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Transcending Socialization:
A Nine-Year Ethnography of the Body’s Role in Organizational Control and Knowledge Worker Transformation

Abstract
A nine-year ethnography reports how two investment banks’ controls targeted bankers’ bodies, how the bankers’ relations to their bodies evolved, and what the organizational consequences were. The banks’ visible values emphasized autonomy and work-life balance; their less visible embodied controls caused habitual overwork that bankers experienced as self-chosen. This paradoxical control caused conflict between bankers and their bodies, which bankers treated as unproblematic objects. The conflict generated dialectic change that cognitive control theories overlook because they neglect the body. Cognitive control theories predict only bankers’ first three years, when the banks benefited from bankers’ hard work. Starting in year four, body breakdowns thwarted organizational control. Despite bankers’ increased attempts to control their bodies, performance declined. Starting in year six, intensified breakdowns forced some bankers to treat their bodies as knowledgeable subjects. Because the body cannot be socialized completely, it helped numerous bankers transcend socialization. Surprisingly, the banks benefited from this loss of control because bankers’ ethics, judgment, and creativity increased.
“I was intent on not letting my back pain interfere with … Goldman …, so I did everything I could to keep functioning. For many months, I’d have to lie down at the office on a couch. … I was in the hospital three times … and each time I ran the arbitrage business from my bed. I was on the board of Studebaker-Worthington, and I participated in one meeting lying on the conference table. Once, the CEO of the company … called and asked me to meet him at his office on a Saturday to talk about selling the company. … I couldn’t walk for more than a few yards at the time, or even sit, but I went to [his] office and lay on the window seat … trying not to miss a beat by working from a horizontal position.” (Rubin and Weisberg, 2003: 88)

One of our knowledge economy’s great paradoxes is that knowledge workers perceive their effort as autonomous despite evidence for organizational control. Individuals experience actions as autonomous when it is personally caused, reflecting the person’s choice (Deci and Ryan, 1987). Knowledge workers are highly educated and qualified employees who work on intellectual tasks (Alvesson, 2004). US knowledge workers report autonomy on when and how to work, but their hours are more uniform than a personal-choice model would predict and higher than they are in other times and cultures. For instance, employees in most countries work less as they become wealthier, but highly paid US workers work more (Mandel, 2005). They work over schedule and on weekends, citing “self-imposed” pressures (Society for Human Resource Management, 2009). Surprisingly, many highly educated individuals with the most attractive employment options, including software engineers, consultants, investment bankers, and lawyers, seemingly choose to work up to 120 hours per week (Kunda, 1992); are voluntarily electronically available 24/7 (Mazmanian, Orlikowski, and Yates, 2005); under-report hours (Deetz, 1997); and even resist directives to work less (Perlow and Porter, 2009; Kellogg, 2009). This “autonomy paradox” (Mazmanian, Orlikowski, and Yates, 2011) raises questions about contemporary organizational control’s nature and consequences: How do knowledge-based organizations (“KBOs”) facilitate members’ effort and autonomy perceptions? What role does the body play in such intense action? What are the evolving individual and organizational consequences?
Existing theories do not account for KBOs’ control forms even though control is management’s “most fundamental problem” (Van Maanen and Barley, 1984: 290). Early work examined industrial firms’ external controls, which placed control within the owner; technology such as assembly lines (Taylor, 1911, 1947); and bureaucratic hierarchy, rules (Edwards, 1981), and job design (Oldham and Hackman, 1976). It assumed that workers fill jobs designed by managers. In KBOs, however, tasks are often not part of a job (Oldham and Hackman, 2010), but are crafted (Wrzesniewski and Dutton, 2001) by collaborating workers (Michel, 2007).

Further, these theories cannot explain knowledge workers’ intense effort and autonomy perceptions. They posit control as visible; participants recognize how they are controlled. For instance, control is visible through job descriptions, supervision, or peer pressure (Barker, 1993) even when job design enhances autonomy (Hackman and Oldham, 1976). Visible controls can cause reactance, where workers reduce effort and oppose directives (Worchel and Brehm, 1971).

Research on needs and motivation, on which job design research builds, also falls short. These literatures argue that employees work hard for firms that satisfy autonomy needs and thus increase intrinsic motivation (Kanfer, 1994; Hackman and Oldham, 1976). Yet knowledge work has conditions that psychological experiments use to decrease autonomy and intrinsic motivation, including high pressure (Deci and Cascio, 1972), tight deadlines (Amabile, Delong, and Lepper, 1976), performance- versus process orientation (Dweck, 1999), and ego involvement (Ryan, 1982)—thus underlining the paradox of workers’ perceived autonomy.

Cognitive control theories, such as socialization and culture theories (O’Reilly and Chatman, 1996; Schein, 1996; Van Maanen and Schein, 1979) better explain why knowledge workers want to work hard, but still do not account for the autonomy paradox. Socialization is a form of control that is both a process and outcome. It ensues when employees accept a firm’s
culture. Organizations target employees’ minds. They inculcate shared concepts, such as norms and values (Alvesson and Robertson, 2006) that workers ideally identify with (e.g., Pratt, 1998). Workers thus exert themselves on a firm’s behalf even without external control. Construing culture as shared concepts, these theories associate culture with a harmonious alignment of interest between workers and organization (cf., Alvesson, 1993, 2002; e.g., Schein, 1985).

Nonetheless, cognitive controls leave important puzzles and gaps. First, like external controls, they are visible. Enculturation explicitly conveys concepts (Van Maanen and Kunda, 1989) that employees consciously adopt (Deetz, 1997). Concepts must be visible for employees to notice and use them (Barker, 1993). It is thus unclear why workers experience effort as self-chosen, versus submission to a collectively designed culture. Yet they would not work so hard unless they viewed choices as their own (e.g., Pittman, 1998).

My data explain this puzzle by revealing controls that bypassed the mind—the domain of cognitive control theories—and targeted a neglected domain: the body. I depict how cognitive and embodied controls interacted. Visible cognitive controls emphasized workers’ autonomous choice (e.g., “Our bankers freely decide when and how to work.”) and work-life balance, but were contradicted by embodied controls, which unobtrusively intensified work and counteracted work-extrinsic concerns. Because embodied controls were less visible, workers 1) oriented toward cognitive controls to explain effort, incorrectly experiencing it as self-chosen, and thus 2) did not exhibit reactance and reduce effort. The work intensification through embodied controls leads to consequential conflict between worker and body, which this paper examines.

Second, cognitive control theories do not notice this conflict because they do not analyze the body. Because the body is controlled by organizations, is must be analyzed in order to understand socialization. In depicting knowledge work’s physical demands (e.g., Kellogg, 2009;
Kunda, 1992), ethnographies imply that the harmony between employee and organization that
cognitive theories posit may be only an artifact of their excluding the body. Because the body
can resist exertion, including it can reveal conflict within the employee. Conflict predicts change
(Clemens and Cook, 1999). Prior theories may have missed conflict because they usually studied
socialization for one year, even though socialization is life-long (Bauer, Morrison, and Callister,
1998; see Pratt, Rockmann, and Kaufmann, 2006 for an exception), and body breakdowns may
occur only after years of strain. To understand control’s extended influence, I tracked incoming
employees for nine years. My use of ethnographic methods document transformation as it
occurred. Prior theories depict linear socialization stages, but I illuminate the surprising turns in
the interactions between workers’ socialized minds, which conformed to control, and their
rebelling bodies, which threatened controls such that employees transcended socialization; they
noticed and acted more flexibly in relation to previously taken-for-granted cultural assumptions.

Third, prior theory offers conflicting predictions about controls’ consequences. Control is
desirable, but can stifle creativity (Alvesson, 2002; Nemeth and Staw, 1989). Also, prior
predictions are static; but controls’ consequences may change with tenure. The benefits of
controlling newcomers might be outweighed by stifling effects later on. My longitudinal
approach shows controls’ shifting consequences: Strong control first benefits firms, but then
produces intractable negative results. Eventually, firms benefit when employees transcend the
culture as their bodies rebel.

I present ethnographic data from two Wall Street investment banks, which epitomize
KBOs. They are therefore ideal for studying contemporary control. I supplement cognitive
control theories by building grounded theory about 1) how unobtrusive controls target
employees’ bodies and interact with cognitive controls, 2) how this interaction longitudinally transforms employees; and 3) what the consequences are for the person and the organization.

THE ORGANIZATIONAL CONTROL OF THE BODY

Unobtrusive Organizational Controls

Unobtrusive controls more plausibly explain employees’ hard work and perceptions of autonomy. In contrast to management-promulgated and peer-enforced cognitive controls, they are rarely articulated. They are embodied in habitual business conduct (Giddens, 1984; Guillén, 1994). Because control agents, such as management or peers, are less visible, employees mistakenly experience autonomy. They work hard and neglect family and health, not just because of choice based on rewards, punishments, or obligation, as prior theories posit, but because they cannot conceive otherwise (Castoriadis, 1992) and even when it does not make sense to do so. For example, consultants discovered that they could predictably take time off and benefit performance only when outsiders intervened (Perlow and Porter, 2009). Unobtrusive controls are important to understand because they are so powerful. Unaware of them, workers may not “game the system” by, for example, framing cultural concepts according to personal interests (Scott, 2008a). Because organizations use multiple forms of control (Alvesson, 2004), I examine embodied controls as interacting with other parts of a heterogeneous control system.

Prior research offers limited insight into unobtrusive controls. The Carnegie School (Simon, 1976; Perrow, 1986) focuses on the design of formalized, hierarchical, and integrated systems but does not illuminate KBOs’ informal, participatory, and often contradictory processes (Eccles and Crane, 1988). Institutional theory studies habits, such as those created by unobtrusive controls. Yet it looks mainly at visible and therefore “more superficial, ‘thinner,’ and less consequential” control, “including rule-setting, monitoring, and sanctioning” (Scott 2008b:
Because this tradition focuses on aggregate and macro-level studies, it lacks behavioral data on habits (Scott, 2008b). The ethnographic processes I use are ideal for capturing such data.

**The Body’s Role in Action**

Because unobtrusive controls influence action by targeting the body, its role in action must be analyzed (Joas, 1997; Strauss, 2008). Control theories are about action regulation (Weber, 1978). Cognitive research, which underlies cognitive control theories, also studies action regulation but does not empirically examine the body’s role. Self-regulatory theories explain action proximally (Carver and Scheier, 1990; cf., Kanfer, 1994). Theories of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977), agency (Bandura, 2001), needs and motivation, including effectance motivation (White, 1959), and autonomy (Deci and Ryan, 1991, 1995; McGregor, 1960) predict only other action predictors (Kanfer, 1994). These theories assume *a priori* that the mind, often as the self-concept, 1) generates action and knowledge, and 2) regulates the body unproblematically. Even in structuration (Giddens, 1984) and intuition research (Dane and Pratt, 2007), which acknowledge embodied knowledge, the body’s role is derivative. It stores but does not generate knowledge (Erricsson and Smith, 1991; Simon, 1991).

Further, action and the body’s role in it are structured by culture. In Western cultures, the mind’s dominant and the body’s instrumental roles reflect a Cartesian tradition that devalues the body (Descartes, 1985). The shift to knowledge work, which is misclassified as “thinking for a living” (Davenport, 2005), conceals how the body influences action (Leder, 1990). By contrast, effective action in Asian cultures reflects a quiet mind that is sensitive to body cues (Nishida, 1990). Even in Western cultures, creative individuals often suppress the mind to let the body dominate (Bruner, 1962). Cross-cultural work shows that Westerners confer agency on individuals and Asians do so on collectives (Morris, Menon, and Ames, 2001), but does not
acknowledge that cultures also differ in whether they confer agency on the body. Instead of assuming an instrumental body action role, as prior theories do, the cultural approach used here empirically documents diverse roles of the body in action.

I use the cultural approach in how I analyze the body. Organizational research on the body is rare (Hassard, Holliday, and Willmott, 2000; Heaphy and Dutton, 2008) and often takes a realist “physiological lens” (Heaphy, 2007), which assumes that the body is a biological object. Most of it treats the body as 1) an implicit aspect of organizational design and performance (e.g., Taylor, 1911, 1947) or 2) an explicit topic, such as health and stress research (e.g., Cooper, Dewe, and O’Driscoll, 2001; Katz and Kahn, 1978; Marmot, Bobak, and Smith, 1995). In contrast, I treat the body as a problem and examine its cultural construction. Instead of assuming that it is an object, I study the different extent to which organizationally shaped participants objectify the body over time and the differential implications for organizational control.

Contrary to needs and motivation theories, which inform job design work, a cultural approach posits that needs, such as autonomy, are not stable and universal (Markus, Kitayama, and Heiman, 1996; Salancik and Pfeffer, 1977). It treats autonomy not as a person’s need but as a mutable cultural construction and thus raises questions about 1) how this construction occurs, 2) what its social functions are, and 3) if and why autonomy perceptions change.

My research thus goes beyond embodiment work (Johnson, 1987; Lakoff and Johnson, 1999), which treats the body as an objective source for thoughts, but does not examine culture’s influence on how the body affects thought and action. Flow theory posits mind-body integration (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Hunter and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000), but flow research does not include body-related variables (e.g., Quinn, 2005) and treats flow as an individual difference variable, not a cultural construction. Congenial institutional work examines stress through
culturally circulating concepts (Barley and Knight, 1992; Meyerson, 1994, 1998), but is not behavioral. It does not study phenomenological experience or how institutions are instantiated in practices, which is necessary to understand institutions’ influence on participants. Critical scholars argue that capitalism causes a mind-body split (Deetz, 1994a, b; Lynch, 1985) that represses bodily cues (Marcuse, 1955; cf., Marx, 1977). Medical socialization (Hafferty, 2000) creates “instant repression” (Shem, 1978: 30) and “deadening experience” (LeBarron, 1981: 241). Because flight attendants had to project friendliness they lost access to their real feelings (Hochschild, 1983). Together, this work documents how organizations socialize the mind to control and dissociate from the body but not how and why the body occupies other action roles.

Transcending Socialization

Existing socialization and culture research depicts constraints, but neglects how participants transcend these and exhibit novel orientations (DiMaggio, 1998). One tradition construes culture as an integrated system of shared values (Louis, 1983; Schein, 1983; Van Maanen, 1976, 1977) that can limit creativity (Nemeth and Staw, 1989), defined as the generation of novel, useful products or ideas (Oldham and Cummings, 1996: 607). Change often emerges from outside. Participants thus do not transcend constraints, but switch from one culturally salient frame to another, which may be equally entrapping.

A second tradition examines cultural “deprogramming” yet does not shed light on how individuals transcend a culture while functioning within it. Like cults (O’Reilly and Chatman, 1996) and total institutions (Goffman, 1961), strong organizational cultures encapsulate members physically, socially, and ideologically (Greil and Rudy; 1984; Kanter, 1968). Deprogramming thus requires removing individuals from the culture.
A third tradition assumes more agency for participants (see DiMaggio, 1997 and Morrill, 2008 for reviews). They use heterogeneous and change-supportive cultural and political tool kits (Swidler, 1986; Kellogg, 2011) to alter a culture (Lounsbury and Glynn, 2001). However, because it assumes that members can only be socialized partially (DiMaggio, 1997) it also does not explain how they transcend socialization. This approach might also be less relevant to explaining uniformly long working hours because it predicts heterogeneous choices.

In summary, no research shows how member of a strong culture can approach situations in novel ways that are not predetermined by an outside source of change. Scholars often study cultures as targeting the mind through concepts (e.g., Schein, 1983; O’Reilly and Chatman, 1996). This study illuminates how cultures also control action by targeting the body. Analyzing the body’s action role may explain where new orientations come from because breakdowns can culturally distance committed individuals (Frank, 2002) and sensitize them to neglected cues.

METHODS

These data are from an ongoing study of how work transforms employees. I studied two investment banking departments, which I refer to as Bank A and Bank B to protect their identities, in two different banks. Investment bankers advise corporate clients on financial transactions such as the sale of a company or the public offering of securities. They conduct financial analyses and interconnect the bank’s resources to execute transactions. They are often confused with traders, who trade existing securities, such as stocks and bonds. Banking and trading constitute different cultures. Investment bankers see themselves as trusted advisors to clients; they work long and unpredictable hours. Traders have no client contact; they work according to the shorter and predictable market hours. They see themselves as “gamblers with fast reflexes,” and “assholes who compete on who has the biggest dick.” Much has been written
about trading (Belfort, 2007; Lewis, 1989). Less is known about the highly secretive but economically important investment banking cultures that I illuminate here.

Described by bankers as “boot camps” and “grind mills,” the banks present extreme cases of the long working hours observable in modern KBOs, which existed side-by-side with the job’s well-documented luxuries. Extreme cases render focal dynamics salient and thus facilitate theory building (Eisenhardt, 1989; Pettigrew, 1990). The banks served Fortune 500 companies; each had more than 60 employees, recruited from top business schools through similar practices; used 360 degree performance reviews; and paid a base salary and performance-contingent bonus.

I used an ethnographic case study design, which is powerful for building new theory (Siggelkow, 2007). It can persuasively demonstrate the violation of taken-for-granted assumptions (e.g., “the mind always guides action”) and their importance. Detailed description gets close to and conceptualizes variables for future quantitative work. Within-case contrasts unravel mechanisms that can otherwise remain implicit and that are crucial for tracking longitudinal change, as I do here. Lacking quasi-experimental design, however, case studies are vulnerable to validity threats (Cook and Campbell, 1979). They provide “existence proof” of a phenomenon, but cannot also make the reader believe the proposed theory (Siggelkow, 2007).

I mitigated some threats through sampling and within-case replication. Specifically, KBOs can be differentiated based on the extent of workers’ autonomy (Scott, 1965). The banks were *autonomous*, quasi-professional organizations. This means that bankers were 1) entrusted with managerial tasks, such as defining and implementing goals, and 2) a special type of employee: highly skilled, motivated, with internalized organizational norms, and strong autonomy preferences. The employees of *heterogeneous* organizations, in contrast, follow rules and, being less skilled, accept reduced autonomy for coaching-based supervision; a structure that
resembles traditional job design. I sampled based on impressionistic modal instances (Cook and Campbell, 1979): I chose my setting and participants based on impressionistic similarity to the class of settings and people I wanted to understand. The two autonomously structured banks were ideal for understanding unobtrusive controls in modern KBOs because 1) they lacked traditional visible controls, such as supervision and rules, and 2) bankers epitomized the modern knowledge worker (Alvesson, 2004). Because replication enhances external validity (Cook and Campbell, 1979), I chose two different banks and tested whether a pattern established in one subsection of the data (i.e., one bank, one subsection of bankers) also held in the other.

**Participants and Personal Background**

I tracked four associate cohorts (two in each bank), which entered during the study’s years one and two. Observing bankers from entry ascertains socialization’s effects. I report nine years per cohort. Because cohorts entered one year apart; total study time is ten years. I included bankers for as long as they stayed with a bank. The banks forbade me to reveal cohort sizes or attrition rates. Throughout the study, the sample was in the double-digits. At entry, associates were on average 28 years old with MBAs and about 50 percent female. Starting year 5, about 65 percent were white males. Associates became Vice Presidents (VPs) after four years and directors after three more years. Before entering academia and starting this study, I was an associate at a Wall Street bank, where I cultivated relations that facilitated access for this unpaid research. Because of my background, bankers treated me as an in-group member, invited me to work and non-work activities, and trusted me with sensitive details involved in their change.

**Data Sources**
I used four overlapping data sources, which I triangulated to bolster validity (Eisenhardt, 1989): observation (2 years; about 7,000 hours), over 600 formal, semi-structured interviews; informal interviews with about 200 informants, and analysis of company materials.

*Participant and non-participant observation.* The banks allowed observation for two years. In year 1, I observed five to seven days a week (80 - 120 hours), mirroring bankers’ schedules, and then at least three days a week. To balance deep familiarity, I chose the observer as my primary role, jotting down notes (Freilich, 1970). As participant, I helped with minor tasks—a standard practice (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1997)—which allowed me to ask otherwise intrusive questions. I sat close to bankers, noting what they said and did. To sample and balance observations, for each banker, I recorded (1) the observations’ log page numbers, (2) data sources I had used, (3) activity types, (4) observation times and length. I opportunistically joined meetings, phone conversations, social functions, and training sessions.

*Semi-structured, formal interviews.* I conducted 136 formal 30 to 45 minute interviews. Because the banks forbade taping, I completed detailed notes immediately after each interview. Limited to one formal interview per banker, I interviewed during year 2, when I had clearer categories, and asked broad questions (Appendix A). I interviewed 60 Bank Aers and 48 Bank Bers, including focal bankers and those they interacted with. Friendly bankers conducted repeated follow-up interviews on their own time. In years 3 to 9, I completed almost 500 one to three-hour interviews, including two to four yearly interviews with every focal banker, usually in a restaurant, about (1) recent experiences, and 2) how the banks’ practices had changed.

*Informal interviews.* I selected 200 informants for informal interviews based on evolving themes. Clients sometimes talked about bankers’ physical demeanor (e.g., “she could not keep her eyes open”) and performance. Bankers’ friends and family discussed work demands and
bodily consequences. Industry experts as well as employees from other parts of the banks and other banks provided diverse perspectives on the banks’ practices. To ensure validity, bankers who were not part of my sample helped interpret the data throughout the study. In addition, 3 Bank A VPs and 1 director and 4 Bank B VPs commented extensively on drafts of the paper.

Documents. I analyzed 1) yearly performance reviews for all bankers, and 2) documents about training, selection, socialization, and change in practices, such as dress code.

Analysis

I iteratively moved between data and emerging theory (Figure 1). I formulated common statements into first-order codes, such as “autonomy” (Locke, 2001). Bankers drew tree diagrams (Jehn, 1997) to define a code (“autonomy means that I use my judgment for deciding when to work”) and then identified key concepts contained in each answer (“This is not like what you see at clients. Using my judgment means that no one tells me what to do”). I selected observations and interview questions based on emerging themes (Spradley, 1979; Appendix B). For example, I asked questions about whether other bankers also assessed their autonomy in relation to clients’. I revisited the data to evaluate a code’s fit and sometimes discarded or revised a code. As “local integration” (Weiss, 1994), I organized data by banker to track development, using diagrams, tables, and counts. I triangulated data by source. For example, to investigate developing body awareness, I counted a banker’s yearly body references. I regularly compared data within and across the banks, using a small number of bankers for a more “inclusive integration” (Weiss, 1994). Thus moving from open to axial coding (Locke, 2001), I tested mini-theories. For example, I theorized that bankers worked harder to compensate for breakdowns but found that different bankers used different strategies, including distraction, and that strategies changed over time (e.g., some bankers gave up controlling their bodies). I
assembled categories into a coherent theory based on shared dimensions, such as distinct control aspects: 1) control practices (e.g., cognitive controls), 2) socialization transformation (e.g., body action roles), and 3) socialization outcomes (e.g., performance). I reexamined the data’s fit with this theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). To avoid elaborating data solely on theoretical grounds, I constructed evidence tables and checked again with informants. [Insert Figure 1 about here]

FINDINGS

I describe the interrelation between 1) the banks’ stable control practices, 2) evolving body action roles and 3) organizational consequences. Visible cognitive controls highlighted autonomy and work-life balance. Less visible embodied controls encouraged indiscriminate overwork and counteracted work-conflicting goals and bodily needs. During years 1 to 3, banks benefited from bankers’ vigorous body control and repression. Starting year 4\(^1\), the body turned antagonistic through breakdowns, thwarting banks’ goals. Bankers resisted, but performance declined. From year 6 forward, 60 percent of bankers remained in the antagonistic pattern, but 40 percent released control over the body. It became a subject that guided bankers—and challenged banks’ control. Surprisingly, these challenges promoted creativity and benefited the banks.

Organizational Controls

Bankers joined and stayed at the banks because of high compensation, prestige, and future marketability (Michel and Wortham, 2009), but other reasons determined daily effort, summarized and elaborated in Tables 1 and 2: “[Money and power] doesn’t make me get up every morning and bust my butt. I work hard because I want to” (Bank A associate). Bankers felt autonomous because cognitive controls explicitly stated autonomy values (“We trust our professionals to work autonomously”). As evidence for these values, bankers also pointed to

\(^1\) All bankers 1) exhibited the body-as-object action role when they started, and 2) changed to a body-as-antagonist action role. But different bankers entered new body action roles at slightly different points in time, albeit within the reported time categories (i.e., years 4 and 5 for body-as-antagonist and years 6 forward for body-as-subject).
absent external controls, such as supervision, which they observed at clients. No one prescribed bankers’ working hours or tracked productivity and vacation time. [Insert Tables 1 and 2 here]

Bank B associate: “I could not work for an organization that required me to come at 9 AM and leave at 5 PM. I want to be in control of my schedule.”
Researcher: “But you work a lot longer than 40-hour weeks.”
Banker: “Yes, but this is my choice. I decide when the work gets done.”

Because prior work describes cognitive controls, I focus on the neglected embodied controls.

Bankers worked up to 120 hours per week even when there was nothing urgent to do. Only during later years did some bankers notice how unobtrusive controls, such as self-surveillance, intensified work effort:

We have no use for managers. Our systems ensure that people control themselves, sometimes without knowing it. We just feedback to people how well they are doing and we leave it at that. We don’t even set targets. People compete against themselves. (Bank A director)

For example, bankers recorded billable hours on time sheets. The banks did not track work hours, but bankers did: “The number matters to you just because you attend to it daily” (Bank B associate). Bankers saw time sheets as a “game,” trying to “beat their own best,” which caused indiscriminate overwork that felt “self-chosen,” concealing the banks’ influence. They also self-monitored deals lost to competitors; resource cost, including juniors’ time; recruiting teams’ effectiveness; and “recruiting batting averages,” which recorded how accurately they predicted recruits’ career success. Self-surveillance worked through embodied perceptual processes that often bypassed the mind. Bankers monitored concrete data that they did not always process abstractly partly because the banks withheld cognitive control standards such as explicit norms and rules. Self-surveillance also resulted from organizing bodies spatially in open floors, including trading-floor-like tables. This layout was designed for reason not related to control, namely to enhance communication and train juniors, who could overhear senior bankers’ conversations. But because senior and junior bankers did not know if they were being watched,
they behaved as if they were, and monitored themselves: “Because I know that everyone can listen to what I say, I keep observing myself from their perspectives” (Bank A director).

Unobtrusive controls also erased work-leisure distinctions thus counteracting work-competing goals and needs. The banks stated such work-life balance values as “ensuring that bankers have time to rejuvenate and spend with family” (Bank B director). Bankers also described the banks’ amenities at recruiting events to illustrate their lifestyle’s luxury. Yet services designed to free up time habituated bankers to long hours. A Bank B associate said about the 24/7 administrative support: “It is like a psych experiment where the light is always on. The only temporal markers are secretarial shifts. And they make it possible to work around the clock and isolate you from the outside’s rhythms.” Senior bankers mentioned how others’ constant presence implied that it was always time to work. Because such embodied cues could bypass conscious processing, they prevented perceptions of control. The banks also erased work-leisure distinctions by encouraging leisure at work. Bankers could chat and play anytime. “You don’t pay by the hour. If they take longer … you just habituate them to being at work and getting all their needs met there.” (Bank A director) The banks’ free car services, meals, health clubs, and dry cleaning valets mimicked homey bodily comforts:

This is like an artificial world. Instead of going home, after 5 PM people here just switch into leisure clothes, turn on the music, and the firm orders dinner for you. Ironically, you end up working a lot more because it is so convenient. (Bank B associate)

“Feminists used to say that every woman could work if the wife takes care of chores. The bank is my wife’s wife.” This Bank A associate’s spouse echoed the banks’ framing of conveniences as spouse-like career support, highlighting banker autonomy and hiding bank control.

To secure full devotion, the banks also controlled energy: “Our most important currency is not time but energy. It is easy to keep people at work around the clock. Minds are willing. You
have to fight the biology” (Bank B director). Senior bankers explained how open floors’ constant buzz facilitated long hours because it impeded reflection and nervously stimulated bankers. The banks also offered food and caffeine at strategic times, namely “when people’s blood sugar slumps and that gives you energy to keep going” (Bank A associate). The banks hired cohorts of “young, energetic people,” because they could “grind out work,” as a Bank A VP said. The average age was 35 years “because you can’t sustain this pace much longer” (Bank B director). A Bank A VP said: “We weed out low performers even when bankers are scarce, because one person who is not performing to the absolute maximum brings down everyone’s energy.”

Unobtrusive controls thus managed time, space, and energy. Unlike explicit cognitive controls, they were embodied in the environment and routines, sometimes for reasons unrelated to control. As long as they were junior, bankers mostly noticed verbal messages about autonomy and downplayed the importance of embodied controls, which made resistance less likely. As they became senior, some bankers noticed embodied controls: “I always thought that my choices are my own. Now I see how the bank subtly chooses for you” (Bank A director). I next describe the practices’ evolving effects on how bankers related to their bodies and the control consequences.

**Developing Body Action Roles and Organizational Control Consequences**

**Years 1 – 3: Body-as-Object**

During years one to three, bankers construed their bodies as objects that the mind controls (Table 3 and 4). They worked long hours, neglected family and hobbies (Tables 5 and 6), and fought body needs to enhance productivity. They suppressed prolonged sleep, taking “naps at 11 PM and then again at 1, 3, and 4.” When I asked: “Aren’t you worried that this will affect your health?” most responded like this Bank A associate: “For the next few years, work has priority. I’ll worry about my health then.” To my question, “What if you do irreversible damage?” many
answered: “I am willing to take that risk.” Eighty-six percent strongly disagreed with: “I make my decisions at work with an eye toward how they affect my health.” “Everything he does, how he eats, sleeps, exercises, only has one purpose: to work longer and better,” summarized a Bank B associate’s wife. Friends and family often talked about bankers’ bodies, sometimes jokingly (“your body is just a way to carry Hermès ties to you,”), but often with serious concern. In contrast to later years, bankers rarely said “my body.” When they said “I,” they referred to the mind, often in opposition to the body. For example, a fiancé said: “You cannot treat your body like a machine.” The Bank Aer rephrased by highlighting the mind’s will, without reference to the body: “I choose to live and work in a disciplined manner.” [Insert Tables 3, 4, 5, and 6 here]

Control was high. Banks benefitted from bankers’ devotion. Later, a Bank B VP said: “Without thinking about it, I did everything I could to numb my body so that it would not get in the way.” A Bank B director looked back: “I was so focused on keeping up that I never questioned the system. I know now that there is wiggle room.” The banks’ yearly performance reviews showed that most bankers exhibited high technical and judgment performance (Tables 5 and 6). Creativity was distributed normally; up to twenty-seven percent displayed high creativity.

**Year 4 Onward: Body-as-Antagonist**

Starting year 4, bodies forced themselves into awareness through sometimes incapacitating problems. 80 percent of bankers strongly agreed with: “I am trying harder to control my body but with less success than before.” The other 20 percent used different language for their antagonistic body relations, such as: “I wouldn’t call it control; I am at war with my body” (Bank A VP). A Bank A VP complained: “No matter how hard I kick my body, I can’t get any energy out of it.” A Bank B VP said: “It feels like my body is choking off all life force.” Researcher: “Why do you think that is?” VP: “Who cares? There is nothing I can do but plow through work.”
The body here is separate from and inferior to the “I”—like an object one can kick. It antagonistically refused resources and even strangled bankers from inside. Bankers also lost bodily control in the form of addictions and compulsions, such as eating disorders. Mild-mannered bankers became short-tempered:

I stormed toward the taxi, but the door was locked. The driver wanted to unlock it but couldn’t because I kept operating the handle. I became so furious that I kept banging against the windows like crazy, swearing at the poor guy. And then I turned around and saw that a managing director was watching with his mouth open. I was so ashamed. (Bank A associate)

Bankers developed embarrassing tics, such as nail biting, nose picking, or hair twirling. They experienced their bodies as antagonistically “taking over,” “taking revenge,” or “fighting back.”

To maintain performance, bankers pushed harder. A banker combatted her eating disorder by fasting and exercising more, training for a marathon even after midnight. To control his temper, a Bank A VP said: “I throw myself into work to discipline myself more.” Bankers also shopped, partied, and consumed pornography to combat numbness (“I need something to feel passionate about.”), achieve control (“These are all ways to control something.”), and escape (“It is a way to escape, so that I cannot even ruminate about my problems if I wanted to.”).

Organizational control remained high (Tables 5 and 6). More than 90 percent strongly agreed with: “My goals and the bank’s goals are completely aligned.” Bankers worked up to 120 hours per week, but with less creativity and judgment: “I had a binge attack during a meeting, and all I could think about is where to get food. Everything the client said blurred. I just wanted them to shut up so that I could do what I needed to do.” (Bank A VP) A Bank B director said: “Most bankers turn into technicians. … Creativity is also a state of the body. It requires openness and feeling of aliveness that is hard to square with years of deadening work.” Bankers also exhibited ethical problems, such as abusing power and shirking outside obligations. (The banks did not allow me to report aggregate indicators on this measure.) A Bank A director said: “When
you lose the feeling for your body, and compassion and respect for yourself, you do the same to others. Bankers who have been riding themselves become people-eaters.”

People here are good at dealing with clients and colleagues because our system ensures this. But working this hard gets to people and we cannot control how they behave outside. When a banker is callous, arrogant, neglectful of obligations, this reflects badly on the firm—and it happens more often than we would like. Our reputation is our most important asset. (Bank B MD)

Year 6 Onward: Body-as-Subject

By year six, about 40 percent of the sample treated the body as a subject that could guide action (“body-as-subjects”); the remaining 60 percent continued the “body-as-antagonist” role.

Breakdown cycles. By year nine, 98 percent of body-as-subjects had given up attempting to control their bodies: “I gave up bludgeoning my body into submission for one reason only: It doesn’t work” (Bank A VP). The other two percent preferred different language: “Control sounds so benign. I have given up completely ignoring and destroying my body for the sake of what I wrongly thought matters more … and started to develop a feeling for my body, a genuine interest and concern” (Bank A VP). Body-as-antagonists continued body control, talking about “letting your body know who is in charge,” and “disciplining the body into obedience.” Body-as-subjects’ control generated escalating cycles of work-disruptive consequences and fierce control attempts, which taught bankers that the body was too complex to be controlled:

I learned the hard way that there are limits to what you can control. Everything I did to keep performing always had consequences that I did not want and that I could not anticipate. When I first got here, I worked so hard that I gained 60 pounds and got heart problems and diabetes. I picked up running to lose weight and that hurt my back and joints irreparably. [He ran about two hours per day, often at midnight] Because I was in so much pain, I took pain killers that got to my liver. Then I went on a special diet and that affected my serotonin levels so that I was in a deep and dark depression. And the list goes on and on. (Bank B VP)

In contrast, body-as-antagonists experienced fewer disruptive consequences (“I overdo everything, but I have a doctor who is good at fixing me up”) or did not interpret breakdowns as their actions’ unintended consequences (“bodies just break down”).
Differential health or relationship experiences are less plausible explanations for the differences between the two groups. In both groups, bankers had similar and comparably serious health issues (Table 5) and had family, friends, and partners object to the work’s high demands. In some cases, relationship conflicts about work caused bankers to leave the banks. For most who stayed, such objections continued but decreased because spouses took bankers’ behaviors for granted, partners achieved a truce, and dating bankers better managed their dates’ expectations. Because body-as-subjects valued performance, they stopped body antagonisms, but sometimes relapsed: “[When I relapse], I feel the effects immediately and stop the abuse. I don’t need to be hit over the head by a collapse” (Bank A director). Instead, they developed the following three strategies (Table 3), which I did not observe in the body-as-antagonists:

**Becoming distrustful of and stepping back from the mind.** Before, body-as-subjects implicitly meant their mind when they said “I.” Starting in year 6, they construed the mind as separate and distrustfully distanced themselves from it because it could not control the body:

I have so often been convinced that I knew what I was dealing with and was dead wrong. Stress-related hair loss really was mercury poisoning until it was thyroid disease and that was before it was attributed to a special diet. These kinds of surprises were a real eye opener on how I was approaching things in general: always confident in my mind. … They made me vigilant toward my mind, watching it, and often choosing not to listen to it. (Bank B VP)

Like this VP, some bankers meta-cognitively reflected on the mind, indicating a new dimension of self-awareness. They also reflexively stepped back from habitual stories and reactions:

When my body forced me to listen, I noticed that I had never before just listened and observed without any judgment or fear. [Previously], as soon as I felt that something was wrong healthwise, I panicked because I started to tell myself stories about not getting work done and clamped down on my body. I started to see that this is how I responded to everything. I always have the same type of fear-driven narrative in my head. (Bank B VP)

His body made the banker notice and orient away from fear toward situated cues. Breakdowns also intensified and thus caused bankers to confront habitual anxiety: “I only noticed my constant
anxiety when it turned into fear because now I had to play this high-stakes tennis with hands and feet tied. … I gave up fighting fear and just accepted it” (Bank A VP). In contrast, body-as-antagonists mentioned anxiety less frequently and attributed it to situations rather than habitual interpretations. Body-as-subjects distanced themselves from the mind by silencing it (“when I listen, I silence inner dialogue”), orienting outside (“I concentrate on the situation and try not to get caught up in my mind”), and meta-cognition (“I literally ask myself: ‘what am I thinking about?’”), but without antagonism: “I am done fighting my body. I am not fighting my mind. … I observe, accept, and engage situations inquisitively, not fight quicksand” (Bank B VP). When body-as-antagonists listened, they did not observe the mind and accept situations, but let the mind control (“listening gives you ammunition to convince them of your goals”).

The body caused cultural distance because it prevented full participation:

Whenever you want to do like everyone else and you can’t—like stay up nights in a row—you can beat yourself up … but also questions come up about why we are all thinking in this way …and you notice other ways to work and think. It’s like an awakening, a gradual process of recognizing that what you have taken for granted are cultural choices. (Bank A VP)

Bankers’ distancing came in spurts, usually when they fell short of cultural standards, and changed how they related to work: “I now more often remember that this is not me, but only a game that I choose to participate in even though I still want to be very good” (Bank A director). Body-as-subjects became curious about how clients and friends worked to discern alternatives. Body-as-antagonists rejected other cultures, admitting to a “not-invented-here syndrome.”

*Surrendering agency while acting.* Bankers surrendered agency when they could not complete actions alone: “[Breakdowns force you] to let go: delegate, trust others, and accept hiccups. You learn to not be the doer and to become part of a process” (Bank A director). They also yielded to the inner dynamics of action, noticing cues and respecting complexity:
When I was sick, I listened to my body. I saw that every activity has a cessation point. I had always pushed everyone beyond that and then things became unproductive. But I stopped forcing things. I stay open to how situations develop and yield to that. (Bank B director)

I learned from my body. Breathing, hormones all of this goes on without any of your doing. I now believe that most of life works like that. Situations have their own dynamics. Things work best if you can align yourself. (Bank A VP)

Bankers spoke about action as “letting things unfold,” “being guided by the situation,” and “being receptive,” which indicated that their minds surrendered agency and opened to cues, including from their bodies. Body-as-antagonists mocked this approach: “Dick spends too much time in the new age self-help section at Borders,” “what a wuss,” “acceptance of mistakes … breeds mediocrity,” and “trusting others when your ass is on the line—that’s insane.”

Relational orientation toward body. Bankers built a relation with their body by attending to and trusting it. They exercised without headphones to feel body cues and stopped when injured; ate slower and without distraction (“I take at least half an hour”) instead of while working; and limited technology usage to “stop numbing myself” (e.g., disconnected Facebook, surfed less on internet). I first noticed such changes when a low-carb dieter ordered a baked potato, explaining: “I have always eaten according to research. But my problems came from dictating to my body and losing feeling for it. Now I eat what I am hungry for and trust this intuition.” Relating to the body was “like learning a new language.” Some bankers developed heuristics, such as “shackles on or off.” “When the shackles come on, I can feel it in my whole body, gut clenching, shoulder stinging, starting to sweat. If I don’t take signals seriously, my body makes me regret it” (Bank B VP). Bankers also stopped fighting low energy and heeded it as a cue: “I learned to differentiate between being tired and drained. When I am drained, my body says that something isn’t right and I stop and try to figure it out” (Bank A director). These bankers explicitly referred to the body, positioning it as a subject; an insightful advisor. Body-as-
antagonists often changed routines in response to fads or research versus bodily prompts. They fought the body (“kicking my metabolism to do its fucking job”), submitting to extreme regimes like lemon-juice-only cleanses and boot-camp training. In contrast, body-as-subjects believed that “we are conditioned to overdo everything” and chose more moderate behaviors than before.

Bankers also negotiated with their bodies: “My body is scared that I will put it through the wringer again. When I feel out of control, I talk to myself, I reason, make concessions.” This Bank A VP identified with the body, including it in “myself.” A Bank B VP said: “I ask my body what would get me through a big push without it getting back at me. And I come through.” Bankers experienced the body as a subject, as having such person-like attributes as emotions, reason, and memory of good and bad treatment: “I see my body differently. It is a friend who has always supported me as best as she could, even though I ignored her. I always thought so highly of my mind, but it has let me down much more often than my body” (Bank B VP).

The body helped bankers recognize and transcend control (Tables 4, 5, and 6). “Once your body forces you to stop certain behaviors, you ask why you engaged in them and whether there are alternatives. And you notice how the firm chooses for you” (Bank B director). Bankers chose consciously rather than always followed directives: “My body makes me live consciously. I say no more often, but I also say yes more consciously” (Bank A director). Breakdowns forced bankers to test taken-for-granted controls and discover freedoms: “When I was sick, I resisted demands because I couldn’t do it. That taught me to push back even when people get mad” (Bank B VP). Breakdowns loosened bankers’ job attachment but bankers remained committed. A male Bank A VP said: “[Because I am ill], I might not work here forever, even though I want to. That gave me the courage to challenge decisions, like how we deal with women.” The body thus liberated bankers from intellectual bondage and trepidation.
Surprisingly, the banks benefited from control’s transcendence. Body-as-antagonists’ performance problems continued. But body-as-subjects’ performance rebounded (Tables 4, 5, and 6); they were creative because they had to reconcile the banks’ and the body’s demands:

I would love to pull the hours I used to. But my body won’t let me. So I have to be creative. I come up with products that don’t involve fire drills like before and go home at night. Because this makes money, I can ask for staffing and delegate. (Bank A director)

Like this banker, some could render hours predictable, but controls still compelled bankers to work long hours (Table 6). Creativity also improved because bankers noticed previously ignored situations. Greg told a female recruit that women often left banking early. Flexible work arrangements had failed because clients were inflexible and bankers who worked less were seen as “second-class citizens.” This conversation caused him to champion a successful new program:

And [the recruit] said: “I put in all this time and become a great banker but once I have a child, that’s it?” And this question and the emotion really got me. It made me think of [other women], whose kids are now in school and who could restart their careers. … That would be great for everyone, these women, younger women, the firm—all of us. (Greg, Bank A VP)

Greg credited his new sensitivity to breakdowns: “I heard that story before but it had not registered. I was like a bulldog pursuing my goals. I wasn’t a jerk—just preoccupied. This [health] ordeal [his serious endocrine problems] put my goals in perspective and let me see what goes on around me.” Ethical sensitivity, including sensitivity to others’ problems, thus further enhanced creativity. It entailed awareness of cues, as opposed to a value change: “I just responded to what was in front of me,” “I did it without thinking,” and “It was almost a reflex.” Similarly, a Bank B director asked the bank’s training department to offer free co-training for developing country clients, who struggled with basic business processes, and bankers, who hence developed closer client relations and got more business: “I have always seen clients’ complaints about bottlenecks as excuses and tuned out. … But I now listen and help because I noticed the hardship for the client.” He explained his change: “Caring for myself made me care for others,
without even trying.” Bankers also avoided gossip, picked up trash, and tipped waiters and cab drivers more generously because “these guys work so hard for so little money.” The banks benefited because bankers represented the banks as socially engaged and compassionate.

Firm tenure helps explain creativity. Senior lateral hires, who lacked firm knowledge, found fresh ideas rejected as inappropriate. Bankers thus had to be socialized before they could effectively distance themselves. Seniority and power are potential, but less likely alternative explanations. Because of flat hierarchies, meritocratic cultures, and innovation dependence, the banks implemented all employees’ suggestions, including juniors who noticed client needs during frequent client contact. Also, the body-as-subject pattern started in junior VPs. Instead of having power, they were especially vulnerable lay-off targets. They did work similar to what associates did, like execute deals, but were more expensive. Unlike directors, they rarely “owned” client relations and were therefore easily replaceable. It was often heard that “If one execution type leaves, you just hire another. They are as common as sand on the beach.”

Despite the body-as-subjects’ innovations, the banks’ long-hour work culture continued:

It is difficult to change that system because people want it. We work hard because our industry has cycles. We have fewer bankers during booms so that we don’t have to lay-off in lean times. … there is a lot of ambition and ego. Even when I tell junior bankers to go home, they work secretly to put that unnecessary extra touch on the presentation. (Bank A VP)

The bankers’ ambition dominated—unless the body intervened.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

KBOs achieve control’s most elusive goal. They capture workers’ hearts, minds, and energy. I examined how and with what long-term consequences. Longitudinal behavioral research on control is scarce, inviting the present theory-building. To supplement cognitive control theories that examine how firms control the mind and how the mind guides action, this study shows how companies control the body and how the body guides action. It yields a new
understanding of how cognitive controls interact with embodied controls; the surprising twists that occur after prior socialization theories stop predicting; and how, contrary to prior work, socialization can not only constrain but also free persons from taken-for-granted frameworks.

**A Model of Organizational Control and Body Action Roles**

Figure 2 describes 1) how conflicting controls explained 2) the puzzling autonomy paradox, and thus affected 3) the body’s evolving action roles (socialization as transformation), with 4) shifting consequences for control (socialization as outcome). [Insert Figure 2 here]

*Organizational controls.* Conflicting organizational controls explained the autonomy paradox—bankers’ autonomy perceptions despite intense, socially patterned work. Visible cognitive controls, including the absence of external controls, targeted the mind and highlighted autonomy through explicit autonomy and work-life balance values. Conflicting with cognitive controls, unobtrusive embodied controls bypassed the mind, targeted the body, encouraged indiscriminate overwork, and counteracted work-conflicting goals and body needs. Bankers initially felt autonomous because they oriented toward the more visible cognitive controls.

*Evolving body action roles and organizational control consequences.* Because the banks controlled action through the body and because extreme work conditions made action depend on the body, analysis must transcend cognitive variables. Cognitive approaches and concepts such as “body schema” (Johnson, 1997) and “body image” (Tiemersma, 1982) construe the body as a mental representation and assume that the mind shapes action. In contrast, my cultural approach empirically examines how people enact mind-body relations differently and how the body can also shape action, depending on whether people notice its cues. The cultural approach does not synthetically assume a mind body-dualism, which would be problematic (Dennett, 1991), but posits that people can enact a dualistic body-mind relation (Leder, 1990). “Body action role”
affords analysis of the conditions under which persons behave as if body and mind were
dualistically separate or not.

The autonomy paradox entailed bankers’ belief that they freely chose action based on
mental goals (versus situational or embodied constraints). They thus let the mind control action,
suppressed body cues, and enacted the passive body-as-object role that cognitive work takes for
granted. This role bolstered socialization. Control was high and banks benefited from bankers’
intense effort, which, however, contributed to body breakdowns after four years. Analysis
reveals that these familiar facts entailed a different, active body role: The antagonistic body
thwarted the mind’s goals and thus socialization. Organizational control remained high as the
committed bankers fought their bodies. Yet the banks could not prevent compromised creativity,
ethics, and judgment because embodied controls were engrained too deeply.

One original finding is the beneficial body-as-subject role that some bankers exhibited
starting in year six. People reflect on taken-for-granted action when it breaks down and disrupts
goals (Heidegger, 1962). While body-as-antagonists could continue to perform, work-disruptive
breakdowns caused body-as-subjects to meta-cognitively reflect on the mind, notice the limits of
and thus relinquish its control, and let the body guide action. Body guidance facilitated body-as-
subjects’ transcending of socialization. They remained committed but could sometimes structure
work more predictably; notice previously invisible controls; choose more consciously, even
countering controls; challenge bank customs, such as the treatment of women; cease to judge the
banks’ cultures as superior; and inquire about work alternatives they had once ignored.

Surprisingly, the resulting low control affected performance positively. “Transcending”
socialization refers to an ongoing accomplishment. It reflects a different style of regulating
action, as opposed to a changed inner state through epiphany. The body-as-subjects were more
creative, ethically sensitive, and had better judgment not primarily because they unlearned cultural content or learned new content, although there was conceptual learning. Rather, enhanced performance and learning were mediated by the body’s increased involvement in action. Specifically, bankers oriented less toward the mind and abstract cultural frameworks and more toward the body’s concrete, situation-specific cues to regulate action. They consequently noticed previously overlooked situational aspects, such as a colleague’s or client’s suffering. Also, the body forced bankers into actions that caused them to experience culturally rare situations, such as challenging someone’s expectations, and consequently learn that there was “wiggle room.” Solutions were new, yet appropriate because the body cannot be completely socialized and its perspective thus both deviated from and encompassed the banks’ cultures.

**Generalizability and Boundary Conditions**

The model likely holds for 1) high ego involvement (Ryan, 1982), 2) high performance demands, and 3) creative, judgment, and ethical (versus technical) tasks. Knowledge workers’ self can be at stake because they tend to believe that performance reflects their skills and judgment, versus job constraints; work is prestigious; and selection competitive. Unlike the employees in job design research, they do not experience themselves as job holders; work is not what they do, but who they are (Davenport, 2005). Ego involvement is necessary but not sufficient. Absent high performance demands, people do not need to push their bodies.

The model may not hold for technical tasks, which rely on internal memory resources (Simon, 1991) and are unaffected by breakdowns (Table 6). Creative-, judgment-, and ethical tasks also require connection to situated resources, such as interpersonal or task cues (Bruner, 1962). Breakdowns threatened bankers. Threat causes over-reliance on internal resources, such as schemas, and neglect of situated cues (Staw, Sandelands, and Dutton, 1981). It is thus more
likely to disrupt creative versus technical tasks. In our knowledge economy, however, most positions require creativity and judgment, especially to improvise in unanticipated situations.

The model’s three conditions are likely present in high-stakes finance jobs, hospital-based medicine, software engineering, consulting, law, and also elite athletics, academia, and art. For example, the 33-year old violinist Janine Jansen cancelled concerts because of exhaustion: “It was just from crazy years of pushing myself. … And of course I didn’t notice … You always want to give more and more of yourself. But there comes a point when the body says, ‘Actually, I don’t have any more, sorry.’ I know now not to let that happen again.” (Jepson, 2011:D5).

Jansen first used her body as an object (“pushing”), then broke down until the body-as-subject intervened (“the body says”), guiding her to transform her life (“not to let that happen again”).

Exacerbated breakdowns caused the body-as-subject pattern. Because health studies found that lower-class workers exhibit more frequent and serious ailments in part because of manual work (Marmot et al., 1991; Marmot, Borbak, and Smith, 1995; Papageorgiou et al., 1997), one might hypothesize that they also exhibit the body-as-subject pattern more frequently. The logic developed here, however, suggests that without the conditions above, ailments may not proceed to the body-as-subject pattern or affect performance. How prevalent these conditions are in lower-class work is an empirical question that this study is not designed to address.

**Contributions**

_The interaction of embodied and cognitive controls_. I contribute to cognitive control work. Like job design research it 1) studies visible cognitive and external controls that managers or peers design into jobs, and 2) construes them as mutually reinforcing and, ideally, autonomy-enhancing. To explain why bankers worked intensively even when it did not serve the banks, this study uncovered 1) less visible embodied controls, which 2) worked by contradicting rather than
reinforcing other controls. Embodied controls are less visible and thus difficult to resist because they 1) do not control through jobs, from which individuals expect control, but through a diffuse infrastructure; and 2) are often but not always the designerless unintended consequence of actions taken for other reasons, such as the open floors created to facilitate communication. Because controls tended stayed as bankers turned over, senior bankers often did not know why a practice, such as free food, had been implemented initially. However, they sometimes recognized and actively exploited its control value. For example, as departments had to cut cost, they were more willing to fire bankers than to cut the food to “keep the troops going.” Cognitive controls let employees initially inspect and buy into an organization’s value system. Embodied controls remove such remnants of visibility, making people act against their conscious values, such as work-life balance, without necessarily being aware of doing so.

This study reported bankers’ own changing perceptions of autonomy. Its data on how unobtrusive controls regulate behavior can also be read as qualifying taken-for-granted perceptions of knowledge workers as more autonomous than industrial workers were. Knowledge work may not diminish but displace control, surprisingly targeting employees with the most (versus the least) status, education, and options. The study also changes our understanding of control as neither inflicted by the powerful on the powerless, as in bureaucratic control, nor democratized, as in concertive control—which are the prototypical controls in cognitive and job design research—but as a web that trapped everyone alike.

**The longitudinal aspects of socialization.** Organizational work studies socialization as intended change in knowledge, skills, and values (Chao et al. 1994)—yet it encompasses all intended and unintended changes from cultural participation (Mortimer and Simmons, 1978). Tracking bankers longitudinally revealed that work also transformed them more fundamentally.
It not only changed what they knew but also how they enacted essential aspects of being, namely the relation between mind, body, and action. This change matters because of its fundamental nature. It also alters predictions of socialization dynamics. Because cognitive control theories do not anticipate conflict, they predict that employees acquire culture linearly; they stop analysis after employees’ first year. This prediction failed starting in year four, when bankers enacted a conflict-laden mind-body relation that caused non-linear changes. Because controls stayed constant, these changes cannot be explained by cultural toolkit changes. Socialization supposedly creates constraint and conformity. This study, in contrast, reveals how it can undo both.

**The consequences of strong control.** The study tracks the bankers’ shifting perceptions of autonomy; their sense of the extent to which action reflects personal “choice” and “inner endorsement of one’s actions” (Deci and Ryan, 1987: 1025). Paradoxically, even though the body-as-subjects more often recognized and transcended the banks’ controls, they felt less autonomous compared to before and to the body-as-antagonists. They felt that their body caused them to act, sometimes against their inner endorsement. Also counter-intuitively, the data suggest that less autonomy can be better. Job design, health, and psychological autonomy research posit that reduced autonomy is bad. When subjects experienced their actions as less versus more personally caused, creativity, cognitive flexibility, behavioral change persistence, and physical and psychological health declined (Deci and Ryan, 1987). Yet when body-as-subjects experienced their actions as less personally caused, they improved on these dimensions. This contradiction can be explained in terms of bankers’ developmental change, which “one-shot” experiments do not assess. Initially, bankers—like many people in our culture, including experimental subjects—were familiar, comfortable with, and skilled only at action controlled by the mind. Over time, however, bankers learned 1) a new action strategy: letting previously
neglected non-mental cues guide action, and 2) the benefits of relinquishing mental control. The cues’ diversity could explain bankers’ enhanced creativity and flexibility. Enhanced skill at listening to the body—in addition to ongoing high demands and latent health issues—facilitated 1) the persistence of the body-as-subject change, and 2) rapid response to early signs of psychological and health problems, thus potentially explaining enhanced well-being in the form of fewer debilitating breakdowns. My study thus qualifies prior autonomy work. High autonomy is positive primarily within a culture that values and teaches the mental control of action. Low autonomy can be positive within a different culture that teaches the value and skill of surrendering action control.

The study’s longitudinal approach also demonstrates that the more complex socialization dynamics described above produced more complex consequences. Prior cognitive research either finds that socialization is necessary and largely beneficial (e.g., O’Reilly and Chatman, 1996) or that it quells creativity (e.g., Nemeth and Staw, 1989). My data qualify these findings. The banks benefited from socialization during bankers’ first three years; incurred negative consequences during the next two years; and subsequently benefited when bankers transcended it. Extant research posits a forced choice between socialization and creativity. Participants remain creative when they are socialized only partially by, for example, investiture tactics that let them keep their personalities (Van Maanen and Schein, 1979; although Jones, 1986, found that it encourages newcomers to passively accept the organization’s role definitions.) Yet partially socialized individuals do not fully use company knowledge. In contrast to partial socialization, transcending socialization entailed that bankers gained cultural distance after they had fully acquired the culture. They could consequently use relevant cultural knowledge, yet creatively
transcend it. Moreover, bankers did not create this distance consciously; it was mediated by their bodies, initially against their wishes, and therefore did not imply reduced commitment.

**Limitations and Opportunities for Future Research**

It would have been ideal to push causality further to explain why only 40 percent of bankers experienced breakdown cycles. To examine whether shared prior socialization (Desmond, 2006) might account for this finding would have required more detailed life histories. Interview taping would have better represented bankers’ own voices. Relying on interviews after year two limited my first-hand experience with how the banks’ practices changed. Nonetheless, my previous thorough understanding allowed me to ask targeted questions. Also, interviewing multiple bankers facilitated triangulation. Ongoing observation could have better captured the body action roles’ tacit and potentially embarrassing aspects. Bankers’ intimate accounts, however, suggested that they were candid, partly because of our ongoing relationships.

Future research could examine whether and how workers who exhibit non-instrumental body action roles can modify the organization’s overall culture. Going beyond prior work, the model predicts that knowledge workers will experience changes after completed socialization, what these changes are, and the sequence in which they occur. The timeframe for each change likely differs across occupations and depends on workers’ physical constitution and work demands. Also, because socialization is a lifelong process, future research could examine whether other body action roles might emerge. The above boundary conditions could assist future quantitative research in formulating and testing predictions about the specific types of workers and occupations to which this study’s model generalizes. Especially needed are more finely grained classifications of KBOs, including heteronomous organizations, in addition to autonomous ones.
This study showed that work causes people to inhabit the body differently and thereby changed how they enacted agency. Future organizational research should examine 1) additional work-induced variation in embodiment, and 2) related changes in other traditional social science categories, such as identity and cognition. For example, the body-as-subjects identified less with the mental guides that cognitive research takes for granted as an identity basis (Higgins, 1996) and more with embodied and pre-reflective cues. Like the bankers, attention to the body may thus also help social scientists break through traditional ways of thinking.
Figure 1 Overview of Data Structure

First-Order Codes

- Statements about the absence of 1) direct supervision (e.g., “no one tells me what to do”), and 2) rules about how, when, and how long to work (e.g., “we can come and go any time”) (d, e)
- Statements about the banks’ values and norms (e.g., “we value people’s autonomy”) (d)
- Bankers controlled banker energy (e.g., “we serve caffeine and sugar in the afternoon, when energy levels drop”), used self-monitoring techniques (e.g., open floor layout), and erased distractions between home and work (e.g., “it is more convenient to stay here than go home”) (d)
- Friends and family discussing bankers’ neglect of body (e.g., “I have never seen anyone abuse their body like this”) (d)
- Bankers override physical needs (e.g., bankers training themselves to only sleep in small increments) (d)
- Bankers saying that health is not priority (e.g., “being successful at work is more important than being healthy”) (d)
- Bankers did not refer to body. Mean the mind when they say “I” (e.g., “I decide when I am tired”) (d)
- Bankers talking about sudden onset of uncharacteristic, out-of-control behaviors (e.g., “I have always been mild-mannered but now I blow up every few hours”) (d)
- Statements about body as enemy that thwarts work (e.g., “I hate my body because it gets in the way of what I love most, my work”) (d)
- Bankers discussing how to intensify control over body (e.g., “the more my body pushes me in one direction, the more I need to push against it”) (d)
- Bankers talking about needing distractions to retain positive mood and energy (e.g., “I have developed a major shopping problem but I don’t care: whatever it takes to get me through the day”) (d)
- Stories about how breakdowns increasingly impeded work (e.g., “At first I was just fat. Now I am even fatter, have an eating disorder, a pill addiction, and liver problems that zap 80 percent of my time and energy”) (d)
- Bankers saying that they gave up controlling body because their actions intensified breakdowns (e.g., “every time I tried to control the body, I made it worse”) (d)
- Statements about how bankers made the wrong judgments by relying on the mind (e.g., “there is only so much that the mind can understand of the complexity we deal with”) and had the same thoughts in different situations (e.g., “I always have the same incapacitating fears”) (d)
- Statements about meta-cognitive strategies (e.g., “I try to learn to think only when I have to”) (d)
- Statements about how action can be guided by aspects other than the mind (e.g., “I learned to respect and work with constraints and not bully through them as I had always done before”) (d)
- Statements about how bankers conducted activities with focus on body (e.g., eating without reading or working) and how bankers negotiated with their bodies (e.g., “I ask my body’s permission before I do anything that could tax it”) (d)
- Bankers worked up to 120 hours per week (d, e)
- Bankers gave up hobbies and outside interests that had mattered to them (e.g., “I used to be a championship soccer player but now I don’t even have time to watch a game, not to mention play”) (d)
- Statements by family and friends that bankers neglected them (e.g., “I have not had a meal with my husband for six months now”) (d)
- Statements by bankers that they prioritized work over other aspects of their life (e.g., “I love my wife and kids and take care of them but for now work comes first”) (d)
- Statements by bankers, colleagues, and clients about focal bankers’ performance on technical, creativity, judgment, and ethics (e.g., “his solutions are just not creative enough for us to give him the business”) (d, e)
- Assessments about how well a banker embodied the culture (e.g., “she is a culture carrier”) (d, e)
- Bankers training others on cultural aspects (d)
- Bankers using cultural concepts to interpret situations (e.g., believing a spouse lacks ambition because he works less than 60-hour weeks) (d)

All data were obtained from semi-structured interviews; “(d)” indicates “triangulated with observation”; and “(e)” indicates “triangulated with company documents.”
Figure 2 The Dynamic Relation between Organizational Control and Body Action Roles
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Control Practice</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Purposes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive controls</td>
<td>Values: Explicitly stated and reflected in absence of external controls</td>
<td>Highlight autonomy and work-life balance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Visible</td>
<td>• No official working hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Target mind</td>
<td>• No productivity measures</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• No efficiency focus</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• No supervision</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• No tracking of vacation time</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unobtrusive controls</td>
<td>Self-monitoring techniques</td>
<td>Encourage indiscriminate overwork and counteract work-competing goals and body needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Less visible</td>
<td>• Bankers monitored and self-adjusted work hours, deals lost, resource cost, and recruiting effectiveness</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Bypass mind, target body</td>
<td>• Open floor layouts</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Erasing distinctions between work and leisure</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 24/7 administrative support</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Encourage leisure at work</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Free amenities, including childcare, valets, car service, and meals</td>
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<tr>
<td>Energy management techniques</td>
<td>Open floor layouts</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Free caffeine and meals during “energy slumps”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hiring young people</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Energy main hiring criterion</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Firing low performers because of energy drain</td>
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Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidence of Organizational Controls</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
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<tr>
<td>practice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cognitive controls, including absent external controls</td>
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<tr>
<td>Explicit values</td>
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<td>Unobtrusive controls</td>
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<td>Unobtrusive nature of controls</td>
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| Self-monitoring techniques | “The more you let people monitor themselves, the harder they work.” (Bank A director)  
“Floor set-up is one of the most critical management tools. We currently are going to something like a trading floor environment. Sure, it aids communication. But it also makes people highly self-aware. We found that many have stepped up their working hours.” (Bank B director)  
“If you set people explicit goals and then reward them accordingly, they’ll work up to the goal. But there is no end to the effort that people put in when you let them track their own performance.” (Bank A director)  
“At first, I liked the self-feedback processes. I felt like I was training myself, like an athlete. But I eventually found that these things take on their own life and end up controlling you. It was relentless. Imagine a world in which you are accounting for everything you do—even though you are only accounting to yourself.” (Bank B VP) |
| Erasing distinctions between work and leisure | Joe had mini-refrigerator under his desk. Dirty workout clothes are lying in various clumps under the computer desk. Dry cleaning hangs in front of his cubicle. He has a CD player and CD rack next to the computer. Goofy pictures of him and friends are pinned to the wall. A superhero poster hangs behind him. Jack comes by: “This is what my frat room looked like at school.” Joe: “Yup, I probably have more stuff here than at home. If you are spending all your time here, you might as well make yourself at home here.” (fieldnotes from Bank A)  
4 PM: Jill comes by. They chat for 15 minutes, mostly gossip.  
4:15: Client calls with logistics for a meeting.  
4:20: John goes into Mike’s office to say hello. They throw basketball back and forth for 10 minutes and chat about sports.  
4:30: John works on spreadsheet.  
4:40: Girlfriend calls. 20 minute conversation.  
5:00: John leaves for the gym.  
6:30: Back from gym with Chinese food. Eats while working on spreadsheet and listening to music.  
(Week 80, Tuesday, excerpt from schedule of John, a Bank B associate)  
“A century ago or so, people had no concept of a difference between home and work. They did homework and worked on the field with family and it all blended together. All of this was part of their family life. And then we had this big societal separation between work and home and all this social engineering around work-life balance. And now most of Wall Street has moved into the other extreme. There is no distinction between work and home because everything is integrated into work.” (Bank A director)  
“The more you talk about work-life balance, the more you create the problem that you want to solve. Why make a distinction between work and life in the first place? The more you can blend them together, the more you’ll get out of your people. You can just rope them in by making whatever they need available at work.” (Bank B Managing Director to a client) |
| Energy management techniques | “Most of the top banks have the same quality of people with similar experiences. The real difference is the kind of momentum you can create, the kind of energy you can generate and how long you can maintain it. … We used to call [name of group] the ‘thundering herd.’” (Bank B director)  
“We have often thought about implementing an ‘up-or-out’ system, even though this is not typical for our industry. But the cost of having just one person drag their feet can bring down everyone else’s energy. And that is the one thing you cannot afford.” (Bank A VP)  
“Frank looks great on paper but I just don’t think that he has the kind of energy that we need. Just compare him to Jack. Jack’s a tiger. Jack may not have the same pedigree but he is ready to
tear into his work. I am voting for Jack.” (fieldnotes from Bank B recruiting meeting)

“Most people think that the free food during the afternoon is a nice gesture, a thank you from
the firm for your hard work. But then we had these discussions on what costs to save and some
people were ready to cut jobs before they’d cut that food. They thought that we still have some
dead weight here that we could cut and be better off for it. But whatever we need to keep the
troops strong for fighting we are keeping.” (Bank A Chief Operating Officer)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years 1 – 3</th>
<th>Bankers controlled body, extracting energy regardless of bodily cues and needs. Body receded from bankers’ experience.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Body-as-object</td>
<td>Banker strategies: Numbed and tried to permanently redesign physical needs. Ignored illnesses, did not prioritize health. Identified with mind and disconnected from body. No reference to body, only to “I.”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very high org control: All banker energies subjugated toward work. Bankers did not question work system.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Consequences for org (mostly positive): Banker worked hard and effectively.</td>
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</table>

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<tr>
<th>Year 4 onward</th>
<th>Bankers experienced puzzling bodily and psychological responses. Out-of-control behaviors sabotaged work. Body emerged into experience as antagonist, thwarting projects.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High org control: Bankers still worked hard. Bankers intended to act on behalf of bank.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consequences for org (unintended, negative): Lapses in judgment, ethics, and creativity.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Year 6 onward</th>
<th>Bankers gave up control over body and attended to its cues.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Body-as-subject</td>
<td>Banker strategies: Becoming distrustful of and stepping back from the mind. Surrendering agency while acting. Relational orientation toward body.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Low org control: Banker questioned and sometimes resisted org control.</td>
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<td>Consequences for org (mostly positive): Increased creativity, ethics, and judgment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4

<p>| Evidence of Bankers’ Evolving Body Action Roles and Organizational Consequences |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <strong>Body action roles</strong> | <strong>Organizational consequences</strong> |
| <strong>Years 1 – 3:</strong> | | | |
| Body-as-object: Bankers controlled body. | | |
| High organizational control. Positive organizational consequences. | “I totally believe in mind over matter. There are no such things as physical needs. Tell me one physical need and I can tell you a culture in which they have controlled it.” (Bank A VP) | “I freely admit that I spend all of my time and energy at work. That’s what I choose to do.” (Bank A associate) |
| | “We have a lot of ex-military people here. They work well here because they know how to discipline themselves and soldier on without food or sleep.” (Bank A associate) | “People here are more drilled to do what the firm wants than in the military. And the funny thing is that no one appears to do the drilling.” (Bank B director) |
| | “They (i.e., the Bank Bers) all live as if they were imperishable and not subject to biological laws.” (Husband of an Bank B associate) | “There is nothing that my husband would not do for the firm. His family, his health, his basic well-being—all of that is secondary to excellence at work.” (Wife of Bank A associate) |
| | “I have learned that there is nothing you cannot do. I also learned about my amazing capacity for work. I would not have thought that I could go without sleep for such extended periods of time. But that’s just because I have never pushed myself to that extent.” (Bank B associate) | Researcher: “What practices does the bank have in place to make sure people work hard and effectively?” Bank B associate during year 2: “None. People work the way they do voluntarily. No one tells you what to do.” Same banker during year 5, revisiting his answer: “Man was I blind. But I was just too busy and tired to reflect on anything. Also, you cannot work as hard as we do and think that there is an evil organization controlling you.” |
| <strong>Year 4 onward:</strong> | | | |
| Body-antagonist: Body usurps control. | “It was a battle I couldn’t win. For every trick that I had for doing something that my body did not want, my body retaliated 100 times, doing the very thing that I wanted to avoid with all my might.” (Bank B director, retrospectively) | “I still really want to go out there and be a go-getter but it gets harder and harder, I have to fight myself more and more and sometimes I cut corners because I am tired to the bones. I go home early or I don’t go the extra mile on a pitch that doesn’t look promising.” (Bank A VP) |
| High organizational control. Lapses in judgment, creativity, and ethics. | “I am the most disciplined person I know. But sometimes it’s like my body is running the show and doing things for which I loathe myself but I just cannot stop it. I am desperate.” (Bank A associate) | “When people have been here for five or six years, you can see some wear-and-tear. They still work hard and do the best they can but sometimes the work has taken such a toll that the spark is gone and mistakes seep in.” (Bank B director) |
| | “I sometimes wake up in the morning and remember what I have done the day before and wished that it was just a bad dream and all I want is to keep it together for the day ahead and not allow my body to take over again.” (Bank B VP who struggled with addictions) | “These problems (with alcoholism) are really getting to me. When I talk to clients or even in the firm all I keep thinking about is whether people notice (the drinking problem) and I keep losing half of what they are saying.” (Bank A VP) |
| | 95 percent of bankers responded with | “There were times when I just felt alive” |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 6 onward:</th>
<th>Bankers surrendered control over body.</th>
<th>and ideas came easily. I now have to work much harder and they are often not very original.” (Bank B VP)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bankers</td>
<td>Bankers questioned organizational control; increased creativity and judgment.</td>
<td>“Once my body forced me to work and live differently, I can see choices where I have not seen them before.” (Bank A VP)</td>
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<td>“I have never before asked myself whether something actually feels good. That thought just never occurred to me. Just do your job… If this firm had not rammed my body into the ground the way it did, my body might not have fought back and forced me to listen to it.” (Bank A VP)</td>
<td>“The benefit of all my problems was that they isolated me mentally and sometimes physically from everyone. Once you have that distance, you can more clearly see the subtle forces through which the firm is herding people into one direction at one pace and you see ways of doing it differently.” (Bank B VP)</td>
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<td>“Even as an athlete I was pushing through pain. That’s just what you learn to do if you want to be serious about something. Now if something feels seriously off, I lay off immediately, both at the gym and at work.” (Bank B VP)</td>
<td>90 % of bankers who had developed the Body-as-Subject pattern “strongly agreed” with: “Physical difficulties have caused me to innovate at work.”</td>
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<td>“All of my life has been a struggle to discipline myself and my body so that I could do good work. I still get my work done and get it done well but now it feels like I am flowing with the current.” (Bank A VP)</td>
<td>“The people who stay here beyond their thirties are often people who could turn burn-out around and become refreshed and strengthened and even emboldened by it and they turn into leaders who are not afraid to speak up and who can offer new visions.” (Bank B director)</td>
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<td>“I have always imposed on my body my ideas of what should be done. I now more often try to feel myself into situations before I think about them and let my body guide me.” (Bank B VP)</td>
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Table 5

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Work commitment</th>
<th>Enculturation/Transcending Socialization</th>
<th>Performance</th>
<th>Health</th>
<th>Body action role</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| 1    | “At this stage in my career, work has priority. My husband has to understand that.” [She was a concert pianist] “I love the piano. But I haven’t even had time to play a little this year. It is hard but [this job] is worth the sacrifice.” | “This culture feels natural to me.” “She fits great with the culture.” (VP) | Review:  
- Top 5 percent  
- Technical: Perfect  
- Creativity: Very good to excellent  
- Judgment: Very good | 4 colds, new allergies, back pain, stress, 2 flues, broken leg | Body-as-object  
“The only way I can keep myself up nights in a row is through a mix of caffeine pills and prescription meds.” “I fell on my way to a meeting. The leg changed color and I had pain but I chose not to think about it until after the meeting.” [leg was broken in two places] |
| 4    | “My work is my life.” Does not go to physical therapy even though it eases her pain because of work. (fieldnotes) | She was chosen to teach new associates vignettes on the firm’s culture. “She is very astute on what the important people around here value.” (Director) | Review:  
- Top 10 percent  
- Technical: Perfect  
- Creativity: Average  
- Judgment: Very good but some lapses  
“I sometimes have a problem hiding my irritation—even with clients.” | “Not sure I ever got rid of cold,” strong body pain (“have to work standing because of pain”), same allergies, 1 flu | Body-as-Antagonist  
“I think my body actually hates me. But I am still the one in control.” “It is an ongoing battle. My body caves in one way and I find another way around it.” |
| 5    | “I had a rough spot but I am still willing to give it all to this job. The firm has been so supportive to me and given me so much.” Comes into office on weekends just to clean up cubicle and “get organized.” (fieldnotes) | In associate training, she was introduced as a “culture carrier.” Often uses firm values to judge the culture of clients (e.g., “they enslave their people with all these rules and supervision”). (fieldnotes) | Review:  
- Top 10 percent  
- Technical: Perfect  
- Creativity: Average  
- Judgment: Needs to work on temper  
“I think they see me as a ‘good soldier.’ The parts of the project that require creative spark always seem to end up with someone else.” | Ovarian cancer (surgery), 2 colds, no flu, same allergies, strong back and joint pain | Body-as-Antagonist  
“I refuse to be scared by the cancer. It is something I can manage.” “With a body like this, who needs enemies?” |
| 6    | “I work hard because this work is who I am.” Did not attend beloved grandfather’s funeral because of work. (fieldnotes) | Assigned as mentor for peer who is being “rejected by the culture.” (fieldnotes) Complaining about a client: “It is inconceivable to not return a call within 12 hours (the firm’s unofficial norm) | “I am struggling. I do everything right but I haven’t really had a creative breakthrough.” “I feel like the creative juices are just gone.” | Heart problem, 3 colds, 1 flu, additional allergies, strong back and joint pain | Body-as-Antagonist  
“The chest pain came just when I thought my body could not defy me anymore.” “I am not going to let my body ruin my life.” |
## Sample Analysis of Bank Ber (abbreviated): Did Transcend Socialization

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Work commitment</th>
<th>Enculturation/Transcending Socialization</th>
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<th>Health</th>
<th>Body Action Role</th>
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</table>
| 1    | “I am willing to kill myself at work because this is an opportunity that comes along only once in life.” | “The firm brainwashes her. I don’t even recognize the way she dresses, speaks, and even walks.” (Mother) | Review:  
• Top 5 percent  
• Technical: Perfect  
• Creativity: Very good  
• Judgment: Very good | 1 cold, addictions, sports injuries. | Body-as-Object |
|      | Did not meet parents who were in town because of work. (fieldnotes) | “I have become so detail-oriented that one wrong comma offends me.” (detail-orientation is firm norm) | “I can always rely on her in delicate client situations for good judgment.” (Director) | |
| 4    | “She keeps standing up even her best friends and family for work.” (Husband) | “Client orientation is so important here that I feel it as physical pain when a client is not completely happy with us.” | Review:  
• Top 20 percent  
• Technical: Perfect  
• Creativity: Needs work  
• Judgment: Average | Glandular problems, immune system problems, body pain, trouble sleeping, addictions, depression, 2 colds, sports injuries. | Body-as-Antagonist |
|      | Decided not to get pregnant, despite wish for family, to not become a “second-class citizen” at the firm. | “Yes, suits are uncomfortable. But I couldn’t imagine coming to work in anything else. It just doesn’t feel right.” | “It’s like she is a different person. She often blurs out the most embarrassing things.” (VP) | |
| 6    | “I have been working with her a lot and she always goes above and beyond what is required.” (Director) | “She understands our norms—she just chooses to ignore them strategically.” (Director) | Review:  
• Top 5 percent  
• Technical: Perfect  
• Creativity: Excellent  
• Judgment: Very good | Glandular problems, immune system problems, body pain, trouble sleeping, fewer bouts with additions and depression, 1 cold. | Body-as-Subject |
|      | Lived apart from husband when he got job in another town because she believed working outside of firm’s headquarters might disadvantage her career. (fieldnotes) | “People see her as a free spirit with a magic touch. Her perspective is sometimes so different that you don’t even understand where she is coming from but it always works.” (VP) | “She makes clients understand their own business from a new perspective.” (Director) | |
| 7    | “I am totally committed to this job.” | “She has developed a cult following, even among senior people. They think that she can help shake up a stodgy culture.” (Director) | Review:  
• Top 5 percent  
• Technical: Perfect  
• Creativity: Excellent  
• Judgment: Very good to excellent | Glandular problems, immune system problems, body pain, trouble sleeping, fewer bouts with additions and depression. | Body-as-Subject |
|      | Declined an offer from a prestigious competitor, despite better financial terms and a promotion. (fieldnotes) | “Working with her inspires me. It makes me see new alternatives.” (VP) | “She is everything a banker should be—but in a completely unique package.” (VP) | |

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• Top 20 percent  
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• Creativity: Excellent  
• Judgment: Very good to excellent | Glandular problems, immune system problems, body pain, trouble sleeping, fewer bouts with additions and depression. | Body-as-Subject |
|      | Declined an offer from a prestigious competitor, despite better financial terms and a promotion. (fieldnotes) | “Working with her inspires me. It makes me see new alternatives.” (VP) | “She is everything a banker should be—but in a completely unique package.” (VP) | |
Table 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Development of Bankers’ Socialization Indicators</th>
<th>End of Year</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Socialization indicators</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Work commitment</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Worked &gt; 80 hrs/wk (i, d, o)</td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>92</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neglected hobbies and outside interests (i, o)</td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neglected family and friends (i, o)</td>
<td></td>
<td>97</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>89</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Enculturation and transcending socialization (i, d, o)</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Know org norms and values</td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
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<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not transcend org norms and values</td>
<td></td>
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<td>100</td>
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<td>100</td>
<td>58</td>
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<td>Transcended org norms and values, of which (*):</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>– Body-as-antagonist</td>
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<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<td>18</td>
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<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<td>N/A</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>82</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Performance proficiency (i, d, o)</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>High technical</td>
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<td>83</td>
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<td>95</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>96</td>
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<tr>
<td>High creativity, of which (*)</td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>14</td>
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<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<td>25</td>
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<td>N/A</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>78</td>
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<tr>
<td>High judgment, of which (*)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>– Body-as-antagonist</td>
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<td>N/A</td>
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<td>N/A</td>
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<td>N/A</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>70</td>
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</table>

Cell values indicate the percentages of bankers who exhibited a particular socialization indicator during a given year. Cell values marked with (*) were calculated as a percentage of total “Transcended org norms and values,” “Hi creativity,” and “Hi judgment” data, respectively. Letters in brackets represent the data source: “i” indicates “obtained from interviews,” “d” indicates “obtained from company documents” (i.e., time sheets and 360 feedback forms), and “o” indicates “obtained from observation.”
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Appendix A: Interview Protocol for Year Two

1. Please summarize your personal and professional background.

2. What is your role in this organization? What kinds of activities does this entail?

3. Tell me about the organization’s socialization processes. What kinds of processes does the organization have in place to convey the knowledge you need to be effective at your job? How effective are these processes?

4. Tell me about your first few months with the organization.

5. What did you learn during these initial months with the organization? How did you learn?

6. Can you describe specific learning situations? What did you think in these situations?

7. Has membership in the organization changed you as a person? In what way? Through what processes or experiences? How do you evaluate this change?

8. How would you describe yourself when you entered the organization? How would you describe yourself at [midpoint of tenure; current point in time]? Can you illustrate your characteristics at each point with an example?

9. How would you describe your knowledge and skills [when you entered the organization; at the midpoint of your tenure; now]?

10. Please describe a situation that you considered successful. Why do you consider it successful? What caused it to be so successful? Can you recall what you were thinking during this situation? Can you guess what other key participants were thinking during this situation?

11. Please describe a situation that you considered unsuccessful. Why do you consider it unsuccessful? What caused it to be unsuccessful? Can you recall what you were thinking
during this situation? Can you guess what other key participants were thinking during this situation? If you could change how this situation was handled, what would you change?

12. What makes an analyst (associate, VP, director, managing director) successful in this organization?

13. How successful do you consider this organization? Why? Against which standard or comparison do you assess its relative success? How would you improve the functioning of this organization?

14. Has the organization’s performance changed over time? Why? How do you know?

15. What makes an investment bank, in general, successful? Why do investment banks fail?
Appendix B: Interview Protocol for Years Three to Ten

1. Tell me about the last few months since our prior conversation.

2. Were there any changes in the organization and its practices? For example, did the organization change such practices as floor-lay-outs, training, staffing, reviews, strategy, or team structures?

3. How successful do you consider this organization? Why? Against which standard or comparison do you assess its relative success? How would you improve the functioning of this organization?

4. Has the organization’s performance changed over time? Why? How do you know?

5. What is your current role with the organization? What activities does this entail?

6. Tell me about the practices that the organization has in place to make sure bankers work hard and effectively.

7. Have any of these practices changed?

8. How are these practices affecting you?

9. What does a typical work day look like for you? Please guide me through a specific recent workday, describing what you did and when in as much detail as possible.

10. How long do you typically work? What determines how long you work?

11. How do you feel about your work hours? How long would you ideally like to work if you could design your own work schedule?

12. What do you do outside of work?

13. How does your family feel about your work? Would they like to see any changes? If so, which ones?
14. How do you feel at work? Please try to recall a specific day during the last few weeks when you felt exceptionally good (exceptionally bad/average). Can you please walk me through your day and tell me what happened, what caused these feelings, and how you responded? (I followed up on cues relating to health, energy, and the body without suggesting any of these topics myself.)

15. How typical are each of these days? For example, how many really good, bad, or average days have you had recently? Has this changed over time? If so, why?

16. How have you changed as a person during the last few months? In what way? Through what processes or experiences? How do you evaluate this change?

17. How would you describe yourself when you entered the organization? How would you describe yourself at [midpoint of tenure; current point in time]? Can you illustrate your characteristics at each point with an example?

18. What kinds of decisions do you make during a typical work day? What kinds of activities are on “autopilot?”

19. What kinds of things have you learned during the last few months? How did you learn?

I asked the following questions about once a year:

20. Please describe a situation that you considered successful. Why do you consider it successful? What caused it to be so successful? Can you recall what you were thinking during this situation? Can you guess what other key participants were thinking during this situation?

21. Please describe a situation that you considered unsuccessful. Why do you consider it unsuccessful? What caused it to be unsuccessful? Can you recall what you were thinking
during this situation? Can you guess what other key participants were thinking during this situation? If you could change how this situation was handled, what would you change?

22. What makes an analyst (associate, VP, director, managing director) successful in this organization?

23. What makes an investment bank, in general, successful? Why do investment banks fail?