

Becoming an Expert Cannabis Connoisseur:  
Toward a Theory of Moralizing Labor

Michele Cadigan

A thesis

submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

University of Washington

2018

Committee:

Sarah Quinn

Alexes Harris

Program Authorized to Offer Degree:

Sociology

© Copyright 2018

Michele Cadigan

University of Washington

**Abstract**

Becoming an Expert Cannabis Connoisseur:  
Toward a Theory of Moralizing Labor in Contested Markets

Michele Lindsay Cadigan

Chair of the Supervisory Committee:  
Dr. Sarah Quinn, Associate Professor  
Department of Sociology

Economic sociologists have shown that legitimacy is an important part of market success (Fourcade and Healy 2007; Meyer and Rowan 1977) and that workers play a central role in establishing a contested trade as legitimate (Anteby 2010; Quinn 2008; Turco 2012). However, researchers have yet to adequately theorize how the process of working within contested or newly moralized markets matters for employee's sense of self. This is a problem because we know that a person's job has profound ramifications for their sense of worth (Lamont 2000). This paper addresses this gap by investigating the experiences of workers in a newly formed market for recreational cannabis. Drawing from a year of ethnographic work in three Seattle cannabis shops, and thirty interviews with workers, this study reveals that workers participating in constructing a moral market can gain large returns to a sense of themselves as moral and worthy individuals. However, these positive emotional returns were not evenly distributed. In the case of recreational cannabis, men were better able to position themselves as experts with unique scientific knowledge

and insight into how cannabis interacted with the body; women were typically met with suspicion by customers and sometimes from employers and coworkers. This indicates that working in a moralized market matters for workers, but in ways that are moderated by social status.

The recreational markets need legitimacy. And the image that a lot of companies have like Have a Heart and Vela and other places, a lot of places in Colorado are becoming models for this, about what does a legal pot shop look like? What does it look like? What does cannabis look like when it's removed from the shady element it's always been associated with?

- Nick, Budtender, Jane's Corner

## **Introduction**

How boundaries come to exist between what are considered morally permissible and profane market practices has been the focus of much scholarly work. Historically, morals and markets have been characterized as hostile worlds each representing contradictory logics: markets being utilitarian spheres of self-interest and morality requiring one to think and act in ways that benefit the greater good (Zelizer 2011). However, more recent work leveraging contested or recently moralized markets reveal they are in fact “explicitly moral projects, saturated in normativity” (Fourcade and Healy 2007). In this line of work, moral values and markets are shown to share an interactive relationship with morality both shaping and being shaped by markets. Furthermore, economic sociologists have shown that legitimacy, particularly moral legitimacy, is an important part of market success (Aldrich and Fiol 1994; Fourcade and Healy 2007; Meyer and Rowan 1977) and that workers play a central role in establishing a contested trade as legitimate (Anteby 2010; Quinn 2008; Turco 2012). What is less understood is how constructing morality in a contested market shapes the experiences of those engaging in this work. Even further, how status characteristics of market participants such as gender shape the moralization of a market and the experiences of those engaging in what I call moralizing labor—the labor one engages with to construct moral values in a contested market—has been undertheorized. This study seeks to address this gap by leveraging Washington State’s emerging legal recreational cannabis market as an ideal case of a contested market currently trying to establish itself as morally legitimate. Specifically, I seek to develop a theory around moralizing labor by examining how frameworks

constructed around legitimate and illegitimate market activities within a given space can have implications for who is allowed to engage in this labor and who can access positive returns from it.

## **Morals & Markets**

Economist Albert Hirschman identified three ways scholars have historically theorized the relationship between moral values and markets: markets are a civilizing force, bringing rationality and civility to society; markets are a corrupting force, undermining the values of society and eventually leading to its demise; and markets are too feeble to overpower long standing social hierarchies, and as such, markets are merely a reflection of broader power structures (Hirschman 1982). However, an increasing number of scholars have diverged from these prior theoretical orientations and a new conceptualization has emerged. Through the investigation of contested markets, researchers have found that moral values and markets share an interactive relationship rather than a unilateral one with markets both shaping and being shaped by moral values (Fourcade and Healy 2007). Morality is broadly defined here as a shared understanding of right and wrong, worthy and unworthy, legitimate and illegitimate (Durkheim and Bellah 2009; Hitlin and Vaisey 2013). Thus, scholars using this new conceptualization examine the ways markets, prices, market participants, and commodities are moralized (Livne 2014). More specifically, prior work has examined the ways markets are able to expand into social spheres of life previously deemed off limits and located market practices as key sites where a market's moral legitimacy is constructed.

Markets attempting to commodify a particularly sacred space of social life or taboo or stigmatized commodity often require moral legitimacy in order to achieve success. Moral legitimacy is defined as a “positive normative evaluation of an organization and its activities” (Anteby 2010: 608). Several studies examining the development of life insurance markets

highlight the importance of this type of legitimacy. Viviana Zelizer found that despite gaining legal legitimacy, life insurance markets in the U.S. experienced success only after market actors were able overcome deeply held cultural beliefs that individuals should not profit off of death (1979). By framing the meaning of death as an economic episode that dealt with the loss of income, life insurance organizations made it culturally permissible to participate in their market. Chan's examination into the creation of a life insurance market in China furthered Zelizer's work in showing how the market draws upon culturally embedded meanings surrounding the market's activities to combat initial resistance and promote industry success (Chan 2009a). Using field theory, Sarah Quinn showed how participants in the secondary life insurance market draw from their institutional positionality and cultural understandings of broader social contexts to construct a moral narrative around their market activities that favors their participation in it (Quinn 2008). Although life insurance may seem like a unique case, the importance of creating moral legitimacy in markets can be seen a variety of other industries and contexts as well.

In his work on hospice care, Livne argues that the success of hospice in the U.S. was a result of the market moralizing scarcity in both spending and treatment for end-of-life care (Livne 2014). Kieran Healy's work on the exchange of human organs, blood, and tissue, in building off the work of Titmuss (1971), shows that despite general public support for organ donation, the bureaucratic process of organ harvesting and transfer is often met with revulsion (Healy 2006). While the market for organ donation was seen as moral, the activities performed by the professionals tasked with harvesting and finding use for the organs remained contested. Thus, organizations involved in this trade spent a lot of resources focused on producing the contexts that promote potential donors to engage in altruistic behavior via one-time gift giving (Healy 2004). Even the framing of economic exchanges of human material as gifts is conceptualized as one way

economic exchanges in taboo or contested markets more broadly obfuscate transactions to make these exchanges appear more legitimate (Rossman 2014). Taken together, markets are found capable of manipulating the meaning of expenditures (Livne) and the manner to which commodities are exchanged (Rossman; Healy) to generate moral legitimacy in contested contexts.

When examining the market's expansion into private spheres of life, similar patterns of reframing moral evaluations of market activities emerge. Markets expansion into domains of caregiving have taken the place of community and familial support (Hochschild 2003). Surrogacy and markets for sperm and egg donations draw on symbols of motherhood and gender to construct legitimacy around the exchange human genetic material (Almeling 2007). Children's removal from the labor market transformed their value within families from economic asset to priceless and sacred (Zelizer 1985). These studies provide powerful evidence that markets, even contested and taboo ones, draw on cultural evaluations of the sacred and profane to reframe their activities, participants, and commodities as morally legitimate to promote market participation and success.

### ***Moralizing Labor***

Furthering this work, research that focus on the professionals who work toward redrawing moral boundaries in contested trades have illuminated a clear separation between the moral project of the market as a whole and the moral project of labor within the market. Work by Michel Anteby and Catherine Turco highlight the important role professionals can play in the competition to define the social space of a contested trade as legitimate. In Anteby's work on the cadaver trade, he finds that the actual performance of market activities is critical for constructing moral boundaries around a given market or organization (Anteby 2010). Moral legitimacy does not lie in the commodity the market is constructed around; rather, it is how that commodity is handled and traded that matters. In his study, academically housed and for-profit cadaver procurement

organizations struggled over the definitions of moral market practices. The academically housed professionals attempt to distinguish themselves apart from the for-profit organizations that they believe resemble the immoral characterization of their profession as greedy “body snatchers” that degrade the dead (Anteby 2010). Thus, it is not solely the act of trading of cadavers that became the site of moral contention and struggle. Rather, it was *how* these cadavers were being traded that made the difference. This points to an important role of the labor within these markets in building moral legitimacy.

Catherine Turco’s ethnographic study of Motherhood, Inc. offers a particularly valuable insight by leveraging a deviant case to understand the nuances in the relationship between moral legitimacy and market success. Motherhood, Inc. attempted to commodify community support for mothers by framing the market project as a moral endeavor (2012). Similar to Quinn, Zelizer, and other’s findings, the company attempted to establish itself as filling a void by drawing on broader social and cultural contexts: new mothers that once relied on community support to help them transition into motherhood now needed to find this support elsewhere and the market was there to provide the solution (Turco 2012). This emerging industry used the idea of community support to legitimize the commercialization of the private sphere of motherhood. Despite public acceptance of this moral market project, it ultimately failed. Turco attributes the failure of Motherhood, Inc. to an inability of the company’s maternal support professionals to decouple the moral discourse claiming to prioritize supporting mothers from the need to generate profits by upselling retail products. While Turco shows that maternal support professionals did engage with the moralization project (i.e., providing support for new mothers), these workers believed it was immoral for them to upsell products they deemed unnecessary or expensive, casting that practice as exploitative. In refusing to decouple their occupational identity as first and foremost supporting mothers from the

profit-generating sales work that Motherhood, Inc. needed them to do, they used their labor to align the moral narrative constructed by the organization with their work activities in a manner that undermined the organization's success. Turco's case highlights the significance of moral practices that happen within a given organization in addition to understanding the broader narrative constructed around a given market. External moral legitimacy (i.e., public acceptance) is important, however, organizational structures and goals must be compatible with the ways workers interpret these moral narratives. In the case of Motherhood, Inc., it was the staff, not the organization's executives that defined what was deemed a moral practice in this market space. This work reveals how the moralizing labor workers perform can actually shape the organization and market itself.

While scholars examining contested markets have shown how market actors construct moral narratives and how they align the performance of their market activities with these narratives, most of this literature has focused on professionals. Anteby attributes this tendency to the characteristics of professions and professional boundary setting (Anteby 2010). Professionals are delineated from non-professionals in large part by their ability to control their domain of work and exclude others outside of this domain from working within it (Abbott 1988). Professional identities are often intertwined with social identities and a challenge to the morality of the market is thus a challenge to both the legitimacy of their control over their domain of work and the morality of the professional who engages in these market activities (Anteby 2010). However, by focusing on professionals, researchers take for granted the power these market actors hold with respect to the contested market to which they work within or alongside. How do workers construct moral narratives and moral market practices in the absence of professionals with pre-constructed boundaries and language? Who's voice is privileged and why? Do market actors ground their

activities within a framework established by organizations providing similar services? Or do they leverage the ambiguity of the market to gain power and status within new fields by attempting to control the types of knowledge and practices that are deemed valuable? Because research on morals and markets has focused so extensively on professionals, the question of how working in a moralizing market shapes the lives of lower-status workers and how this could be mediated by status characteristics of the workers remains understudied. People that occupy particular professions such as those found in prior studies within the markets and morals literature are typically homogenous in gender and class (England 2014; Kanter 1977). Thus, we do not know much about how lower-level workers can contribute to the moralization process, who has the ability to make contributions with these spaces, and how these workers are shaped by that experience in turn. By leveraging the unique case of the recreational cannabis industry where no formal professions exist and moral narratives around recreational consumption are largely absent, I seek to understand what motivates individuals to construct particular narratives and practices and how this framing shapes the experiences of those within it, paying particular attention to whose voice gets privileged and why.

### ***Integrating Worth and Work***

Research investigating moral identities and work has shown that individuals seek, and in some cases, struggle to establish a sense of worth (i.e. personal sense of moral value) within the markets they labor in. In Kimberly Hoang's ethnographic work on Vietnam's sex worker industry, bars where sex workers were employed "operated according to strict moral codes oriented toward freedom and consent rather than forced labor" (Hoang 2015: 105). Sex workers, aware of the stigma surrounding their occupation, construct their market activities in a way that aligns with widely accepted moral values associated with both work and sex: consent. These workers reported

feelings of economic independence and liberation, indicating that aligning market practices with broader moral values can shape workers' own sense of moral being (Hoang 2015). In more recent work, Andrew Cohen and Shai Dromi find that advertisement professionals, a highly stigmatized profession, develop a moral narrative around particular practices they engage in to frame their work as contributing to a broader social good (2018). Through the creation of advertisements, ad-men claimed they were expressing a deep care for the clients, products, or customers (Cohen and Dromi 2018). This narrative centered on care for others and the common good distances their professional identity from the image of a deceptive and manipulative marketing agent while enabling them to assert their own sense of moral identity (Cohen and Dromi 2018). In Josh Seim's ethnographic examination of ambulance workers, he comments on the way paramedics and EMTs construct differences in moral value between their two job titles that places paramedics in a more valued position than EMTs (2017). Through the use of their discretion, paramedics take the lead in more "legit" cases that are characterized as dealing with medical issues that require the delivery of actual medical care while allocating the "bullshit" cases that do not require such care to the EMTs (Seim 2017). In doing so, the paramedics are using their work to reaffirm their value as a medical professional (i.e., highly valued profession) instead of one that merely transports the drunk and disorderly (i.e., less valued occupation).

In the service industry, the routinization of interactional service work often results in an internal struggle for the worker. Integrity and authenticity are important moral values found among both elites and the working class in the U.S. (Lamont 1992, 2000). For the working class, the inability to achieve economic success has them searching for feelings of worth outside of material evaluations. Their moral identity becomes paramount in granting them feelings of dignity and superiority compared to their wealthy counterparts (Lamont 2000). Through the construction

of a moral identity that is not linked to economic success, workers are able to align personal feelings of worth with their material reality. However, in service work such as retail, organizations have been increasingly demanding of their workers ability to embody a specific personality that signals authenticity and care for customers (Hochschild 2012; Leidner 1993). This creates an internal conflict as being considered a “phony” is to be considered immoral (Lamont 2000; Leidner 1993). Furthermore, service industry occupations are devalued in society. In Leidner’s *Fast Talk, Fast Food: Service Work and Routinization of Everyday Life*, fast food workers and insurance agents told Leidner stories of angry customers challenging their intelligence and integrity (1993). The routinization of work inhibited individuals from making decisions and problem solving while also constraining their sense of selfhood and worth. This detachment from personal agency makes it difficult to derive a sense of worth and meaning from one’s work (Garson 1988). Taken together, workers and organizations implement work practices and construct narratives around their market activities that grant markets *and* workers a sense of moral legitimacy. However, when examining the realm of retail, the struggle over authenticity and routinization of service work creates a tension within workers. In a morally contested service-oriented market (i.e., a cannabis retail store), moral narratives in an ambiguously defined arena could potentially follow suit of the broader service industry by implementing organization-driven routinization of interactional service within the stores. However, this ambiguity could also allow for more autonomy that allows workers to construct a narrative that benefits them. Through investigating how morally legitimate practices come to be constructed in the low-wage retail work within the legal cannabis market, we can improve our understanding of how moralizing labor shapes workers experiences. As professionals may hold some level of value and worth based on the prestige of their professional identity, low-

wage retail workers may provide deeper insight into the ways moralizing labor can affect those engaging in it.

### ***Bringing in Gender***

Up to this point, markets have been described as social fields where evaluations of what are permissible and profane practices (i.e., their moral legitimacy) are negotiated among workers within these markets. Hitlin and Viasey build on this in their 2013 annual review of the sociology of morality by explaining:

Moral evaluations and categorization are an essential part of struggles in “social fields” (Fligsten & McAdam 2012). “Moral entrepreneurs” contend with each other to define which kinds of actors and which kinds of persons are more or less worthy and what kinds of practices are permitted or forbidden. ... the distribution of power and resources plays an important-- but non determinative-- role in who gets heard and what gets taken for granted. (Hitlin and Vaisey 2013: 59)

Moral definitions of a market activities are characterized as a battle ground in which different groups fight for the power to define what is valued and what is forbidden. Being able to define moral value within a market in favor of one’s position within it may have significant consequences for personal feelings of worth. For example, if low-wage workers are able to employ autonomy within a moralizing market to develop occupational norms that bolster their status from low-wage worker to valued member of society, this could impact their personal feelings of worth. However, we know that the ability to access power and resources is not evenly distributed across status characteristics like gender, race, and class. Who has access to claiming authority an autonomy within particular spaces can be a gendered process. In fact, there is an excess of research finding that women, even when equally qualified as men, do not have the same ability to claim expertise and authority compared to male counterparts in group contexts (Cohen and Zhou 1991; Joshi 2014; Thomas-Hunt and Phillips 2004). Thus, gender may shape who is allowed to make claims about

moral legitimacy in a market. This could have potential consequences in access feelings of worth if they are being constructed through moralizing labor.

### *Research Questions*

Constructing moral legitimacy is an important part of market success. Those who work within contested markets play a key role in determining what activities are legitimate and illegitimate. Moral frameworks constructed through these activities can help even those in stigmatized markets gain a sense of self-worth. When examining workers in stigmatized markets such as those in Cohen and Dromi's study, or taboo markets like that in Hoang's work, we can see how this moral boundary making matters for worker's sense of value (Cohen and Dromi 2018; Hoang 2015). In Lamont's work, she highlights the fact that workers who do not have the material means to achieve economic markers of success rely on moral constructions of value and worth derived from their occupations (Lamont 2000). Considering this, these moral framings then could mean even more to low-wage workers than the professionals who are typically the focus of past work in moralizing markets. Therefore, understanding who gets to engage in this work may have important implications for who can access the positive returns.

To examine the way moralizing labor can have a reciprocal effect on a worker's own sense of worth outside of a professional domain and investigate how this process is potentially moderated by gender, I leverage Seattle's emerging recreational cannabis market, specifically licensed recreational retail stores. With low barriers to entry and an ambiguous understanding of what a legitimate recreational cannabis market looks like, these sites are ideal for addressing the broader gaps identified in the above sections. Specifically, in the following sections, I seek to answer the following questions:

1. How do pot shop workers construct moral boundaries around their work?

2. How does this moralizing labor shape the workers' own sense of self?
3. How is this process mediated, if at all, by the worker's gender?

This review and the findings of my research below together reveal how the recreational cannabis retail space, with its low barriers to entry relative to professional work creates a unique opportunity for individuals to moralize their own occupational identity and derive a sense of worth directly from their labor. However, how these retail workers frame their activities privileges men in a ways that make it harder for women to engage in moralizing labor and thus access the same positive emotional returns.

### **Historical Background**

It has been nearly five decades since Howard Becker's classic work, *The Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance*, first introduced the concept moral entrepreneurs by describing how government officials came to define cannabis as a threat to the moral fabric of the United States despite a lack of support from the scientific community (Becker 1973). Moral entrepreneurs are individuals that make a deliberate effort to create "a new fragment of the moral constitution of society, its code of right and wrong" (Becker 1973: 145). Since then, various groups have espoused this role as they fight over the morality of cannabis and its place in market society. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, cannabis consumption was associated with counter-culture and anti-war movements as well as racial and ethnic minorities in an attempt to vilify communities of color and respond to radical youth (Alexander and West 2012; Hudak 2016). By 1972, a majority of Americans believed using cannabis was linked to "idleness, lack of motivation, hedonism, and sexual promiscuity" and that cannabis "conflicts with basic moral precepts as well as with the operating functions of our society" (Musto and Korsmeyer 2002: 113). In the 1990s, the medicinal cannabis movement experienced great success in California as proponents couched their advocacy

in the moral obligation to provide medicine for the terminally or seriously ill, distancing it from recreational consumption (Hecht 2014). Federal drug enforcement agents, prosecutors, and opponents of cannabis legalization pushed a counter narrative that medicinal cannabis laws enabled immoral market actors to push recreational cannabis on minors and take advantage of vulnerable sick populations (Hecht 2014; Hudak 2016). For both the medicinal cannabis advocates and those opposing cannabis legalization, recreational market participants were the vice that plagued state legitimized markets.

While debates continue over the medicinal qualities of cannabis, the recent emergence of a legal recreational cannabis industry in several states has directly challenged the villainization of recreational markets. Unlike the medicinal cannabis market actors' attempts to frame their activities as a needed social good, advocates for a legal recreational market focused instead on the moral value the state could bring to the immoral illicit and ambiguous medicinal markets. The existing medicinal market's legal structures were too ambiguous and limited in scope. This ambiguity and lack of constraint on who could participate in the market enabled immoral illicit and medicinal market actors to thrive. By opening up the market to all adults over 21 years old, the state could construct a market that would rival the illicit one and eliminate its need to exist. Moreover, a legal recreational market would also eliminate the need for people to abuse a medicinal market in order to access recreational products. One piece that was missing in this narrative, however, was a definition of what morally legitimate recreational market activities and consumption look like. Transparency in regards to monitoring the movement of cannabis products was paramount, however, how cannabis was packaged and sold to consumers was left to the retail sector to figure out.

## **Case & Methods**

### ***Seattle's Legal Recreational Cannabis Retail Stores***

To investigate my research questions, I draw from a year's worth of ethnographic research in three different licensed recreational cannabis retail stores in Seattle, Washington as well as thirty-three formal and informal open-ended interviews with staff members across these three locations. Ethnographic and qualitative inquiry were selected over other possible methods in order to leverage thick descriptions produced by this type of data that can characterize the narratives constructed by the workers. Moreover, the direct observations of work being performed helps me to reconcile potential discrepancies between what respondents say they do and what they actual due, a known problem in both qualitative and quantitative research (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007). Additionally, although moralizing labor may be present across different types of markets, I have selected the legal recreational cannabis industry in Seattle as a case study for important methodological reasons.

To investigate moralizing labor, I selected an industry likely to be engaged in an intense moralization project. In licensed recreational cannabis retail spaces, market actors are likely to be focused on the morality of their industry and expend some amount of effort on moralizing the products or services the market provides. Particular spaces embroiled with moral meaning can activate a sense of moral identity (Stets and Carter 2012). As I have shown earlier in this paper, cannabis markets continue to be the focus of national moral debates and thus, workers will likely be making decisions about how they will engage in work activities to promote this moral construction. I selected legal recreational cannabis retail stores in Seattle out of convenience, however, there are also methodological motivations for selecting these spaces that provide a great case to investigate moralizing labor.

In 2012, Washington state voters legalized recreational cannabis and two years later, the first recreational pot shop open in Seattle. Washington's recreational market is different than other states in that it does not allow for vertical integration and the medicinal market was forced to be subsumed by the recreational. Without vertical integration, companies making cannabis consumables must sell their products to retailers. Retail stores thus have the power to decide what products they will choose to carry and which they will reject. Therefore, the power to define quality products and value lies in the retailer. Moreover, as retail business are not allowed to sell their own products, this distances them from the producers and potential bias in measuring quality based on the store's house brand. Furthermore, the absence of a standalone medicinal market means these narratives may potential converge within these spaces despite legal regulations defining these as separate markets. While I was recruiting stores for the study, many store staff, even those with medical endorsements attached to their licenses that enabled them to sell medicinal products, were not selling medicinal products and questioned whether or not the medical market still existed.

At the time I first entered the field, Seattle's recreational cannabis industry had been in existence for a little over two years with over 30 active retail licenses. Seattle is only one of a few cities that has had a recreational market for more than two years at the time of my observations. This makes the Seattle market ideal as it is not too new to where there may be high volatility as stores attempt to adjust to changing regulations, but it is not so established to where it has wholly asserted its moral justification to exist. Washington jurisdictions, as in many other states with legal recreational cannabis legislations, can decide for themselves if they will allow pot shops into their communities. There are a number of jurisdictions in Washington that are still contending with this issue and hosting contentious town halls to discuss pot shop license applications. Furthermore, retail stores are the only spaces completely open to the public for those

who are over 21 years old and retail workers have direct contact with individuals outside of the industry such as novice users, tourists, and more heavy consumers. To the public, these workers are the face of the industry and through their interactions, can define how quality cannabis should be measured and what moral cannabis consumption truly is. Owners of pot shops, industry workers outside of cannabis retail stores, newspaper and magazine articles and advertisements can all make claims about what cannabis use is and is not and how to measure quality of various products, but once in the store, as seen in the case of Motherhood, Inc., workers can play a powerful role in legitimizing these perspectives or coming up with their own measures and meanings. Therefore, I selected three cannabis retail stores in Seattle because these sites are where workers may be engaged in meaningful moralizing labor.

***Field Sites: Jane's Corner and Eddie's Pot Shops***

Selection of the first site was initially based on criteria relevant to studying a slightly different topic of interest. Before entering the field, I was initially interested in how consumers within the site constructed gender and race. Seeing as cannabis has been perceived as a female endeavor in the medical market and racialized in the underground market, I was curious to understand how race and gender were perceived in the legal recreational context. Therefore, I selected my first field site, Jane's Corner, because the store had a very diverse clientele and several female employees. Jane's Corner is located on one end of a long, one story building occupied by a string of small businesses a block away from a major freeway entrance and near several universities. The clientele is a mixture of blue and white collar workers, tourists, older individuals and couples, college students, and homeless individuals from a nearby encampment. Additionally, customers appear to be of a mix of native born racial and ethnic minorities and whites as well as foreign born individuals from various countries of origin. With the exception of the security guard

who is a Jamaican born Afro-Caribbean man, all staff were native-born white and at the time of my entry, was made up of 4 women and 5 men. After remaining in the site for several months, I began to notice that race and gender were being constructed through this process of moralizing labor. I decided to first turn my attention toward conceptualizing moralizing labor (i.e. how labor comes to embody a specific cultural and moral values) before extending my analysis to understand what this means for consumers and racial and ethnic minorities racialized by cannabis criminalization. Following a multi-site ethnographic approach, I focused on following a specific theme emerging in my site and thus attempted to examine the theme at other sites to see if similar processes were at play.

In addition to observing Jane's Corner, I also observed two pot shops that were part of a chain of cannabis retail stores: Eddie's Weed Emporium and Eddie's on 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue (Eo5). Eddie's pot shops provide a great contrast to Jane's Corner that enables me to examine the potential effects of organizational structure on moralizing labor (see Table 1 below). Eddie's pot shop employees have very well-defined roles and hierarchical employee structure as well as highly routinized processes for many tasks such as receiving shipments, clocking in and out, and how to store their extra products that don't fit in their displays. Jane's Corner on the other hand is very loosely structured with ill-defined employee roles and almost no standardized processes. The strict structure and hierarchy at Eddie's pot shops enabled me to test if the way employees engage with moralizing labor is a function of Jane's Corner's loose organizational structure where workers had incredible freedom to define their roles at work or if the themes observed are a labor process present within a market moralization project.

**Table 1. Field Site Comparison**

<b>Company Name</b>	<b>Employ Structure</b>	<b>Routinization of Work</b>	<b>Customer Base</b>
Jane's Corner	Loosely structured	No routines embedded in organizational structure	Diverse customer base
Eddie's Pot Shops	Well-defined roles & hierarchy	Highly routinized	Diverse customer base

## **Methodology**

Throughout my analysis, I attempt to link the micro-level processes of how these individuals engaged with their labor to larger social contexts by focusing on what the observed social processes of my cases say about how people frame their labor as a moral endeavor and add social value to their work. I am not interested necessarily in observing consistent definitions of concepts used to describe cannabis use. In fact, contradicting information and pseudoscientific facts about cannabis consumption were common both across and within my sites. Instead, I am more interested in the type of language used and how this language and their definitions of cannabis use and users as well as measures of quality construct moral boundaries of their work. Therefore, I look to how they characterize high quality cannabis, the language they use to talk about cannabis and cannabis use among themselves, to consumers, and to me, as well as how they talk about the meaningfulness of their work in terms of the non-monetary returns their jobs give them. This last point can include experiencing positive emotions and their perception of their occupation providing a bolstered sense of social position within mainstream society or their own personal networks.

By focusing on the processes, my sites do not represent typical or atypical recreational cannabis retail stores. In fact, as the industry is so new and laws vary from state to state on how they need to be structured and sell their products, representativeness of actual stores may be unobtainable at this point in the industry's development. Instead, I am looking at common

processes and development of an occupational identity across sites and attempting to understand members' meanings of these concepts in an effort to build upon existing theories of morals, markets and labor (Luker 2008). Employing this method, I find workers come to define and embody the expert cannabis connoisseur, which has implications for their own occupational identity and sense of worth.

## **Findings**

### ***Constructing Occupational Norms***

How workers engage in market practices is central to constructing moral legitimacy in a contested market (Anteby 2010; Turco 2012). Understanding how pot shop staff create occupational norms in this emerging industry is thus important in revealing how moral consumption and legitimate market practices are established. Occupational norms are the standards of practice by which individuals of a particular occupation that does not fall under the category of profession orient towards (Habenstein 1962). Although occupational norms can mimic professionalization techniques such as employing particular language and techniques for executing job tasks, the occupations attributed to these norms do not align with the definition of professional—restriction of entry; standard measures of competency; and participation in professional organizations (Abbott 1988; Habenstein 1962). Seeing as budtenders and other store staff similarly do not constitute a professional, occupational norms best define the market practices that can help answer my research questions. To investigate the development of occupational norms by store staff, I examined the way they talked about cannabis with various customers and amongst themselves in addition to the types of tasks they engaged in. Additionally, I asked them what they considered are the most important aspects of their job both in informal interviews during down time at the stores and in more formal one-on-one, semi-structured interviews.

Overwhelmingly, store staff felt that educating the customer was a central part of their job. Observations and interviews revealed education entailed teaching consumers—both new and long-time users—new language for talking about cannabis, new ways to measure quality in cannabis products, and the proper motivations for consuming cannabis. Much like veteran cannabis users taught novices how to become a cannabis user by showing them how to properly consume and enjoy cannabis in Howard Becker’s seminal study, *Becoming a Marijuana User*, staff in these new spaces were teaching customers how to become a cannabis connoisseur (1953). In line with Becker’s findings, these educational experiences were identified as a mechanism used to construct new moral meanings of cannabis consumption. In Becker’s work, potential cannabis users had to first develop new moral framings around consumption before they became regular consumers (1953). The construction of the cannabis connoisseur was one way workers distanced recreational cannabis from negative consumer stereotypes defined by workers as the lazy stoner, the addict, and the thug, while providing a new framework for defining morally legitimate consumption in this new market context.

While this new framework borrowed from the medicinal cannabis narrative, it conflated medicinal and recreational cannabis by defining it as a wellness product. For example, cannabis was said to inspire creativity by clearing the mind, however, this was grounded in discussions around managing anxiety and stress. This blurring of the distinction between recreational and medical use is supported by the findings of Greta Hsu and her colleagues work on organizational identity among cannabis dispensaries post-legalization (Hsu, Koçak, and Kovács 2018). On the ground though, it was clear that this conflation was a tactic employed to distance cannabis from the idea that it was a narcotic that could be abused. The connoisseur emerged within this blurred

space as a moral, regular user who consumed to elicit particular affects to enhance one's daily life and everyday activities.

The connoisseur relied on science to measure quality and flavors among various cannabis products and consumed for complex experiences rather than simple intoxication. In constructing the connoisseur, workers were creating class distinctions between legitimate and illegitimate consumers. Moreover, while attempting to elevate the cultural status of cannabis, they came to not only embody the cannabis connoisseur, but become its arbiters, determining who is and is not a legitimate connoisseur. This new, elevated cultural meaning of cannabis also worked to elevate their own occupational identities. Staff transformed from service workers to experts and health professionals in an emerging field through their utilization of scientific knowledge of cannabis consumption. However, because legitimate occupational norms (i.e., measuring quality products and matching customers' desired effects with the right product) were grounded in a scientific framework, women had a more difficult time claiming expertise. Women tend not to be seen as valid experts in scientific fields and my field sites were no different (Joshi 2014; Thomas-Hunt and Phillips 2004). As a results, they did not experience the same positive returns their male counterparts did. Even further, women reported being sexualized in these spaces by customers, and in some cases, colleagues, making it even harder to be validated as experts and access positive emotional returns.

### *The Complex High: Using Science to Measure Quality Cannabis*

To answer my first question—how do staff work to construct moral legitimacy in Washington's legal recreational cannabis market—I observed the way store staff talked about cannabis amongst themselves and with customers. Many staff interactions I observed were educational encounters where staff attempted to reframe how new and longtime users enjoyed

cannabis. Cannabis consumption was conceptualized across my field sites as a set of complex chemical reactions that produce particular feelings that can be paired with any lifestyle to enhance one's daily functioning and/or activities. Specifically, the rising popularity of terpenes<sup>1</sup> and cannabinoids<sup>2</sup> in the legal market to characterize quality and make distinctions among various products and strains is one way these workers employ science and language to bolster the status of cannabis from a simple intoxicant and street drug to a complex commodity. It only takes a few minutes of sitting in a store to see how workers attempt to redirect consumer preferences away from an interest in simple intoxication and instead, direct them toward viewing cannabis as having complex flavors that elicit particular effects. During one of my observations at Jane's Corner, a customer walked over to the extracts case and bent over to get a closer look at the different products on display. Tyler, a budtender at the shop, immediately walked over and without asking the customer any questions, starts describing what hash is with a level of detail and depth that does not seem necessary, let alone requested by the individual.

*Tyler:* "...you get high from this [hash] and the terpenes... with hash, more of the plant actually carries over into the product. You can't dab it because it has too much plant matter in it. I call this [hash] a complex high."

He goes on to talk about the plant's trichomes and how terpenes are made as the customer looks at the different products with a furrowed brow and confused look on his face.

- Jane's Corner, 4/19/17

Tyler talks about terpenes in the context of hash and characterizes it as a "complex high" to what he perceives as a novice user. He goes into great detail about what terpenes are, how they are made, and how this relates to hash. These interactions were incredibly common across all three sites and characterize the way individuals redefine the purpose of cannabis. It is not about getting

---

<sup>1</sup> Terpenes were described as chemical products of the plant found in many other plants and were said to hold the flavor and scents of cannabis that define the type of effects of various cannabis products

<sup>2</sup> Cannabinoids are a group of C<sub>21</sub> terpenophenolic compounds found to be in (until recently) uniquely in cannabis sativa (ElSohly 2007) and was also said to shape the way consumers are affected by particular cannabis products

high, it's about having complex experiences (i.e., highs that go beyond simply getting intoxicated) and being able to fully explore the complexity of cannabis meant knowing the science behind consumption. Casey, an assistant manager at Eddie's Weed Emporium, launched into a similar, elaborate explanation about terpenes and cannabinoids when we first met at his store to tell me how he matches customers with products.

*Casey:* It's really all about the genetic make-up of the plant, the terpene profile. ...I've been trying to educate [customers] and steer them away from using [THC] numbers. I love these guys Lazy Bee because they show so much information on the packages. *He grabs a gram of Lazy Bee from the wall and flips it over to show me the label on the back.*

*Casey:* You get to see the terpene profile, it goes through all the names and gives me a description of flavor- this is a really earthy flavor: piney, lemony.

*Me:* It sounds like you know a lot.

*Casey:* I don't know everything, I just act like I do!

*We both laugh.*

*Me:* So, what would you like to see on the packages?

*Casey:* I think every company should label their products like [Lazy Bee]. That would help me find the right thing for people. If was able to, I could ask [the customer] what they smoked last time and make a recommendation based on the genetic make-up of the plant. The math's all there. ... Like CBG is the happy cannabinoid, it's what brings you that happy feeling.

- Eddie's Weed Emporium, 8/22/17

Casey, along with many other staff I encounter, use science to understanding and tease out specific effects of particular products. Moving away from "using numbers" was deemed necessary in order to provide customers with the best possible experience, something that was incredibly important for the industry. Ensuring customers have the best possible experience consuming in the recreational market was characterized as key to constructing legitimacy and they did this through learning about plant biology. In fact, all staff lamented customers that used the amount of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) in a given product as a measure of quality. THC was defined by most staff as the chemical that creates an intoxicating effect, but one that is one-dimensional.

Understanding how terpenes and cannabinoids worked meant creating complexity. However, this complexity also enabled workers to create class distinctions between legitimate and illegitimate consumers and the construction of the cannabis connoisseur.

*Appreciating Cannabis for the Flavor: Constructing the Connoisseur*

By grounding cannabis consumption in science, specifically using terpenes and cannabinoids to measure quality, effects, and flavors of various products, staff began to create categories of class distinction. After talking at length about the different ways to consume cannabis, Chelsea, a budtender at Eddie's on 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, described cannabis' multidimensional qualities to me during down time at the store.

*Me:* So, what is cannabis? What do people use it for?

*Chelsea:* Cannabis, you can customize it to any type of lifestyle. It works well with your brain in so many different ways, it just depends on what you want to use it for. Like, if you just want to chill out after work or whatever or perhaps you want something to help energize you, some people use it to go to the gym. Some people use it to focus and get work done and that's all they use it for. Other people, use it for pain or whatever. There are too many different things.

- Eddie's on 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, 11/2/17

In this description, cannabis is not an intoxicant. Rather, cannabis is defined as a way to improve one's overall health and wellbeing or increase productivity. This is characteristic of the way medicinal and recreational consumption was conflated as cannabis is described in this excerpt to provide consumers with energy, focus, pain relief, and a variety of other effects. In couching consumption in particular "lifestyles," however, staff such as Chelsea begin to create distinctions between types of consumers. For example, the types of lifestyles commonly listed by staff that when defining various motivations for use evoked images of a sophisticated, motivated, and successful consumer. In Chelsea's description alone, users are defined as employed, physically active, and focused workers. Moreover, staff will often commensurate cannabis with high status

cultural symbols such as wine, wealth, and professionalism, which all hold high cultural or economic value (Bourdieu 1984). Helping a group of young male customers, Stan, a budtender at Eddies' Weed Emporium, was asked what his favorite strain of cannabis is.

*Customer:* Yea, what's your favorite?

*Stan:* Everything I smoke pretty much ends up being my favorite and then I get over it. On one day, I could say something is my favorite, but I smoke it that day and the next day it's the last thing I want. It just depends. This AK-47. I love this strain by Everest! I like to pair this with food, like a chef pairs their food with wine. They do this with all their products on their website, I love that. They also have recipes on their website. It's great

- Eddies' Weed Emporium, 8/22/17

In this interaction, Stan reveals he prefers to explore different strains rather than having favorites. He draws an explicit connection between wine and cannabis, a common practice within the sites I visited. Cannabis, with its subtle scents and flavor profiles as distinguished by the terpenes, made for a good comparison with wine, a mark of distinction (Bourdieu 1984). This coupled with the emphasis on pairing cannabis with lifestyles became a salient tactic employed by workers in an attempt to bolster cannabis' cultural status and develop its legitimacy. This was not a market for criminals, addicts, immoral characters, and unmotivated heavy users. Rather, cannabis was a commodity for the culturally and economically privileged class and through their efforts to bring complexity to consumption, workers provided the framework necessary to draw this distinction. It is in this context that the connoisseur emerged.

The cannabis connoisseur was a symbol of a sophisticated pallet yearning for different experiences. Nathan, the store manager at Eddie's on 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, defined the connoisseur as someone who understands and leverages the complexity of cannabis to achieve particular effects.

*Nathan:* Usually, it's the connoisseurs that are really going for quality ...

*Michele:* Can you explain to me what a connoisseur is?

*Nathan:* Someone who's willing to smoke cannabis for flavor, instead of its THC percentage, or if it's for a particular effect that no other strain can offer ...As connoisseurs, they appreciate cannabis for the flavor, because terpenes in cannabis is where the flavors are, and that goes in hand with the THC, and so if you have something that's rich in terpenes and high in THC, then that high is going to be long-lasting and consistent, whereas if you have something that's not very flavorful but high in THC, that high would probably be a strong high, but it would be very short-lasting.

- Nathan, Store Manager, Eddie's on 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue

Connoisseurs, a term typically employed to signify high status consumers with mastery of judgements in taste and quality (Bourdieu 1984), in this market are those who move beyond simple intoxication and can employ the language necessary to do so. These individuals embody the most legitimate consumer, someone who can properly appreciate the product through the use of refined taste. Furthermore, the connoisseur brings together the science and sophistication to locate regular consumption within a highly valued cultural status.

### ***Becoming the Expert Connoisseur: Embodying the Refined and Sophisticated Consumer***

While pulling from culturally accepted values and norms to reframe a contested market as legitimate is not a new finding, the staff in these stores locate and elevate themselves by aligning their approach to consumption with the connoisseur. Despite being low paid wage-workers in a retail setting, through their engagement in moralizing labor, they elevate their own occupational identities with their elevation of cannabis. Mick, the assistant manager at Jane's Corner, told me during a one-on-one interview the differences between motivations for consumption.

...in regular use, [cannabis] is a medicine, it is a way to sustain your body. ...Yea, it may have a psychoactive effect at first, but you know I can smoke a joint and go back to a very important task if I need to and it doesn't have that psychoactive affect that it used to.

Some people that are consuming are still chasing that [high], but the people that can afford to regularly smoke are not using cannabis anymore as an intoxicant. ... that's a very important point there, it's for people that can afford it. If you're to use cannabis as a medicine and use it as a way to regulate your mood, body, etc. it's expensive. It's not something that everybody can just go out and do.

So a lot of our customers that do come in and smoke, even our regular customers because they are, you know, living on the street or whatever, they've got \$10 a day and they want the strongest shit they can get because it's their intoxicant, it's their sweet release for 45 minutes to an hour. But I do see a general trend towards, it's not about getting fucked up anymore, it's about regular consumption, it's about feeling good...

- Mick, Assistant Manager, Jane's Corner

In his description of the different types of users, Mick draws a distinction between different types of regular consumers by delineating who is using for intoxication and who is not. Those with wealth regularly consume as a way to enhance their lives while those living on the street are interested in intoxication. The conflation between recreational and medicinal consumption is present in the high status consumers, while low status folks are framed as addicts. However, what's even more telling about this description is how Mick aligns himself with the high status, wealthy consumer. Despite the fact that Mick makes \$12.50 an hour and works a hefty amount of overtime to be able to afford his own apartment, he still aligns himself with wealthy consumers. Staff aligning themselves with high status consumers was common among those who were viewed as experts. Darius, a budtender at Eddie's on 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue was helping out an older customer who asked for the most expensive and thus most powerful strain.

*Customer:* [Stating loudly] I need something that has some power in it. The most expensive stuff you have!

*Darius had told me earlier that day that he gets frustrated and disappointed by customers who use simplistic assessments like price and percent THC to evaluate product strength. He drags his feet as he grabs some product off the shelf. The product is not too expensive and the customer is initially suspicious when he hears the price, raising his eye brow as he picks up the package and examines the label that states the product's THC levels.*

*Darius:* [Reassuring the customer] This is some pretty good stuff for what you're asking for.

*Customer:* This does it for you eh?

*Darius:* Well, I'm a sativa person so I don't really use these kind of products.

*Customer:* I'm too old for that stuff! I just want to mellow out!

In this interaction, Darius attempts to redirect the customer's assessment of quality away from price and towards more technical understandings of cannabis. He assesses the individuals' needs and using his discretion, offers the customer a product he feels is a better match for the customer's needs. In this interaction, Darius is simultaneously attempting to reshaping the customer's preferences while asserting himself as an expert and someone who knows what the customer needs better than the customer does. This is incredibly common to witness and customers generally agree with the budtenders assessment. However, with hundreds of different products from different venders and budtenders being highly selective in what they offer, unless you know what it is you want before you go in or are assertive yourself, the staff are going to show you an array of products based on their own subjective interpretation of what you really want. It is this discretionary work where they are best able position themselves as experts. When customers ask about cannabis-infused gummies (i.e., gummy candy like gummy bears or gummy worms), it became easy to predict worker responses, which centered on reshaping and refining preferences. One interaction I observed between Brody, a budtender at Jane's Corner, and a couple vacationing in Seattle from Canada exemplifies this type of refining labor.

*Brody:* Why the fuck are tourists obsessed with gummies! We have so much other shit! When you're 30-45 years old asking for some gummies, you sound like an idiot! You sound so ridiculous.

*Tyler:* I totes agree!

*Moments later two tourists come in and show their passports to the security guard. They go up to Brody and ask if they have any gummy bears. Brody shoots me a look and smirk, rolls his eyes, and proceeds to redirect their request. The customers look back at me confused.*

*Brody:* The only gummy thing we have are these [*places package on counter*] and cream savers. But you should dream bigger than gummies! You're in a pot shop!

*Brody continues to show them a variety of cannabis products and after they leave, he turns to me and yells out in excitement.*

*Brody:* Did you see that? Take notes because that's how it's done! They came in wanting \$25 of gummies and left with \$155 of some good stuff! Did you see how I did that? I expanded their horizons. People are naturally closed minded and need someone to help them open up to new choices and experiences.

- Jane's Corner, 5/19/17

Brody sees consumer preference for cannabis-infused gummy candy as childish and lacking sophistication. He was visibly pleased with his work not just because of his successful upsell, but because he was able to reshape these customers' preferences and get them to purchase products he deemed as more sophisticated and worthy of their money. It is clear that reshaping customer preferences serves both to define cannabis as a sophisticated and culturally valued product is something workers are deeply and personally invested in. Brody is not just telling me he broaden the customers' horizons, but that he is open minded and has the type of refined and sophisticated understanding of cannabis that makes him best equipped to do this work. Brody, along with Mick, Darius, and many other staff, not only help other's come to a sophisticated understanding of cannabis, but they come embody this refinement and sophistication.

When workers engage in this kind of work, they are asserting themselves as experts and the individuals who hold the valued knowledge and refined tastes that make up the ideal connoisseur. By tying their labor to this connoisseur identity, others that do not engage in this type of labor or at least do not do so according to their standards are seen as ill-equipped, illegitimate, and in some cases, harmful to the industry itself. Frank, a budtender and key holder at Jane's Corner, explained to me during a one-on-one interview his disappointment and the frustration he experienced when he found a budtender at another store couldn't answer his more complex questions.

...But you go in and ask for, you know, you ask questions that someone, a connoisseur would ask, something about terpenes and different flavor profiles. There are some people that are really knowledgeable and there are others that are just kind of like, “eh, well, I’m just going to give you a suggestion because I don’t really know what I’m talking about.” Yea, I would hope that it would be standard across the board, being super knowledgeable, knowing the connoisseur details I should say.

- Frank, Budtender & Key Holder, Jane’s Corner

In this statement, Frank identifies as a connoisseur which he also ties into his occupational identity as a cannabis industry worker. Frank and the budtender he encountered have the same job and yet, because the individual did not share his approach to the work, he was deemed as not worthy of the position. In talking with budtenders and staff like Frank, being able to understand and employ the “connoisseur details” developed as a desired occupational norm. Individuals I spoke to across my field sites had surprisingly similar comments about their experiences with and perceptions of retail workers at other cannabis shops. Workers would often tell me how their store was unique because of the level of expertise they bring to the industry or how frustrated and disappointed they were by other stores’ lack of quality budtenders. This boundary work that positions them as a worker and their store above others deemed illegitimate directly ties into their attempt to establish the occupational identity as an expert and connoisseur rather than a retail worker. The frustration they feel is expressed as a mismatch of what they expect, or at least wish to expect, and what they find. To the regular consumer, this distinction may not be obvious. However, to these workers, this categorization and boundary work is deeply personal as it validates their self-perceived expertise and brings immense positive feelings of self-worth.

### ***“To Be and Expert, It’s Amazing”:* Positive Emotional Returns**

Individuals that invest in these constructs and engage in this moralization project often talk about the joy they get from being identified with the occupational role of an expert cannabis connoisseur. Miguel, an assistant manager at Eddie’s Weed Emporium, would constantly follow

me around the store, excited to tell me all the great things about his job and his “journey” to his management position. He would tell me repeatedly it was his great work ethic that enabled his success at the Emporium. He, like many other retail workers I encountered during my observations, would tell me how lucky and smart I was to select the cannabis industry to study. It often felt that some workers like Miguel were using me as they used customers to validate their own status as culturally and socially important. In one of these conversations with Miguel, I asked him directly what this job means to him.

I feel like I now have freedom. ... This job has really let me be who I wanted to be. ...at this point, I want to make a career out of this. It is so much easier waking up in the morning and say, ‘yea! I get to go to work today!’ This right here [*lifts both his arms up just above his waist with his palms open, facing the ceiling as if praising the store*] is my dream job. ...To be an expert, it’s amazing. It’s something I only dreamed about and would only talk about with a few of my friends. Now, I literally have the whole world coming up to me! Japan, Paris, they come in and say ‘hey, I’m new to this, I want to get totally blitzed, what are you smoking?’ Going from where I didn’t want people to know I’m a pothead to now, I want them to know I’m a smoker, that I work at Eddie’s, and that I get high off of the best weed, we do have the best weed! I still get high as hell, I mean, I still get my CBD gel and topical and pills and stuff, everything I need is here!

- Eddie’s Emporium, 8/29/17

Miguel expresses enthusiasm when talking about what this job means to him. He feels personally validated by the industry and his occupational role as expert. Similar to most other staff I encountered, Miguel’s previous job was in the food industry working as a store manager of a local fast food chain. He is an expert in an emerging field who gets to determine what is the best weed and make recommendations to a global community of new and long-term users. The sentiment Miguel expresses about his job validating and moralizing his sense of self was expressed by others as well. During one observation, Tyler eagerly tells everyone in the shop about his father coming to visit from Massachusetts. He plans to take him by the shop and show him what he does. I wonder what his family thinks about his work and career plans in cannabis as other workers have

brought up conversations with family in regards to their work and trying to renegotiate stigma using the moralizing constructs they employ at the shop.

*Tyler explains that his dad, although initially disapproving of his cannabis consumption and financial dependence on his parents has since come around.*

*Tyler:* Oh, well he's cool now. Mostly because now I can afford to live on my own, pay my own rent, take care of my girlfriend and my dog, all of that. It's a huge weight lifted off my shoulders. He accepts me now. It's not like I'm sitting around all day on my couch getting high. I mean, I still do that, but it's different. I can be myself now. I am so much happier now.

- Jane's Corner, 5/19/17

Similar to Miguel, Tyler feels like his job enables him to express his personal identity while also providing him opportunities for a career and economic success. Although he admits to engaging in the same behaviors he did in an illegal context, he claims that through legalization and his job, he is able to personally redefine his behavior as socially acceptable. When he continues to talk about the benefits of regular consumption, it is clear that he finds his job critical to moralizing his personal identity as a heavy consumer. Although Tyler was a heavy consumer prior to legalization, these types of attitudes and feelings are common among staff that invest in the moralization project and did not consider themselves heavy consumers. It is clear there is a link between their occupational identity and personal feelings of worth that comes with validating their expertise.

The personal benefits these individuals derive from moralizing cannabis, in effect, moralizes their occupational identity and thus themselves. Their work as morally and socially valuable is tied into how they moralize cannabis and engage in their work. This moralizing labor in turn provides personal, non-monetary benefits such as adding a sense of self-worth. In sum, individuals in this industry, in their embodiment of the expert connoisseur, positions their occupational identities as experts. This then informs personal feelings of value and worth as they

transcend state regulations to deliver medical advice they deem as moral and reshape customer preferences toward sophisticated products worthy of consumption. However, expertise was grounded in scientific understandings of cannabis and prior work has shown that women are often not viewed as valid experts, specifically in scientific contexts (Joshi 2014).

### ***Moralizing Labor as a Gendered Process***

While workers able to engage in moralizing labor felt increased feelings of worth, these returns were not evenly distributed between men and women. As men typically expressed enthusiasm for their work and increased feelings of worth, women often reported feeling demoralized and devalued and many spoke about plans to leave the cannabis industry. This was attributed to two main concerns: customers harassing women and devaluing their knowledge in addition to reports of sexual harassment and discrimination by colleagues. Being able to redirect consumer preferences towards their own definitions of quality as well as being able to recommend specific products for medicinal consumption required the budtender to be viewed as an expert and authority by the customer. As documented throughout this paper, this expertise is situated in scientific understandings of chemistry and plant biology. As prior research on expertise, particularly scientific expertise, and gender dynamics has well documented, women, even when more qualified than men, are typically not valued as experts (Cohen and Zhou 1991). Although not every interaction devalued women's attempt to establish themselves as experts, it was enough to significantly diminish the positive emotional returns experienced by their male counterparts.

### ***He's an Expert and I'm a Bitch: Expertise and Authority***

When making recommendations or attempting to establish themselves as experts during their interactions with customers, women reported being met with suspicion. Women at Eddie's Pot Shops told me they would often see customers wait for male budtenders to become available.

At Jane's Corner, I saw this occur several times when customers would wait for Mick or Tyler to become available while ignoring or declining help from Helen and Breanna, two budtenders at the store. Although a few male staff across my three sites claimed the opposite was true, they cited one main reason for preferring female budtenders was based on sexual attraction and not expertise. Moreover, even when women were helping customers, female staff reported that customers would often ask for a male budtender's opinion on their recommendation before accepting it as legitimate. During my observations, this occurred several times as customers would lean over and ask Mick for what he thought of Helen or Breanna's recommendation while I never observed anyone asking Helen or Breanna what they thought of Mick or Tyler's choices. Amelia, a budtender at Eddie's Weed Emporium, characterized this best during our one-on-one interview.

Casey has a tendency to talk over people. He's easily able to raise the volume of his voice to get the point across with customers. And they will more likely accept it from him. Whereas if I were to do something like that, then I'm a bitch. Or, then I have an attitude. In which case, the customer is going to have more of an inclination to then retaliate towards me. It's going back and forth.

- Amelia, Budtender, Eddie's Weed Emporium

In the above narrative, Amelia is describing what happens when she tries to correct a customer who has what she defines as inaccurate information or when she attempts elaborate on her recommendations. For Casey, a tall, slender white man, getting his point across is easy, even when he raises his voice to drown out any resistance from customers. However, for Amelia, customers are not only less likely to take her advice seriously, but that they actively push back. Even though women in these retail spaces may have the similar or even greater levels of expertise as their male counterparts, they feel customers do not invest in their narrative and consequently devalue their knowledge and labor. Amelia, like many other women I spoke with, was incredibly frustrated and hurt by their inability to access the same positive returns as their male counterparts that came with claiming expertise in interactions. She revealed to me that she

seriously thought about quitting several times and either leaving the industry altogether or moving to a different state to work in another legal market. Chelsea from Eddie's on 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue who had worked at a medical dispensary before recreational cannabis was legalized, discussed her experience working for a different recreational retail store post-legalization.

I mean, I know we have the most female CEOs than any other industry and that's awesome, but this doesn't reflect what's happening on the ground, here in the stores. ... Customers would not respect me. .... guys would get promoted all the time over me that didn't know shit or weren't good at their job. I was doing so much shit at that store outside my paygrade and didn't get any acknowledgement. They would be like, "Oh yea, you deserved this [promotion], but I did too." And I'd be like, "No you didn't!" But they would be like "Well, I got it, so that means that he [the boss] thought I was right for the position and that I did deserve it." But the manager was just an asshole. He told me one time that he thinks women are not good leaders, but they're great at multi-tasking. What the fuck!? UGH it makes me so mad just thinking about it.

- Chelsea, Budtender, Eddie's on 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue

Chelsea's statement perfectly sums up the experience of women I spoke to working in cannabis retail. Not only do customers disrespect her in ways similar to what Amelia described, but men who were praised and promoted ahead of her felt entitled to their advantages. A shift lead at Eddie's on 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue expressed a similar frustration at how long it took for her to get promoted despite having extensive experience as a store manager in the food industry prior to coming to Eddie's. She explained in a side conversation during an observation that she felt she continually needed to prove herself while men around her were being promoted faster. Women within these spaces were not viewed as experts and their authority and leadership skills were delegitimized. Both women's frustration and discontent, although perhaps not unique for service jobs, serves as a stark contrast to the blissful evaluations of their jobs and work environments made by their male counterparts. In fact, almost all women I spoke with considered their job typical of any retail except for the type of product being sold. This evaluation of their job as "typical retail" when compared to Miguel's perception of this as a "dream job" reveals how positive emotional returns

can be moderated by gender. At Jane's Corner, Helen and Breanna shared a similar sentiment although this was mostly due to harassment and discrimination at the hands of their management team.

### *Taking Care of the Attractive Females: Patronizing Men & Bodily Capital*

In addition to delegitimizing female staff's expertise, I also found evidence of sexual harassment and discrimination as some spaces attempted to promote and claim women's bodily capital. When interacting with customers, I observed harassment towards women on several occasions and heard stories during interviews of customers' objectification of female employees. Again, Amelia was a prime example of how customers shape the experiences of women in the retail space and their ability to access positive emotional returns. During an observation, a group of customers were talking loudly and taking pictures of Amelia as she pulled products from the wall behind the counter.

*I was standing a few feet away from Amelia as she waved over a group of four rowdy customers, two men and two women, to her register. As she started pulling products from the wall behind her, one of the men started recording a video of the store, including Amelia.*

*Amelia:* Excuse me, but we don't allow customers to take pictures of staff without their permission. I need you to either put the phone away please or focus the camera on products only.

*Dissatisfied with this response, the man started yelling at Amelia.*

*Male Customer 1:* You're trippin'! I'm fine. Who are you anyway?

*Amelia:* I don't care what you do, you just can't take pictures of me.

*Their voices blur together in a loud, angry rant directed at Amelia. Amelia, distraught, burst into tears and ran out of the back door of the shop. Emma, a female assistant manager, attempted to resolve the issue, however, one of the female customers in the group told her she wanted to see a "real manager." Another female employee jumped in to support her, informing the customer that she is the "real manager" and the highest level on staff at that time, which was a lie. Feeling uncomfortable with my notebook in hand and a highly visible "Visitor Badge" sticker on my shirt witnessing this hostile interaction, I also walked into the back of the store as I could feel the conflict escalating. At the end of*

*the interaction, Tim, the store manager, brought Amelia back in the store and was updated by Emma on the situation.*

*Tim:* Oh man. I have no tolerance for that bullshit. Next that happens, tell me *immediately* and I'll come and kick them out. I have no problem kicking out a customer that is inappropriate with my budtenders.

*Miguel, who is an assistant manager like Emma and is now standing right behind me chimes in.*

*Miguel:* Yea, we need to know if that kind of stuff is going on so we can take care of it then and there and make sure they don't come back.

-- Eddie's Weed Emporium 8/25/17

This type of interaction happened three times while I was observing Eddie's Pot Shops: twice at the Weed Emporium and once at Eddie's on 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Additionally, staff who previously worked at stores outside of my field sites reported similar instances where female staff needed to leave the floor or security had to intervene in order to avoid harassment by customers or escape uncomfortable situations. Amelia, like other female staff, are not granted the ability to regulate behavior and actions in the retail space. Even worse, instead of commending Emma for diffusing the situation, Tim and Miguel believe they were more capable than her in protecting female staff. This paternal nature of male staff was prevalent at Eddie's Pot Shops and to some extent, Jane's Corner. Male staff would proudly tell me how they "don't tolerate bullshit" and kick rowdy or unruly customers out of their stores. This diverges from the customer service orientation of caring for customers by elevating their moral obligation to protect women. However, in reality, this defines women's position in the store as inherently subordinate. In these stores, they will always need a male superior capable of "handling" out of control customers. This ended up frustrating women and making them view themselves as weak in comparison to men within these spaces.

In addition to customers' harassment, some indicated that discrimination and harassment occurred regularly at the hands of their employers, coworkers, and other industry workers such as

venders. At Jane's Corner, the store manager, Evan, was one such employer. Frank, told me during his one-on-one interview that Evan wanted to hire more attractive female staff to increase their profits and tips.

There was a couple of people who used to work here, a couple of females used to work there who were very cute. The argument was like, they would get more tips there than if it was just guys. Counter argument is well, when it's myself and Mick and Brody, we are busting ass, we actually end up getting more tips than if it was just attractive females.

- Frank, Budtender & Key Holder, Jane's Corner

For Frank, he was frustrated at Evan's suggestion that attractive females are better equipped to do their job than men. He even expressed frustration at the lengthy time it took him to get hired relative to several "very cute" budtenders who he felt were hired on much faster because of their looks. Although he does not believe attractiveness makes a quality employee, this statement reveals the attitude of store staff towards women. Female employees at Jane's Corner are not good at their jobs and are only valuable for their looks, which still is not enough to help them at work. Ashley Mears' work on the global VIP party circuit shows how men attempt to appropriate women's bodies as a resource to generate profit (Mears 2015a). This was clearly the strategy employed by some employers, much to the dismay of female workers who wanted to be equally valued for their work as their male counterparts were. However, as shown early, even when women attempted to engage in moralizing labor by reshaping consumer preferences, they were met with suspicion as if they were trying to upsell products.

#### *Allocated to Retail: Distribution of Labor and Opportunities*

Although the devaluing female staff's expertise and attempted exploitation of their looks were not the only reasons women experienced their work different than men. Helen spoke with me for an hour during her day off at a local café about how her and other women experience working at Jane's Corner. Almost yelling in rage as I sat across a small table from her at a café,

she explained the ways men hoarded opportunities, burdened women with more work, and demeaned and humiliated them in the workplace.

It's such a boy's club. . . . These people come in with these samples everyone's super psyched about. First of all, there's no space around the area. It's all crowded out by the boys. And then when you're outside of that space, you then become responsible for anything they don't wanna do while they're paying attention to that.

- Helen, Budtender, Jane's Corner

Helen confirms one of the first things I observed at Jane's Corner. When a vender came in, men would crowd the space around him, physically pushing the women to the side. Even though stores are allowed free samples from vendors based on the number of employees within a store under the assumption that employees will receive an equal share of samples, at Jane's Corner, I watched as men picked out the samples they wanted and Evan took the rest to the safe in the back. Even the security guard received free samples every now and then while women were left to do most of the cleaning and service work. Women in this store were thus assigned to the lowest position of an informal employee structure, which resulted in all but one of the seven female employees who had worked at the store during my observations to quit. A week after my follow-up interview with Helen where she made the statement above, she quit as well, citing frustration and feelings of being undervalued by store staff.

Although Eddie's Pot Shops seemed significantly less hostile toward female staff, likely due to the well-defined roles of each staff member that enabled tight boundaries of what one should and should not be doing at work, I still noted women taking on more work than men. Although not as pronounced as the differences in the distribution of labor between men and women at Jane's Corner, female staff at Eddie's Pot Shops always seemed too busy to talk with me while men were more than willing to ignore their job duties in favor of talking with me about their experiences working for Eddie.

When evaluating past research on workplace dynamics and gender, my findings are not surprising. Both women's frustration and discontent, however, served as a stark contrast to the blissful evaluations of their jobs and work environments made by their male counterparts. In fact, many women I spoke with considered their job typical of any retail job except for the type of product being sold. This evaluation of their job as "typical" when compared to Miguel's perception of this as a "dream job" reveals how moralizing labor can be a gendered process. Positive emotional returns within my field sites were moderated by the worker's gender. While women having a difficult time claiming authority and legitimacy in the workplace is not a new finding, the literature on morals and markets has yet to explore potential ways status characteristics like gender determine who gets to engage in moralizing labor and how one experiences working in a contested market. This is important to address for several reasons. First, workers were shown to derive a sense of worth and value from engaging in moralizing labor. While most research on morals and markets deals with professional trades that have pre-established some level of prestige derived from the professional status, examining moralizing labor in the context of low-wage work shows how deeply meaningful this work can be for establishing personal feelings of worth. In their prior occupation, most workers reported being incredibly discontent, feeling demoralized by their rote, meaningless work activities. However, in this moralizing market, they were able to construct new forms of cultural capital that bolstered their sense of worth. Although it is unclear based on the data at hand whether others viewed them as validly occupying the role of expert, this research focuses on how they perceived themselves. However, gender was shown to operate in a way that moderated the types of positive feeling of value and worth they were able to access, which can have repercussions on how the market may be organized in the future. Constructing the moral value of cannabis around science disadvantages women as they are often valued as experts. If

cannabis was framed in a more care-oriented framework, women may have experienced the industry differently as women are seen as legitimate caregivers.

## **Discussion & Conclusion**

As the legal legitimacy of the recreational and medicinal cannabis markets remain contested and moral battles over recently legalized recreational market spaces continue, retail stores within these markets have provided a unique opportunity to understand how individuals working in contested spaces outside of a professional domain construct moral legitimacy of their market activities and how this in turn shapes their experience of these markets. My findings have revealed that for low-wage workers, moralizing labor can provide immense positive feelings of self-worth. By aligning a contested commodity with high status symbols and individuals, workers not only elevate cannabis, but elevate themselves as the cultural curators of this new valued commodity. They do this by pulling from scientific understandings of consumption to reframe cannabis as wellness product with complex flavors and effects, distancing it from the street drug and narcotic it has been associated with. However, in using science as a mechanism to measure quality and establish expertise, men are privileged as women face known barriers to claiming scientific expertise in group work (Joshi 2014). This work contributes to the morals and markets literature by revealing how moralizing labor in contested markets can be a gendered process.

The ways in which moral boundaries are constructed around market activities can privilege certain individuals. In the case of the cannabis industry, by constructing moral market practices that centered on the morally neutral use of scientific facts to frame regular consumption as acceptable and legitimate, workers contribute to embedding gender bias into the moral fabric of this new market. Female staff expertise and authority were met with suspicion and occasionally outright ignored by customers and in some cases, colleagues. Because their expertise was not

validated when attempting to engage in moralizing labor, they did not receive the same types of emotional returns. For women, working in a cannabis store is just another retail job while men find it to be a calling. This uneven return for the same type of labor creates a relational mismatch for women. Relational mismatches are “the differing expectations resulting from a misalignment” in meanings and boundaries (Mears 2015b). Although initially coined to discuss the way men managing women’s bodily capital in the global VIP party circuit, in the case of cannabis retail store, women expect to be compensated for their expertise in the same way that men are through validation of their expertise by customers and colleagues. Instead, women continually take on more of the retail-type work while not being able to engage in moralizing labor. As a result, many women ended up frustrated and often left their jobs at a higher rate than the men within my sites. This is important to understand because the sense of worth and value gained from engaging in this type of work cannot be accessed equally across gender and may explain how a market’s moral boundaries allow for some groups to thrive while others struggle.

If we expand this analysis to examine class and race, examining boundary construction around morally permissible market activities can help us understand how these frameworks can privilege certain status characteristics over others. For example, moral boundaries constructing within particular markets can limit the ability of the market to exploit the poor or could enable the exclusion of those with criminal records.

Within the cannabis industry, future research should investigate how the historical link between the criminalization of black and brown communities due to the illegality of cannabis specifically shapes the way moral framings and activities are executed within this market. Although I was able to see some of this process play out in the store, management decisions about

how to organize and execute hiring strategies added an additional layer to observations within these field sites that need to further be explored.

## References

- Abbott, Andrew Delano. 1988. *The System of Professions: An Essay on the Division of Expert Labor*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Aldrich, He and CM Fiol. 1994. "Fools Rush in? The Institutional Context of Industry Creation." *Academy of Management Review* 19(4):645–70.
- Alexander, Michelle and Cornel West. 2012. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. Revised edition. New York: New Press.
- Almeling, Rene. 2007. "Selling Genes, Selling Gender: Egg Agencies, Sperm Banks, and the Medical Market in Genetic Material." *American Sociological Review* 72(3):319–40.
- Anteby, Michel. 2010. "Markets, Morals, and Practices of Trade: Jurisdictional Disputes in the U.S. Commerce in Cadavers." *Administrative Science Quarterly* 55(4):606–38.
- Becker, Howard S. 1953. "Becoming a Marihuana User." *American Journal of Sociology* 59(3):235–42.
- Becker, Howard Saul. 1973. *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance*. New York, NY: Free Press.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1984. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. London u.a: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Chan, Cheris Shun-ching. 2009. "Creating a Market in the Presence of Cultural Resistance: The Case of Life Insurance in China." *Theory and Society* 38(3):271–305.
- Cohen, Andrew C. and Shai M. Dromi. 2018. "Advertising Morality: Maintaining Moral Worth in a Stigmatized Profession." *Theory and Society*.
- Cohen, Bernard P. and Xueguang Zhou. 1991. "Status Processes in Enduring Work Groups." *American Sociological Review* 56(2):179.
- Durkheim, Émile and Robert N. Bellah. 2009. *On Morality and Society: Selected Writings*. Reprint. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press.
- ElSohly, Mahmoud A., ed. 2007. *Marijuana and the Cannabinoids*. Totowa, N.J: Humana Press.
- England, Paula. 2014. *Comparable Worth: Theories and Evidence*. New Brunswick: AldineTransaction, A Division of Transaction Publishers.
- Fourcade, Marion and Kieran Healy. 2007. "Moral Views of Market Society." *Annual Review of Sociology* 33(1):285–311.

- Habenstein, Robert W. 1962. "Sociology of Occupations: The Case of the American Funeral Director." Pp. 225–46 in *Human Behavior and Social Processes: An Interactionist Approach*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Hammersley, Martyn and Paul Atkinson. 2007. *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*. 3rd ed. London ; New York: Routledge.
- Healy, Kieran. 2004. "Altruism as an Organizational Problem: The Case of Organ Procurement." *American Sociological Review* 69(3):387–404.
- Healy, Kieran Joseph. 2006. *Last Best Gifts: Altruism and the Market for Human Blood and Organs*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Hecht, Peter. 2014. *Weed Land: Inside America's Marijuana Epicenter and How Pot Went Legit*. Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press.
- Hirschman, Albert O. 1982. "Rival Interpretations of Market Society: Civilizing, Destructive, or Feeble?" *Journal of Economic Literature* 20(4):1463–84.
- Hitlin, Steven and Stephen Vaisey. 2013. "The New Sociology of Morality." *Annual Review of Sociology* 39(1):51–68.
- Hoang, Kimberly Kay. 2015. *Dealing in Desire: Asian Ascendancy, Western Decline, and the Hidden Currencies of Global Sex Work*. Oakland, California: University of California Press.
- Hochschild, Arlie Russell. 2012. *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling*. updated ed. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press.
- Hsu, Greta, Özgecan Koçak, and Balázs Kovács. 2018. "Co-Opt or Coexist? A Study of Medical Cannabis Dispensaries' Identity-Based Responses to Recreational-Use Legalization in Colorado and Washington." *Organization Science* 29(1):172–90.
- Hudak, John. 2016. *Marijuana: A Short History*. Washington, D.C: Brookings Institution Press.
- Joshi, Aparna. 2014. "By Whom and When Is Women's Expertise Recognized? The Interactive Effects of Gender and Education in Science and Engineering Teams." *Administrative Science Quarterly* 59(2):202–39.
- Kanter, Rosabeth Moss. 1977. *Men and Women of the Corporation*. New York: Basic Books.
- Lamont, Michèle. 1992. *Money, Morals, and Manners: The Culture of the French and American Upper-Middle Class*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Lamont, Michèle. 2000. *The Dignity of Working Men: Morality and the Boundaries of Race, Class, and Immigration*. New York, N.Y. : Cambridge, Mass: Russell Sage Foundation ; Harvard University Press.

- Leidner, Robin. 1993. *Fast Food, Fast Talk: Service Work and the Routinization of Everyday Life*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Livne, Roi. 2014. "Economies of Dying: The Moralization of Economic Scarcity in U.S. Hospice Care." *American Sociological Review* 79(5):888–911.
- Luker, Kristin. 2008. *Salsa Dancing into the Social Sciences: Research in an Age of Info-Glut*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.
- Mears, Ashley. 2015a. "Girls as Elite Distinction: The Appropriation of Bodily Capital." *Poetics* 53:22–37.
- Mears, Ashley. 2015b. "Working for Free in the VIP: Relational Work and the Production of Consent." *American Sociological Review* 80(6):1099–1122.
- Meyer, John W. and Brian Rowan. 1977. "Institutionalized Organizations: Formal Structure as Myth and Ceremony." *American Journal of Sociology* 83(2):340–63.
- Musto, David and Pamela Korsmeyer. 2002. *The Quest for Drug Control: Politics and Federal Policy in a Period of Increasing Substance Abuse, 1963–1981*. Yale University Press.
- Quinn, Sarah. 2008. "The Transformation of Morals in Markets: Death, Benefits, and the Exchange of Life Insurance Policies." *American Journal of Sociology* 114(3):738–80.
- Rossman, Gabriel. 2014. "Obfuscatory Relational Work and Disreputable Exchange." *Sociological Theory* 32(1):43–63.
- Seim, Josh. 2017. "The Ambulance: Toward a Labor Theory of Poverty Governance." *American Sociological Review* 82(3):451–75.
- Stets, Jan E. and Michael J. Carter. 2012. "A Theory of the Self for the Sociology of Morality." *American Sociological Review* 77(1):120–40.
- Thomas-Hunt, Melissa C. and Katherine W. Phillips. 2004. "When What You Know Is Not Enough: Expertise and Gender Dynamics in Task Groups." *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 30(12):1585–98.
- Titmuss, Richard Morris. 1971. *The Gift Relationship: From Human Blood to Social Policy*. 1st American ed. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Turco, Catherine. 2012. "Difficult Decoupling: Employee Resistance to the Commercialization of Personal Settings." *American Journal of Sociology* 118(2):380–419.
- Zelizer, Viviana A. Rotman. 1979. *Morals and Markets: The Development of Life Insurance in the United States*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Zelizer, Viviana A. Rotman. 1985. *Pricing the Priceless Child: The Changing Social Value of Children*. New York: Basic Books.

Zelizer, Viviana A. Rotman. 2011. *Economic Lives: How Culture Shapes the Economy*.  
Princeton: Princeton University Press.

## **Acknowledgements**

I would first and foremost like to thank my committee, Dr. Sarah Quinn (chair) and Dr. Alexes Harris, for their endless support. Their feedback and belief in my project and ideas has made this a much stronger project and made me a much better scholar. I cannot state enough how grateful I am for having such an amazing duo of scholars pushing my work forward.

I would like to thank the Harry Bridge's Center for Labor Studies for granting me the Washington State Labor Research Grant. My findings have been made much stronger with the financial support provided by this grant.

I would also like to thank all of the folks who have read numerous drafts and provided me invaluable feedback. Specially, I want to thank María Vignau Loría, Dr. Sara Curran, Dr. Aimée Dechter and the participants of the Master's Thesis Seminar (i.e., Francisca Gómez Baeza, Hannah Curtis, Savannah Larimore, Annie McGlynn-Wright, and Tyler Smith), and to the members of Context Working Group. I also want to thank folks who gave me their time and detailed feedback at conferences, especially those that attended the Contested Markets: Lessons from Cannabis Legalization Workshop at the HEC Paris.

Lastly, I want to thank my family for supporting me through this process and listening to me drone on about cannabis, morality, and markets. To my mother, who has always been a strong role model and helped me keep pushing when things got tough, my father, my step parents, and all my siblings. I want to thank my partner, Jason Alexander Garza, as well, for always making me laugh when things got stressful.

Thank you all so much!