fierce negotiation among values and perspectives from both consumers and the organization can lead to increased consumer well-being, even though the process is "messy."

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APPENDIX A
INFORMANT DATA COLLECTION TABLES

Table 1. Informant Data Collection Table

Informant	Role	Status	Data at St. Mary's	Data after St. Mary's
Jasmine	Mom	Pregnant, recovering addict, felon	Interview and Observation	In jail: informal conversation
Tiffany	Mom	Pregnant, recovering addict, felon, first-time mom	Interview and Observation	Facebook: Living with family
Bonnie	Mom	CPS took child who may be placed for adoption, nearly homeless	-	Alumni event group discussion, Interview & Observation
Marge	Mom	Child is several years old, moving out of transitional housing into own home	-	discussion, Interview & Observation: living in
Erin	Mom	Has many children both before and after her time at the shelter, married, currently pregnant	-	Alumni event group discussion, Interview & Observation
Corie	Mom	Pregnant with her fourth; had her first at the shelter, mentally ill	-	Alumni event group discussion, Interview
Eve	Mom	First-time mom 12 years ago, now has another daughter, one of the first moms at the shelter	-	Own apartment: Alumni event group discussion, Interview & Observation
Leah	Mom	Interviewed at end of stay, abused, self-identified as mentally ill, first-time mom	Interview and Observation	Transitional Housing: Interview and Facebook

Table 1. Informant Data Collection Table (continued 2 of 3)

Informant	Role	Status	Data at St. Mary's	Data after St. Mary's
Natasha	Mom	Interviewed at end of stay, recovering addict	Interview and Observation	Interview and Facebook
Hillary	Mom	Pregnant, supportive family, first-time mom	Interview and Observation	Living with family: Facebook
Abby	Mom	Child is several months old, getting ready to move out of shelter, first-time mom	Interview and Observation	Transitional Housing: Interview and Observation
Catherine	Mom	Child is a month old, also has two teenagers	Interview and Observation	Facebook
Rachel	Mom	Child is 18 months old, she is living with her mom, recovering addict, first-time mom	Interview and Observation	Interview and Facebook: Living with family
Ariel	Mom	Pregnant, in process of moving out of shelter after being asked to leave	Interview	Facebook: Child no longer in her care
Anna	Mom	Second child	Interview	-
Robin	Mom	Pregnant: in process of moving out, struck out	Interview and Observation	-
Whitney	Mom	Child is 8 months old, first-time mom	Interview	-
Monique	Mom	Getting ready to move into transitional housing	Interview and Observation	Interview and Facebook: Living in Transitional Housing
Cassandra	Mom	Pregnant, first-time mom	Interview	-
Alexandra	Mom	Baby is 7- 8 months old. Mom has all her teeth removed. Ready to move out. Has lived on the streets.	Interview	-

Table 1. Informant Data Collection Table (continued 3 of 3)

Informant	Role	Status	Data at St. Mary's	Data after St. Mary's
Raina	Mom	Baby is several months old, recovering addict	Interview and Observation	-
Elizabeth	Mom	Baby is several months old	Interview	-
Maryn	Staff	Director General	Observations (2 years) and Interview	-
Claudia	Staff	Director of Volunteers	Observations and Interview	Facebook: Getting advanced degree
Britta	Staff	Director of Volunteers	Interview	-
Melissa	Staff	Director of Guest Ministries	Interview and Observation	Facebook: pre-K teacher
Amy	Staff	Multiple roles at multiple locations	-	currently working at St. Mary's administration
Heidi	Staff	Director of Guest Ministries, Director General	Interview and Observation	Signed on for an additional year, became Director General
Linda	Staff	Director of Volunteers	Interview and Observation	Signed on for an additional year, became Director General
Rosemary	Staff	Director of Guest Ministries	Interview and Observation	Facebook; currently working at St. Mary's administration

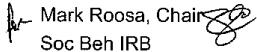
APPENDIX B

HUMAN SUBJECTS IRB APPROVAL



Office of Research Integrity and Assurance

To: Laurel Anderson
BAC

From:  Mark Roosa, Chair
Soc Beh IRB

Date: 04/09/2012

Committee Action: **Exemption Granted**

IRB Action Date: 04/09/2012

IRB Protocol #: 1202007533

Study Title: Developing the Mother Role: Homeless Women within a Liminal, Immersive, Value-Laden Service

The above-referenced protocol is considered exempt after review by the Institutional Review Board pursuant to Federal regulations, 45 CFR Part 46.101(b)(2).

This part of the federal regulations requires that the information be recorded by investigators in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects. It is necessary that the information obtained not be such that if disclosed outside the research, it could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability, or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

You should retain a copy of this letter for your records.