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**“Them old guys... they knew what to do”:
Examining the impact of industry collapse on two tribal reservations**

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“Them Old Guys...They Knew What To Do”: Examining the Impact of Industry Collapse on Two Tribal Reservations
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Abstract

Previous studies of the impact of industry decline on individuals focus on cities; however little is known about the impact of industry decline on life outcomes on tribal reservations. Using 46 in-depth interviews conducted on the Yurok and Hoopa Valley reservations, I answer the following research questions: is there an empirical basis for asserting a relationship between the decline of the logging industry and weakening of male labor force attachment, and for relating these economic shifts to changes in attitudes, expectations and behavior, including methamphetamine use since 1985? Using a cohort model, I describe the changes in male labor force attachment following the decline of the logging industry, as well changes in personal behavior, especially methamphetamine use from 1985 to present. These findings support existing theories of weak labor force attachment as a result of industry decline.

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Introduction

Studies of industry decline and labor force attachment typically focus on urban environments, and very little is known about the mechanisms linking unemployment and life outcomes on tribal reservations. The decline of the logging industry coupled with high rates of informal employment and accompanying male substance use on the Yurok and Hoopa Valley reservations present a new context in which to study these phenomena. I use 46 in-depth interviews to address the following research questions: *is there an empirical basis for asserting a relationship between the decline of the logging industry and weakening of male labor force attachment, and for relating these economic shifts to changes in attitudes, expectations and behavior, including methamphetamine use since 1985?*

In previous generations, and even within the last twenty years, tribal low-skill males could find gainful, well-paying jobs as loggers in the reservations' forests. Since the decline of the logging industry on the reservations and Pacific Northwest more generally (Stier 1980, Carroll et al. 1999, Slack & Jenson 2004), low-skill men no longer have access to such natural resource employment, and this has had implications for how they express themselves as men and meet their expectation as providers.

Out of Sight, Out of Mind: Rural Poverty & Unemployment

Rural communities marked by poverty fall outside the typical purview of sociologists, and Native American reservations are an extreme version of this oversight. Much has been learned about the interaction of structural and cultural forces in shaping life outcomes (Wilson 2009), yet these theories focus mainly on the urban core. On the Yurok and Hoopa Valley reservations, I find that, although the logging industry's decline over the last two decades has

mirrored the effects of deindustrialization (State of Industry 2007), employment is set within the specific context of seasonal job markets in ancestral forests. I argue that the resulting informal employment, shaped by traditionally-informed expectations of tribal men, renders them uniquely susceptible to drugs like methamphetamine, a connection not previously linked to labor force attachment.

By taking theories designed to explain phenomena in urban areas and applying them to tribal reservations, I expand our understanding of the impact of major structural economic shifts on employment patterns and personal behavioral patterns. Although studies of rural America in the 21st century emphasize how poor health outcomes, like drug use and heart disease, are directly related to macroeconomic shifts, these studies tend to focus on the experience of recent immigrants and multigenerational bastions of white poverty, overlooking tribal reservations (Burton et al. 2013; Lichter 2012, 2013). This is a notable oversight because tribal communities can serve as microcosms for the effects of natural resource industry decline on individual outcomes. Additionally, incorporating tribal communities in the study of macroeconomic shifts will allow me to expand theories of joblessness to include rural variations.

The Decline of the Logging Industry & Its Consequences

Rural reservation employment in the Northwest has fundamentally changed over the last several decades. According to Stier (1980), resource scarcity and technological advancement have reduced the labor needed to harvest forests and fisheries. Additionally, environmental legislation drastically limited federal forest harvests, resulting in an 83% job loss from 1988-1995 in Oregon alone (Carroll et al. 1999). Both the Yurok and Hoopa Valley reservations are

set within federal forests, and my analysis highlights the tribal men who are the “collateral damage” of these well-intended environmental policies.

Using the March Current Population Survey, Slack & Jenson (2004) find that loggers had a national underemployment¹ rate over 27% from 1974-1998. Such high marginal employment is striking given previous decades of relative prosperity compared to low-skill workers in other major industries like manufacturing and transportation (Slack & Jenson 2004). Despite high levels of underemployment after the 1970s, logging was once a vibrant industry in areas with rich timber resources. In 1960, 128,000 individuals, primarily men, were employed nationally in forestry/timber occupations, as demonstrated by Graph 1. A majority of these men were fallers, equipment operators, and sawmill workers who worked seasonally to harvest logs and transform them into board lumber. As technology increased, labor needs lowered but remained stable through the early 1990s. Yet, with environmental regulations mounting (Carroll et al. 1999), jobs continued to dwindle and mills closed across the country, as evidenced in Map 1. Sawmill closures were localized to the Pacific Northwest, with over half of mills in California closing from 1991-2001 (Bailey 2001). Overall, jobs in forestry/timber have declined by 58% from 1960 to 2015, although the true effect is even larger for logging jobs in particular, as a majority of forestry/timber occupations are now in conservation and/or forest biology sciences.

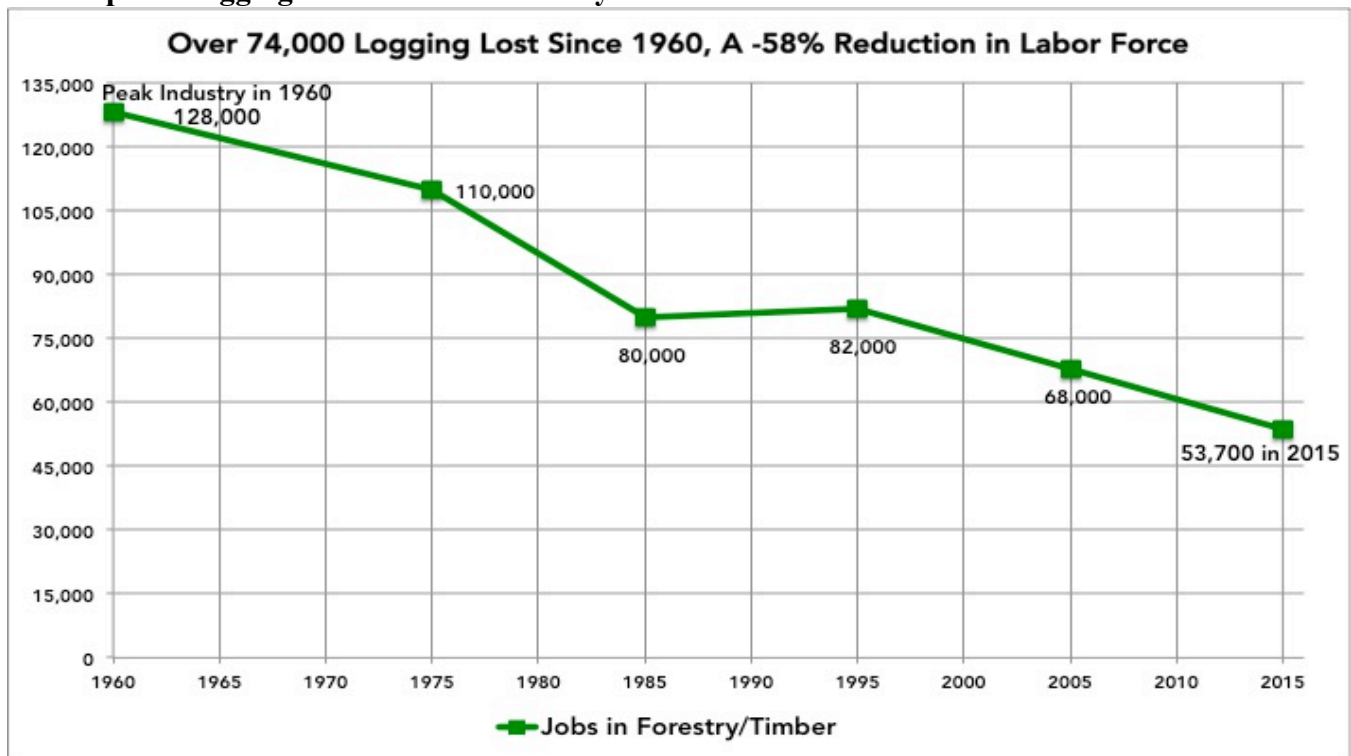
The Yurok and Hoopa communities were also impacted by the logging industry decline, with 14/88 closures in California happening in the counties surrounding the two reservations (*Mill Closures 1989-2003*). Despite these closures, Yurok and Hoopa tribal loggers came from multigenerational backgrounds in the forest, and still had access to their ancestral redwood forests (Newell et al. 1986, Lewis 2016). Unlike other timber exports, redwood has remained a

¹ Slack & Jenson (2004: 33) use the 1974 Labor Utilization Framework to construct a measure of underemployment by combining the categories of subemployed, unemployed, involuntarily part-time employed, and low-income workers.

valuable, place-specific commodity in global markets, and Yurok loggers have utilized these forests since pre-contact (Kroeber 1925, Yurok Tribe date uk, State of Industry 2007). The Hoopa Valley reservation also commands substantial timber resources, with over 87,000 acres under its care, forming the largest forested reservation in the state (Hoopa Tribal Forestry date uk). Although demand for these timber resources has remained strong over time, the redwood industry has not been immune to the impact of increased environmental regulations and technological advancement, which have both reduced the need for local loggers.

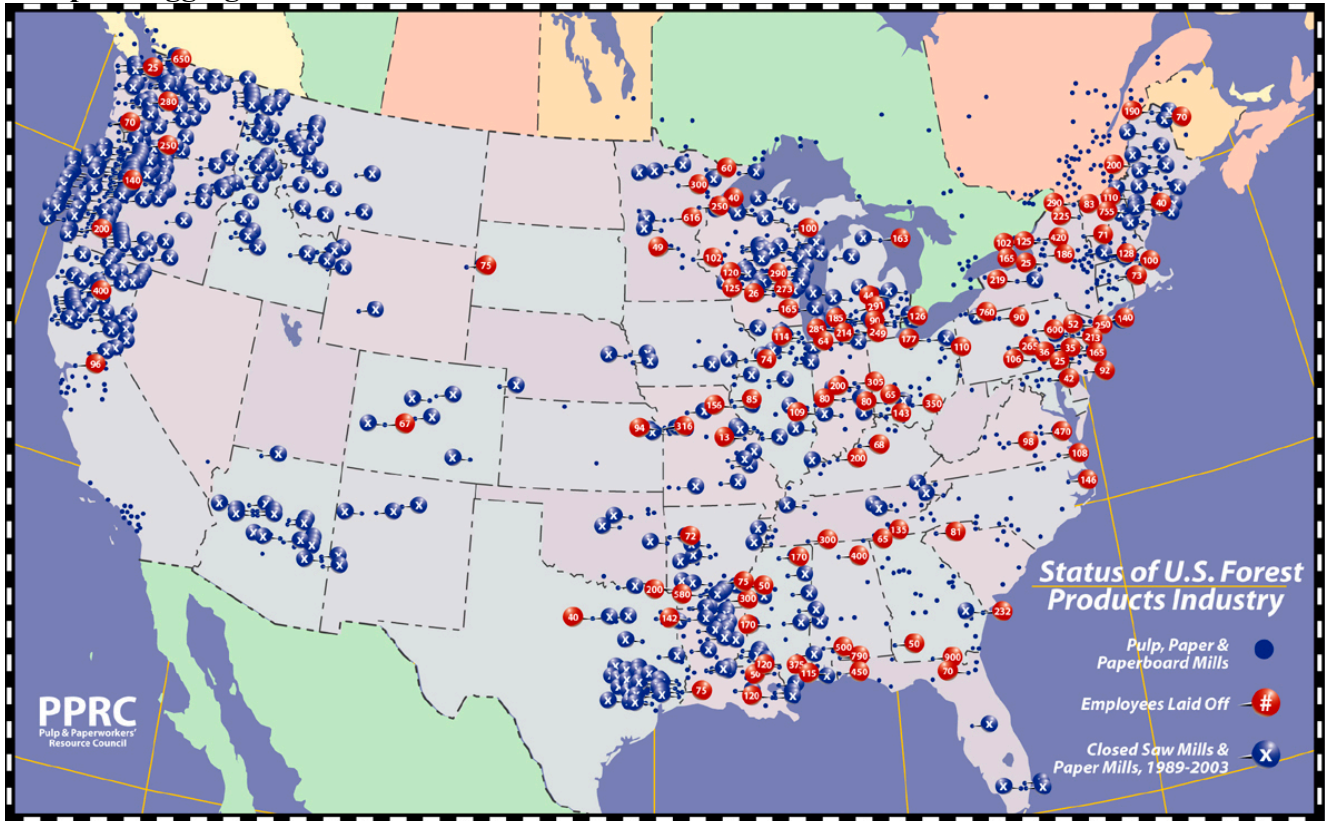
The Yurok and Hoopa Valley communities have experienced the most acute aspects of the logging industry decline, thereby making them an ideal setting in which to document its cumulative effects on rural male outcomes. Given the spatial concentration of these macro-level changes, I argue that the Yurok and Hoopa Valley reservations serve as a bounded area in which to study the implications of structural forces for those living on the reservation.

Graph 1. Logging Job Decline Nationally 1960-2015



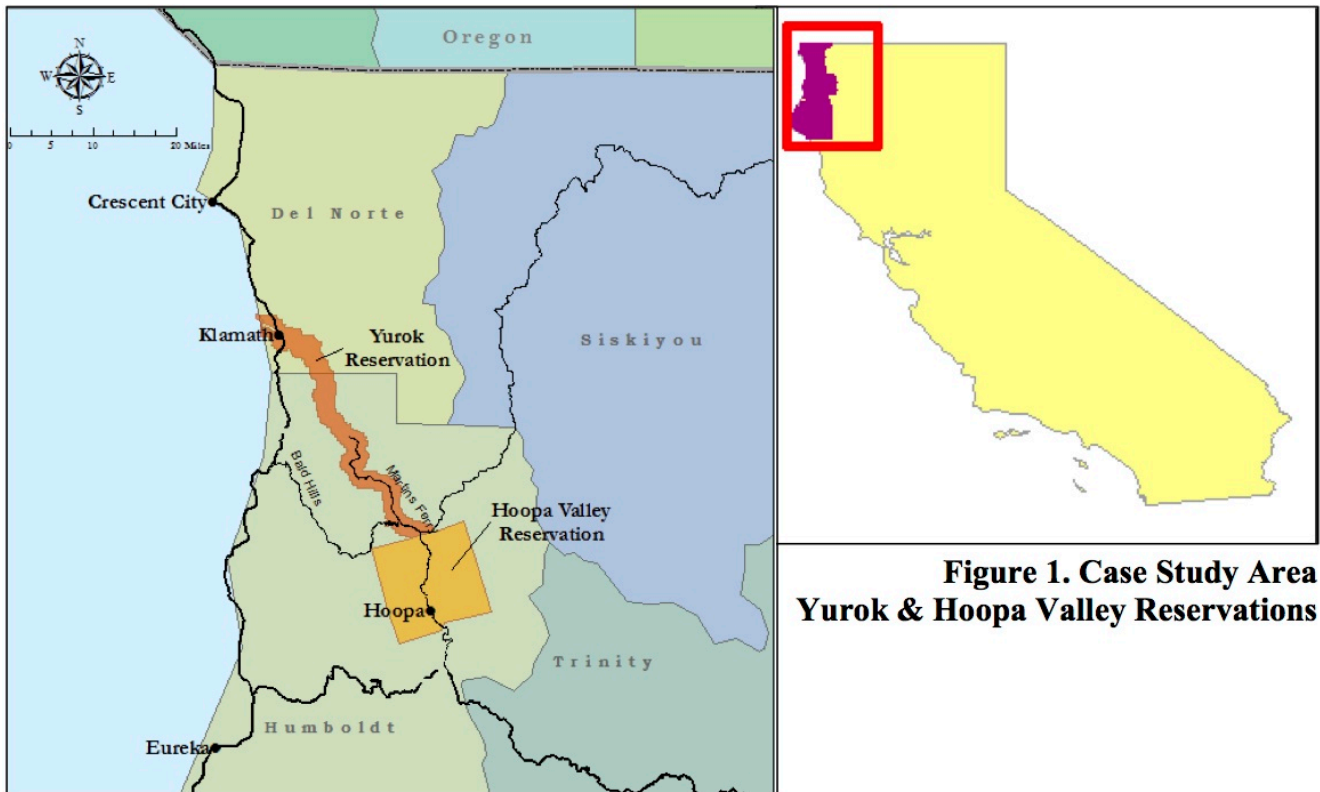
Graph 1 Source Information: Bureau of Labor Statistics. 1968. Occupational Employment Patterns for 1960 and 1975. US Dept. of Labor, Manpower Administration. Bulletin Number 1599.; Bureau of Labor Statistics 2005. Monthly Labor Review. *Current Labor Statistics*. Pg. 49-126. December 2005.; Mellor, Earl. 1985. Monthly Labor Review. *Research Summaries*. Pg. 54-59. January 1985.; Silvestri, George. 1995. Monthly Labor Review. *Occupational Employment: Employment Outlook 1994-2005*. Pg. 49-126. November 1995.

Map 1. Logging Job Decline 1960-2015



Map 1 Source: Status of U.S. Forest Products Industry 2003. Pulp and Paperworkers Research Council. 2003.

Study Area



**Figure 1. Case Study Area
Yurok & Hoopa Valley Reservations**

I use the Yurok and Hoopa Valley Reservations located in the northwestern corner of California to expand considerations of rural men's labor force attachment and its implications. Figure 1 shows the study area, which is home to the Yurok and Hoopa Valley Tribes, whose reservations are surrounded by Humboldt and Del Norte counties of northern California. These coastal counties are some of the most rural in the state and are colloquially known as the "Lost Coast."²

Table 1 shows the poverty, labor force, and crime statistics of the area, including information at the county and nearest city (Eureka and Crescent City) levels. According to the 2009-2013 American Community Survey (ACS), both reservations are home to significant American Indian (AI)³ populations, and this population typically has higher unemployment and poverty rates than the total area population. The Klamath county subdivision⁴ has an AI individual poverty rate of 20% and a male unemployment rate of 26%.⁵ The Willow Creek-Hoopa Valley county subdivision has a higher poverty rate, 34% for individuals, and a comparable male unemployment rate (22%). Crime is also high at the county and reservation-levels. Table 1⁶ compares the crime rates per 100,000 for violent and property crimes, with the

² The Lost Coast is an approximately 50-mile stretch of coastline in northern California that is the longest undeveloped stretch of coast left in the contiguous United States.

³ This project focuses on the experience of tribal members living on their tribal reservations, specifically the Hoopa Tribe on the Hoopa Valley Reservation, and the Yurok Tribe on the Yurok Reservation. "Tribal" is used to indicate enrolled members of these federally recognized tribes, and their specific tribal affiliation is disclosed where relevant. "Reservation" and "off-reservation" refer to the residence or location of an individual or event and indicates whether it took place within or outside the reservation's legal boundaries. These categories can include tribal and non-tribal members, as well as non-Native residents. Reservations are colloquially known as "the rez," and this shorthand is used throughout. Finally, "Native," "Indian," and "American Indian" or "AI" refer to individuals who claim American Indian ethnicity. This does not automatically mean that these people are tribally affiliated, and, given the importance of this distinction, "tribal" will be used only to refer to those who are officially enrolled in either of the two tribes.

⁴ I use the county subdivision which includes the reservation and the surrounding area, although this population will be slightly greater than the population of the reservations themselves. This is the most consistently available unit of analysis for data collected at the reservation-level.

⁵ Labor force data from 2010-2014 American Community Survey, poverty data 2009-2013 ACS

⁶ There is a difference between the reservation and county crime rates based on their respective jurisdictional limits. Numbers from the reservation are based on tribal police records, whereas county statistics are based on sheriff and California Highway Patrol (CHP) records. The former have jurisdiction on the reservation through a renewable

subcategories of homicide, aggravated assault and arson. As Table 1 shows, every category of crime is higher on both reservations than in the surrounding two counties, although the entire area has high crime for such a small, dispersed population (Burns 2014).

This study considers the Yurok and Hoopa Valley reservations as linked entities. The Yurok and Hoopa Tribes are bound together by the river, the land, and legislative circumstance, and their histories were intertwined long before the area was settled in the 19th century. Although they have distinct languages and town sites, for the purpose of this analysis the reservations will be treated as a combined unit set within the larger two-county context. As demonstrated by Table 1, the demographic and social conditions are comparable on both reservations, although Hoopa tends to have more extreme disadvantage across a number of indicators.

Tribal members living in Klamath or Hoopa may be motivated to live on the reservation for proximity to family or drawn to move “to town” for better access to jobs in Eureka, Crescent City, or even farther. Moves on and off the reservation are common, and living on the reservation has meaning for tribal individuals who *choose* to live in their aboriginal territory. However, I do not endeavor to make a causal argument about the role of space in creating economic disadvantage. Instead, using these two reservations as a study area, I describe the reality of those living in areas marked by industry decline and extreme unemployment, analyzing their implications for labor force attachment and changes in behavior, including methamphetamine use.

agreement between the county and tribes, whereas the CHP has jurisdiction because of the state highways that run through both reservations.

Table 1. Area Characteristics

Area Characteristics	Klamath*	Hoopa*
Total Population	1,398	5,574
Percent American Indian	17%	49%
Individuals in Poverty		
AI Population	20%	34%
Total Population	35%	31%
Labor Force Participation**		
AI Male	79%	63%
All Male	37%	58%
AI Female	70%	55%
All Female	58%	52%
Employment Rate**		
AI Male	53%	41%
All Male	29%	51%
AI Female	51%	39%
All Female	42%	45%
Unemployment Rate**		
AI Male	26%	22%
All Male	22%	21%
AI Female	18%	16%
All Female	29%	21%
Violent Crime Rate***	2,634	5,524
Humboldt County: 325		
Del Norte County: 262		
Property Crime Rate	6,072	5,795
Humboldt County: 3,113		
Del Norte County: 2,672		

*County Subdivision-level or the nearest equivalent, depending on data source; Hoopa data includes nearby town of Willow Creek.

** Listed as percents, for American Indian populations ("AI") compared to the total population ("All").

B *** Crime rate per 100,000; county rates included for comparison.

Data and Methods

The high incidence of poverty, unemployment, and crime make the Hoopa Valley and Yurok reservations apt laboratories for understanding the implications of declining employment opportunities for disadvantaged rural men. Additionally, like Sherman's (2005) Golden Valley, both Klamath and Hoopa have had high poverty rates for decades, rates that were compounded by the logging decline of the last two decades (Carroll et al. 1999, Walters 2014). By focusing on the post-decline experience of tribal men, I can detail the result of the recent industry decline, not solely as a reaction to extreme poverty per se. I argue that my study area provides an ideal context to answer the following research questions: *is there an empirical basis for asserting a relationship between the decline of the logging industry and weakening of male labor force attachment, and for relating these economic shifts to changes in attitudes, expectations and behavior, including methamphetamine use since 1985?*

I am making a methodological assertion that I can use the life and employment narratives of 17 men living on or near the reservation, 13 of whom are tribal members, to study the effects of the logging industry decline on labor force attachment and drug use patterns. While this interview data is cross-sectional, I categorize these men into three age-based cohorts. Cohort membership has implications for how the individual understands the importance of formal employment, how they utilize "flexible" employment, and their proximity and inclination towards methamphetamine use. Figure 2 demonstrates this cohort model. The timeline of 1985-2015 begins during the ten-year hiatus in the logging job decline, from 1985-1995⁷, and continues into the rapid decline era following spotted owl regulation in national forests (Carroll et al. 1999).

⁷ See Graph 1 and Map 1 on pages 5-6.

A majority of the employment narratives are with those who identify as “nonemployed,” a category that includes the traditional definition of “unemployed,” i.e. those that are seeking work. To build on previous work on weak labor force attachment (Wilson 1996, 1999, Thurow 1995), I also include those who are *not* seeking work, and those who primarily work under-the-table. These 17 interviews are buttressed by 29 interviews with tribal women living on the reservation, as well as tribal administrators, social service providers, and non-tribal community members, for a total 46 interviews. I use these interviews to supplement and provide context for the experiences of nonemployed men on the Yurok and Hoopa Valley reservation.

I initially recruited interview respondents who were actively seeking work to articulate the obstacles facing job seekers on the reservation, both male and female. Additionally, I wanted to document the strategies of those making ends meet in the absence of formal employment. As the project grew, it became clear that long-term unemployment was largely a male phenomenon, with women typically opting out of formal employment for full-time homemaking. Alternatively, men who were unemployed had often given up securing formal employment and were providing for their families through alternative means. As such, I moved to theoretically over-sample men who were no longer seeking formal employment to gauge how criminal records and substance abuse were inhibiting employment. The motivation for this over-sampling was to not only provide a thick description of long-term unemployment on the reservation, but to also investigate gender’s role in shaping outcomes like flexible employment and methamphetamine use. Table 2 includes the sample statistics and cohort breakdown of the 17-respondent interview pool.

Although my sample does include a large proportion of substance users and men over 40, I argue that this is because of the realities of reservation unemployment. Men across the life course have varying employment success and experiences depending on when they were born

and what labor market they entered at age 18 (see Figure 2). Many tribal men have come to depend on flexible employment and methamphetamine use in the absence of satisfactory job opportunities. This is not to say that all unemployed men use meth, or that all meth users are unemployed. I use tribal male life narratives to build a cohort model of male labor force attachment. Existing work on culture and the life course asserts that interview and ethnographic data can speak to changing perceptions across time as a result of macro-level shifts, and I adopt a similar framework to structure this analysis (Riley et. al 1972, 1988, Elder 1994, Small 2002, 2004).

Table 2. Male Respondent Characteristics

Cohort	Tribal Member?	Employed?	Unemployed?	Seeking Work?	No Driver's License?	More than H.S. Degree?	Lives on Rez?	Ever used meth?	Substance User? Or Addict
A N= 9	7	4	5	3	4	5	8	6	7
B N= 4	2	1	3	2	1	1	3	3	3
C N= 4	4	1	2	2	1	0	3	2	2

Respondents were primarily recruited through fliers and word-of-mouth, with tribal administrators facilitating connections to eligible participants on occasion. I also approached people who congregated at either of the two gas stations located on the reservations, as this is social space frequented by the unemployed reservation residents. Snowball sampling from interview participants was a secondary sampling strategy, as was recruitment at the Hupa Family Resource Center's monthly emergency food bag day. This latter strategy was key to contacting individuals who were making ends meet in the absence of formal employment.

Interviews ranged in length from one hour to two and took place at local service providers' offices, at tribal buildings, and in homes. All interviews were conducted on a semi-structured basis, with an interview guide used to structure a majority of the interview for those

recruited for employment narratives.⁸ Questions spanned the life course, with an emphasis on job history and meaning-making. Using a semi-structured framework, I modified the order of questions in real-time to accommodate the economic, social, and personal characteristics of the respondent. I limited my own observations to those strictly necessary for administering the interview guide in a way that reflected the information shared with me. I mentioned my tribal and local affiliations at the beginning of the interview, but stressed my (at times feigned) naïveté on the specifics of reservation living conditions. This helped put respondents at ease, without encouraging them to provide less detail given my growing familiarity with the area and community. For key informants, interviews were less structured and specific to the position and affiliation of the expert.

To analyze the interview data, I employed a qualitative coding scheme, executed with MAXQDA coding software. I constructed a codebook based on existing literature on labor force attachment, how people find work, and how this impacts their social bonds (Wilson 1987, Smith 2007, Edin & Nelson 2013, Edin & Kefalas 2005). After the initial coding analysis, I expanded the codebook to include references to substance use, criminal activity, and variation in social roles by gender as my preliminary analyses underscored the importance of these factors. I used both the inductive and deductive codes to construct the narrative of this analysis, although this paper includes only a small subset of the overall dataset.⁹

As a member of the Yurok Tribe myself, I avoided sampling through my personal networks so as not to bias my findings unnecessarily given my insider status. I grew up off the reservation, which is associated with different social networks and employment options, and I

⁸ As noted by Furstenburg (2007), in-depth interviews are uniquely suited to get at the mechanisms linking macro-level forces with micro-level individual outcomes.

⁹ Interview recordings total over 42 hours. Not all key informant interviews were recorded to help protect confidentiality.

wanted to build this study independently from my own affiliation with the Yurok Tribe. Having grown up “off-rez,” I straddle the insider/outsider line. I identify with this group as a co-ethnic, yet was not exposed to the concentrated disadvantage that marks life in Klamath. This tribal affiliation, however, was key in gaining access to respondents living on the reservation, as well as working with tribal administrators to help supplement the in-depth interviews. As the findings show, I was able to parlay my status as a co-ethnic into building a rapport that allowed some very sensitive details to be shared with me. Although self-censorship was always at the disposal of my respondents, my role as a Yurok tribal member allowed them to trust and open up to me in a way that would have been difficult for a non-tribal member to accomplish. Yet, my off-reservation affiliation and subsequent off-reservation credentials allow me to analyze the data with the eye of a pseudo-outsider.

Reservation Labor Force Attachment: A Male Cohort Model

I propose a cohort model to understand the changes in labor force attachment over the last three decades on the Yurok and Hoopa Valley reservations. The following analysis is built on the cohort model showcased in Figure 2.¹⁰ This general argument is then followed by a substantive description of the shift from formal logging employment to high rates of flexible employment and methamphetamine use amongst tribal males.

I assert that labor force attachment¹¹ among tribal males is a matter of how sons understood their own father’s employment, their own employment prospects at age 18, and how the labor market has changed over time (see Figure 2). Cohort membership in categories A, B,

¹⁰ The ages span from 17-57, with a median age of 45. Most interviews were conducted in 2015, so men who were approximately 25 at the time of the interview were born in 1990 or later; men who were 40 were born in 1975; and men over 50 were born in 1965 or earlier. These men are grouped into three cohorts, C, B, and A respectively.

¹¹ Labor force attachment is defined as “attachment to a routine, a recognition of the hierarchy found in most work situations, a sense of personal efficacy attained through the routine management of financial affairs, endorsement of a system of personal and material rewards associated with dependability and responsibility” (Wilson 1999: 482).

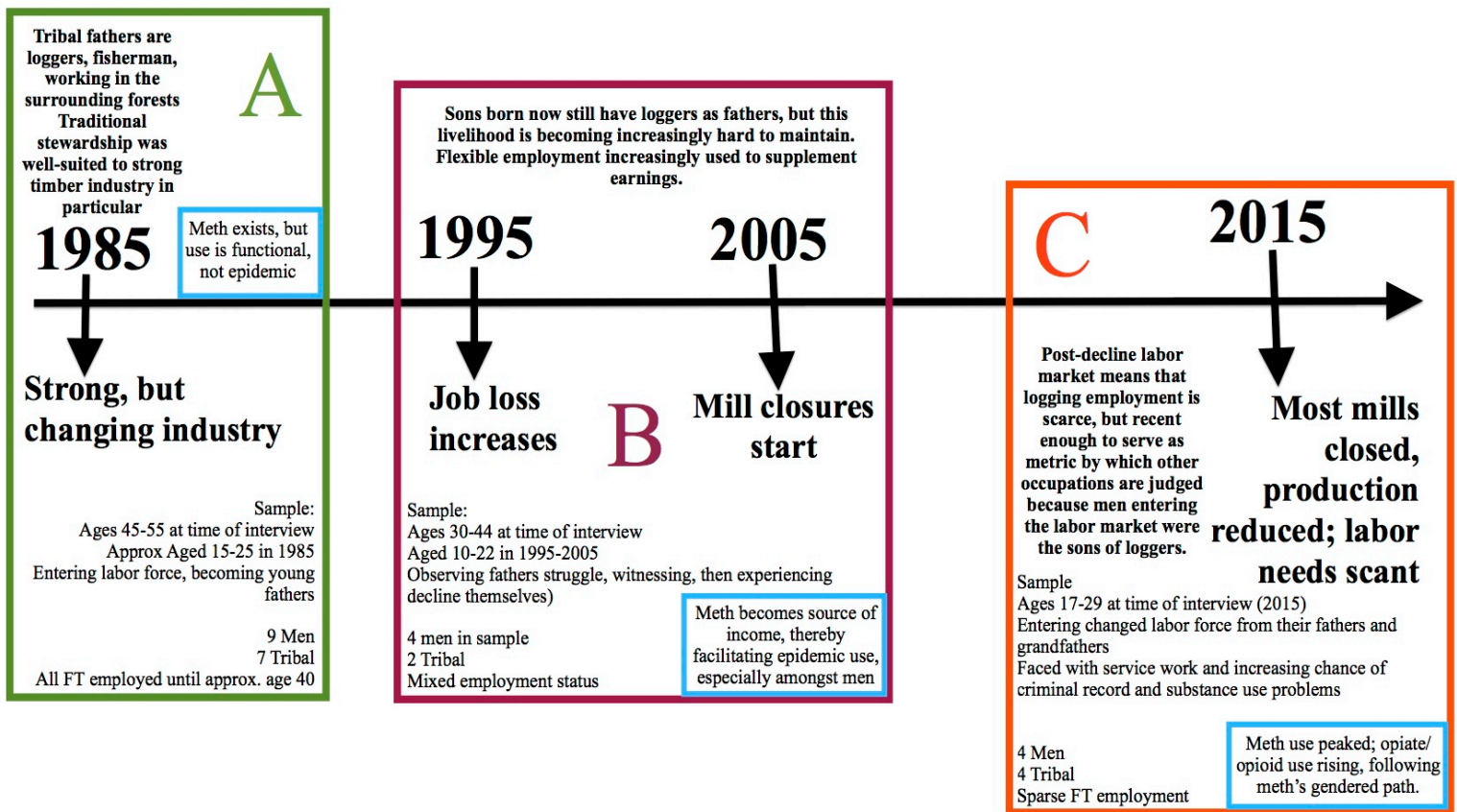


Figure 2. Cohort Model
Source: Blythe George (2016)

and C drives the employment prospects of reservation males, thereby shaping their ability to provide financially for their families. The attenuating labor force attachment across time impacts tribal males' understandings of appropriate employment for themselves, as well as their inclination to use meth.

Men in Cohort A are the largest group, with nine men in the sample, a majority of whom are tribal and grew up on the reservation. These men were entering the labor force in approximately 1985 or earlier and came from fathers who were loggers, fishermen, and otherwise employed in the surrounding forests. This is because traditional stewardship roles for tribal men were well-suited to the redwood industry in particular, which remained strong into the early 1990s (State of Industry 2007). Therefore, men in Cohort A see their futures in the forest

as they enter the labor force and become young fathers. Methamphetamine use exists, but is typically used as a work supplement, has not yet reached epidemic levels, and is structured by a strong labor force attachment. Men in Cohort A were aged 45-55 at the time of the interview, and although most were not currently formally employed, all men had maintained formal employment for a large portion of their lives.

Cohorts B and C are smaller than Cohort A, but I believe that this speaks to the older face of unemployment on the reservation. For Cohort B, there are four men in the sample with varying employment statuses, half of whom are tribal. These men were entering the labor force in approximately 1995-2005, and they have felt the strongest and most immediate effects from the labor market decline. As a result of increased regulation and innovation, tribal fathers at the turn of the 21st century struggle to maintain employment in the logging industry. Sons coming of age now still have loggers as fathers, but this livelihood is becoming increasingly hard to maintain. Men in Cohort B first observe their fathers struggle in the labor market and then experience the decline themselves upon labor force entry, becoming increasingly dependent on “flexible” employment to supplement their formal earnings.

I deem informal work options like landscaping, stacking firewood, fishing, hunting, and other under-the-table employment as “flexible” for explicit reasons. “Informal” and “under-the-table” work do not capture the typically seasonal, rhythmically patterned, and entrepreneurial aspects of the non-formal work patterns of tribal males. Flexible employment is dependent on the surrounding forest, river, and other natural resources, just as logging and the stewardship roles of tribal men traditionally were. Historically speaking, both logging and flexible employment share this connection to ancestral practices—tribal men have always worked in the surrounding forests

to support their families, so it is no wonder that they returned to these forests when formal opportunities to provide dried up.

The category of “flexible” employment includes both licit and illicit opportunities, and, just as in urban areas (Wilson 1996, Venkatesh 2009), its informal nature weakens labor force attachment across cohorts, although all three cohorts used such earnings to varying degrees. For reservation men, such work increases the access, sale and chance of use of methamphetamine. Initially, these men used meth to complement their formal and informal workloads, like their fathers before them. But, male drug use in Cohort B becomes more intense, corresponding to epidemic meth use on the reservation, especially amongst men. Men in Cohort B were aged 30-44 at the time of the interview.

Cohort C is the most recent cohort to enter the labor force on the reservation, and these men are entering a post logging-decline job market. As shown in Graph 1 and Map 1, by 2015, most area mills have closed, and full-time logging employment is scarce (State of Industry 2007). Yet, such work is recent enough in memory to serve as the metric by which other occupations are judged. This evaluation is based on the fact that men entering the labor market were the sons and grandsons of loggers and still have access to the surrounding forests for flexible employment. Additionally, two of the four men in Cohort C have criminal records¹² and all lack the necessary credentials to adapt to the shift to service work in the reservation economy. Even when available, my interviews indicate that these service jobs are not appealing to reservation men as compared to flexible employment, which allows them to maintain their role as traditional stewards. Unlike Cohorts A and B, such work now serves as their primary source of income, typically supplementing to their partners’ formal employment or TANF benefits.

¹² Four of the nine men in Cohort C have criminal records, with nine out of the total 17 male respondents having criminal records. For Cohorts A and B, four and three men have criminal records respectively.

Labor force attachment is attenuated at best, and for some of these men nonexistent. According to users and non-alike, meth use has peaked, and heroin use is increasingly common, following along gender lines akin to meth before it. Men in Cohort C were ages 17-29 at the time of the interview and are entering a changed labor force from their fathers and grandfathers (see Graph 1).

The relationship between the logging industry decline, the rise of flexible employment, and the increase in meth use amongst tribal men mirrors the weakened labor force attachments observed elsewhere (Wilson 1996, 1999, Liebow 1967). As in urban areas (Wilson 1996, 1999, Pager 2003), such men have an increasing chance of criminal records and substance use problems.

Tribal men can use “flexible” employment to support their families, which means that jobs like landscaping, firewood stacking, and fishing are set within the context of ancestral forests just as logging jobs were for previous cohorts. I argue that it is this allure that explains the similarly weakened labor force attachment, despite a much more recent time frame, from a strong industry in 1985 to a post-decline economy in the present.

Beyond this timeline and traditional allure, the long history of drug use on the reservation places men in direct proximity to methamphetamine. Selling drugs like marijuana and meth is a high-risk, but high-yield option for men struggling to provide for large families (Kemp 2012). A context of easy access and personal characteristics like family addiction and childhood trauma explain the frequency of flexible employment and meth use on the reservation in the wake of the logging industry decline. To support this assertion and proposed cohort model, I will use three qualitative subsections to describe the transition from strong to weak labor force attachment.

A Heyday Within Memory

The days of villages were not that long ago in Klamath and Hoopa. As Mitchell, 38, a male cultural leader in Cohort B explained, “A lot of people don’t realize it, but we were the last ones settled in the lower 48. Like, the *last*-last ones. Especially up here [in Klamath].” These coastal communities had dealt with white traders for centuries, but it wasn’t until the discovery of gold in 1849 that settlers entered the area in large numbers, and, even then, it would take generations for the land and people to be tamed. Mitchell, who had spent years learning the Yurok language from tribal elders, notes “I talked with people who grew up in plank houses, we’re talking not even 50, 60 years ago,” referring to the traditional redwood and cedar homes of the area. In fact, individuals ranging from families facing homelessness to seasonal commercial fishermen still make their homes on the riverbanks of the Klamath and Trinity Rivers to this day.

Such proximity to cultural practice and tradition is a direct result of the fact that the Yurok and Hoopa tribes were never removed from their ancestral lands. This means that Yurok and Hoopa men have been harvesting the forests of Humboldt and Del Norte counties for time eternal, a duty that is passed down from father-to-son. This ancestral connection is not lost on tribal men, as Daryl, 55, describes:

“We are one of the luckiest people and so are the Yurok, because we do have our homeland. A lot of Indians across the United States don’t have that.”

As a member of Cohort A, Daryl was born on a reservation with rich natural bounty and had the privilege of watching his father and grandfathers harvest this area:

“When I was a kid I could sit up on a rock and watch hundreds and hundreds of salmon coming up the river....All the way up in *Hoopa*... they’d catch 100 in day!” – Daryl, 55

Given the accessibility of these resources, and the clear joy with which they describe them, men in Cohort A saw their futures as stewards of the area, even at a young age. Daryl entered the

workforce at 11 after the death of this father, and he is proud of having worked in the forests since adolescence:

“It’s what a man does, you step up. I’m trying to show my own boys that. They’re 14, 15, and they don’t get it—I was working by the time I was their age!”

Daryl has high expectations as a tribal father, yet, even as he cajoles his own sons for not taking up a similar mantle, he understands that they are doing so in a drastically different world:

“I grew up on the hill here, and there would be thousands of quail, you would drive down the road and there’d be thousands in the way. Now, there’s none hardly...Everything just disappeared...The world was way different, just 50 years ago.”

Daryl came of age when the logging industry was strong, and he worked as a timber cruiser and firefighter in alternating seasons for nearly two decades in Hoopa. Dean, 54, is also a member of Cohort A, and he recalls a time in Klamath when logging and fishing were the primary occupations:

“It’s generational, I guess. When I was a boy here on the reservation... it was loggers and fisherman and that was it. Most of the fishermen were white, about half of the loggers were Indian.

As these men aged, such work became decreasingly available in part due to the regional decline described previously (Stier 1980, Slack & Jenson 2004, Carroll et al. 1999).

Yet, the expectation that a man provides for his family in the forest has persisted from Cohort A onwards, as the memory of these vibrant industries persists in the minds of all reservation residents. Logging has been an option for low-skill tribal males since pre-contact, and despite the industry decline since 1985, men like Bobby, 31, a member of Cohort B, were able to secure such work through their fathers when they were younger:

“We put in for a bid, read the paper [to find bids], my dad and his friend JR, and my uncle before he passed. JR, he was the one with the contractor’s license, so he’d put in the bids and all that. If we won, we’d go to work!”

Independent logging requires the necessary licensing, a credential that is increasingly hard for male job seekers to secure because of the frequency of criminal records and driver's license loss. Although such work is hard to find on the reservation, it still serves as a metric for job expectations for tribal men:

“That's the best job, being up there in the hills you don't have to listen to nobody....[Logging] was fun. We'd go up the hill, pull the camp trailer up, out on Highway 1, out over there... We'd come in when it snowed!”

For Bobby, working with male relatives in a self-employed fashion was deeply meaningful, and his face beams as he describes his time in the logging industry, even though it was short-lived because of his membership in Cohort B. Logging work previously allowed low-skill tribal men to provide for their families, even in the absence of high school degrees and other credentials now necessary for reservation jobs. Bobby and other men in Cohorts B & C saw with their own eyes their fathers provide for their families through timberwork, and they measure their own job expectations against this memory.

Men in Cohorts A & B participated strongly in the labor force, but their attachment has become attenuated as logging industry has declined. Strong labor force attachment was previously not only key to supporting families, but also to structuring the substance use patterns of tribal men. In Cohort A, the logging industry was strong, and most men worked from “dark-to-dark,” leaving before the sun rose and getting home after the sunset. On the weekends, alcohol use was common, and as Elizabeth, 69, chortles, “they partied on the weekends, they got rip roaring drunk! But during the week, they worked, and they worked hard!”

Meth use was also set within the context of strong labor force attachment, typically serving as a work complement given the high-intensity, even dangerous, demands of working in

the forest. Hanson, 17 and member of Cohort C, is the last of his father's children, who supported the family as a logger for 21 years as a member of Cohort A. Hanson explains

“[My dad] used to be a pretty avid methamphetamine user, back when he was a logger. You probably see why, long hours, logging is hard work...[when he quit,] he said he didn't stop having the electric, the electricity feeling in the back of his head for at least a year.”

Although his father managed to shake his meth use, his description of “electricity” is in reference to the dopamine and serotonin release associated with the drug. This is the same feeling that users describe as being akin to “Superman.” Snorting and eating the drug was common during this era, which results in a “slow burn” effect of the drug. I argue that the functional use pattern coupled with strong labor force attachment meant that tribal men were less susceptible to the drug's “Superman” allure because they had access to deep meaning in their logging work and ability to provide for their families as their ancestors had before them. This affirmed their sense of self worth and identity as tribal men, and they were less likely to abuse a drug that simulated this feeling. Strong labor force attachment therefore kept meth use in check, but as job prospects have declined from Cohorts A to C, so too has meth use and its allure increased.

Traditional Expectations Meet Changing Opportunities

On the reservations, the service sector and tribal offices have replaced logging employment as the primary industry, yet this work is not suitable for tribal males for several reasons. As in urban areas (Wilson 1996, Liebow 1967), I find that men living on the reservation struggle to gain credentials like high school degrees and beyond (Faircloth & Tippeconnic 2010), although low-skill men had previously been able to provide for their large families as loggers without such qualifications. Additionally, as shown elsewhere (Pager 2003), the frequency of criminal records and driver's license loss limits the extent to which the employers that will employ tribal men. Finally, while formal options exist, like working at the casino or gas station,

these jobs are customer service and soft skill-intensive (Correll 2007). Like their urban counterparts (Nixon 2009), such skills are hard to accrue for low-skill men and according to their partners and employers, tribal men are disdainful of this work because of its low wages. As tribal men, they still have the burden to provide for their families, yet doing so through formal employment is increasingly difficult.

The lack of credentials for most men is often not a matter a choice, but of opportunity. Trace, 27, is a younger member of Cohort B who is currently unemployed after getting knee surgery following a basketball injury from his youth. He indicates that he will resume his job hunt as soon as he is able, but is currently considering a vocational program after a lackluster high school experience:

Captain John¹³ wasn't really a school... I didn't even do anything to graduate and I got credits for math, stuff like that and I just kind sat there and graduated. So, I didn't really have any ambition to do anything after that.

Trace feels that he was unequipped by his high school education for anything beyond manual labor—"It's all the work I know how to do right now"—yet even with the necessary credentials, he will struggle to find work because he does not have driver's license, a common obstacle for reservation men seeking work. Driver's license loss affects 5% of adults in Hoopa and Klamath, and these communities are in the 90th percentile of driver's license loss in the state (Back on the Road CA 2016).¹⁴

Beyond job scarcity, tribal men are also limited in their employment searches by a high frequency of criminal records. Growing marijuana, selling drugs, intimate partner violence, and driving under the influence are all crimes that frequently result in a criminal record for job

¹³ Captain John is a public continuation high school located on the Hoopa Valley reservation.

¹⁴ Driver's license loss rate calculated by the organization *Back on the Road CA*, using a scale of 0.0-7.8% (100th percentile).

seekers in all Cohorts. Peter, a Hoopa father in his 50s and member of Cohort A, was once formally employed *and* selling meth simultaneously, until going to prison:

“I was a firefighter, I was a lot of things, a contract plumber. Then I started going to prison...*Bad*...I’ve been back, I’ve been to prison 33 times. That’s gotta be a record or something. I only made it three days one time and then I was back in San Quentin. [guffaws]

According to Peter, he initially went to jail in his early 30s, after growing marijuana, dealing methamphetamine, and trafficking guns. He was sentenced to three years and ended up serving four after bad behavior and, the way he tells it, proceeded to spend the four years on parole experiencing a revolving door of being in and out of prison. When asked why he never went back to work, he asserts that “it’s impossible [to get a job], after you have a record!”

It is hard to disentangle the causal arrows between unemployment and criminal records on the reservation, yet the implications are typically unidirectional for tribal men. Ursula, a mother of one in her 20s, describes her baby’s father Tripp, 33:

“He doesn’t really work because he’s a felon and he can’t find a job. But he goes and does like odd jobs, like he works for his Gramma doing yard work, he helps people with their cars. They pay him, and they’re just odd jobs.”

Ursula’s description of Tripp’s inability to secure formal work resonates with Rosie, a tribal justice advocate in her 60s. Rosie challenges:

“You show me the jobs, the jobs that a man with a record can get on the reservation. Where are they? Our own tribe won’t even hire them! So you know what our men have? It’s not a crime problem, it’s a providing problem. They are programmed to provide for their families to a fault.”

Going further, Rosie pushed back on the notion that reservation males were simply more prone to crime, instead arguing:

“What’s the difference between our young men and any others? Young men make bad choices all over this country, but it sticks with our men. They mess up once, and it has consequences for them for the rest of their lives. You don’t see that in wealthier places.”

Rosie, a Yurok official in her 60s, was indignant at the idea that tribal males grew marijuana out of some chronic deficit on their parts, like a poor work ethic. Instead, she linked poor choices, bad luck, and criminal labeling as the reasons why men living on the reservation couldn't secure employment, and at times chose illicit means to compensate for this. Her argument resonates with urban studies that connect criminal records with poor job market prospects (Pager 2003), but tribal policies against hiring ex-felons could potentially exacerbate reservation unemployment.

Similar to the limitation of criminal records, driver's licenses serve as additional screening criteria for reservation employers. In the case of the Yurok Tribe specifically, mandatory driving history checks are necessary, on top of standard background checks, to insure employees under the insurance needed for tribal, government-sponsored vehicles. Not all positions require workers to drive, but the tribe requires that all employees be able to drive in the case of emergencies. Nearly half of the men in the sample did not have a driver's license, and several respondents noted how this had limited their employability. Kerry, 29, Cohort C, a tribal father of four, had aspirations of obtaining a Class A license in order to drive semi-trucks, but was unable to following a DUI:

"I got a DUI, I wasn't drinking or anything. I had taken an Ambien, and accidently hit a guardrail, I feel asleep at the wheel. I was going to my mom's house... Then I tried going for my Class A [license] for trucking but I kinda messed that up for awhile."

Although Kerry's license loss was relatively recent, Bear, Peter, Dean, and Kenny (all members of Cohorts A & B) indicated having been without a driver's license for nearly *two decades*. Bear explains that losing his license in 1995, soon after turning 21, had produced lifelong limitations to his employment history:

I: "Has not having it impacted your job search, the jobs you consider applying to?"

B: "Very much. Cuz my brother drive's for [Eureka-based trucking] company, he goes down to Oakland then

San Francisco...He said he could put in a word for me to hopefully get a job, and that they take people right out of school, so you don't need 4, 5 years of experience. So that's what I'm shooting for. He started at \$22 an hour. That would be worth driving out to town that much!" [chuckle]

From the employer's perspective, driver's licenses serve as a proxy for several unobservable traits before the applicant is hired, specifically timeliness, punctuality, and commitment. Elizabeth explains that for her, driver's licenses are not a firm job requirement, but the ability to transport one's self to work on time everyday is:

"If they need them, then yes. If they don't, they don't. I don't care— if you need to hitch a ride with your supervisor everyday? Then be where your supervisor picks you up, and go to work. If you're going to drive a vehicle, then you need a license."

Sarah, a social service provider in Crescent City, works to connect job seekers with open positions in the coastal city. While she indicates that the unemployed range from homeless, low-skill workers to high-skill, over-credentialed professionals, she echoed the employer's desire for "timeliness, cleanliness, and basic job skills usually found to be lacking." For many unemployed in the area, Sarah explains that "soft skills" are the biggest issues shaping employability in this slack labor market. Driver's licenses represent an easy criterion for employers to identify these characteristics when the supply of workers overwhelms demand. According to Sarah, not having a driver's license means they "can just cross them off the [job applicant] list."

Bobby, who maintained his tree nursery job for 4 years, indicates that his peers on the reservation struggle to meet these employer demands for several reasons:

"I think it's just that transportation a lot and that they've never really worked before. That makes it a little more hard, cuz they never had that work experience, of going in every day, they're used to every couple days."

The above quote summarizes several employability concerns facing reservation males: their inability to pass a background check to gain a job; once obtaining a job, their difficulty get to work daily, on-time; and finally, their difficulty using the necessary "soft" skills when on the job.

Dean provides an interesting example of the negotiation of job options. As a member of Cohort A, he has had a long job history, and, despite his alcoholism, has held several management positions in various fields. As he says, “I’m a good manager, I just don’t have the abilities anymore.” For him, such abilities included staying sober during the entire workweek and dealing with the emotional labor of supporting a team, aspects that were at times difficult for him:

“This is the most interactive I’ve ever been for years... [working at the casino and living] here in town... my boss was really cool in that he could understand that I could do four days hard, but maybe not the fifth day, or five days but not the middle of the week.”

Dean attributes his difficulties in finding stable employment as based in his alcoholism, but he also struggles to find the kind of work that makes him less thirsty at the end of the day:

“I was looking for work [for a year and a half] and there wasn’t a lot of it. What happens with a guy my age is age discrimination. I know what I’m doing but no one wants to hire a white-haired man. (laughs) They want the young bucks... I tried to fish but I got really seasick. (laughs) But there was a 50-year old man out there with 20-year olds, and I was trying to pound it, I liked that job! (laughs)”

Despite the age discrimination at play, Dean indicates having had luck in the reservation job market because he approaches the job search differently than his Cohort B or C counterparts:

D: “You have to apply yourself. Seriously apply yourself. I watch people come in here for interviews, they got baggy Levis down around their ass, some ratty t-shirt. When I come, I put on a suit and tie, I’m serious, I want the job. They’re all “uh I guess I’ll take it.”

I: Do you think that’s generational?

D: Yes, uhhh-hmmm. My dad, he would punch me in the nuts if I showed up like that! (laughs)

Dean’s experience speaks to the changing fates of men in Cohorts A-C as a result of the post-logging decline job market. For men in Cohorts B & C, and even job seekers without criminal records in Cohort A, finding suitable employment is both a matter of availability and preference, speaking to the role of structural conditions and individual expectations in shaping labor force attachment (Wilson 1996, 1999, Nixon 2009).

As labor force attachment has weakened, so too has meth's place changed with regards to access, dealing, and use patterns. Daryl, 55, Cohort A, directly links the increase in drug sales on the reservation to the decline of alternative options:

Tribal people of this tribe cannot get a job. What do they got? They got kids, they gotta feed 'em so they so they're gonna sell drugs to feed their families. They won't take it but they'll sell it to make money to feed their families, if they can't get a job..."

Nonviolent crimes like drug possession, sales, and trafficking came up in several of the respondent's life histories. In fact, several male respondents in each cohort were substance users and a smaller subsection personally identified as addicts. When caught cultivating marijuana or dealing substances like methamphetamine or heroin, these men were labeled "criminal," at times incarcerated, and ultimately severely limited in their employment options beyond informal, under-the-table work. As Peter, 49, Cohort A, explains, he had originally used drug sales to supplement his formal earnings, but, after getting caught, that was the only option left to him:

"I: What happened in your 30s, to make you start going to jail?

P: [It was] Just when I got caught...[I was] Dealing a lot of drugs and stuff, I just got caught. Selling meth. Lots of meth, *that* time."

Like meth sales, marijuana cultivation also serves as a form of flexible employment, one that has a long history in the Humboldt County area (Kemp 2012), dating back to Cohort A. As Trace explains, his father's illicit entrepreneurial activities increased after a drug deal gone bad:

"My dad didn't work, he lived on SSI. He spent his time beating my mom and growing weed. He was a logger before that, but got shot in the knee and got on disability."

Trace is gruff as he extolls his father's long list of failures, yet cognizant of the connection between his father's unemployment and his drug dealing. This underscores the change in drug sales over time: for men in Cohort B and C, these illicit options are often the primary source of

family support, no longer complementing nor constrained by formal employment, as had previously been the case.

Ultimately, the decline of logging industry has shaped male labor force attachment, attenuating employment over time as formal options vanish and informal alternatives, like drug sales and other forms of flexible employment persist. Additionally, the formal work that does exist is often inaccessible to those with criminal records and/or without driver's licenses, and can be demeaning and servile (Nixon 2009, Wilson 1996). As Cohort C enters the labor force, they face a post-decline job market, experience weak labor force attachment and are surrounded by viable flexible employment alternatives. These circumstances produce and reproduce an increased proximity and susceptibility to methamphetamine and other substances.

Emergent Strategies in a Post-Divide Market

Low-skill men with prison records, who lack driver's licenses and have substance abuse problems struggle to find a place in the contemporary reservation labor market. The formal employment that does exist lacks opportunities to build self-worth, and the low wages earned can border on demeaning for tribal men. There is a vibrant informal economy on the reservation, including licit and illicit under-the-table work. The self-motivated, entrepreneurial components of such work are particularly appealing for tribal men otherwise lacking employment opportunities and are an option that makes the most sense for many. As men "opt-out" of formal employment, they are opting into "flexible employment" to provide for their families. Yet, these informal options are set within a context of multigenerational addiction and easy access to marijuana, methamphetamine, and opiates/opioids, thereby increasing the risk of drug use amongst flexibly employed tribal men.

Before detailing such informal work, I note that a significant portion of unemployed men continue to seek formal employment. Nate, 38 and member of Cohort B, asserts that even for men without a criminal record, stable employment is hard to find. His search for employment has instead become the norm:

“I actually have worked here as a physical therapy aide in town. I was the only one of 5 who had the certification specifically, but could only get 20 hours a week at \$9 an hour... I’ve been jobbing it for the six years I’ve been here, from place to place to place. I had what, 4 or 5 W-2s this last tax return... My wife has had steady work, thankfully.”

The work he and his wife were so thankful for had her commuting daily for nearly three hours total, traveling to Eureka and back to Klamath Glen, one of the more remote reservation areas.

Moving to town can help, as Trace, 27, hopes as he and his wife Bonita, 26, prepare to move to Crescent City to live in tribal housing. Although Trace loves being home with his second child, he does not romanticize his unemployment as a member of Cohort C:

“I: Is there anything you can do right now while you’re unemployed that you will miss when you go back to work and having to clock in?
T: Nope, I’d rather be clocking in.”

The phenomenon of “jobbing it” or moving to town represent formal employment options for low-skill men in Cohorts B and C who are struggling to gain stable employment. Yet, many reservation men prefer flexible employment in the surrounding forests. Fishing and hunting are frequent examples of such work, as both are a matter of subsistence and income generation. The community has kept cultural traditions alive, like canning and smoking salmon for sale. Additionally, the natural endowments of the reservation enable small-scale individual entrepreneurship and flexible employment, as is the case with fishing for sale, cutting and stacking firewood, and landscaping more generally.

In terms of licit under-the-table employment, fishing is as an example of a tribal practice that can be both a source of food for a family’s dinner that night and a means of income

generation. Peter, a father in his late 40s and member of Cohort A, indicates that such activities have a long history on the reservation, given the natural resources present in both communities: “I did it back when I was raising my kids, I lived off fish, deer, and all kinds of stuff, eels.” This hunting supplemented his earnings before he went to prison.

Working on the river can translate to daily income for members of both tribes. Bobby, a member of Cohort B, is quick to point out that fishing can produce cash-in-hand:

Getting money is not hard, I can get money. I can make money— you know how to cut wood, you know how to hunt and fish? You can make money, it’s easy. You can smoke fish, you can sell fish, you can sell them by the jar, \$15 by the car, \$300 by the case. You have 20, 30 fish? That’s 15 cases.”

Bobby explains that he often catches 15 salmon per net, which can be turned into consumer goods with the necessary preparation. Bobby was one of the men in the sample who cited their informal work arrangements as a form of self-employment:

I: Are you currently employed?

B: “Not with an employer but I go to work every day for people, cutting their grass, cutting their wood. Fishing, I set net and I donate fish to the elders. And if they want to give me money for it, then they can give me money...”

Both Yurok and Hoopa tribal members have access to the river for subsistence and small-scale sales during the year, but the Yurok Tribe also administers an annual commercial salmon fishing season. According to June, a Yurok mother of three in her early 30s, both subsistence and commercial fishing take place at the dock and processing facility at the mouth of the river, and at several family holes spread throughout the river as it heads inland. Each fall, as the salmon begin their run upriver, the Tribe negotiates a bid with a prospective buyer, who offers a set price per pound harvested. Once a deal is reached, that company, and only that company, can buy salmon straight from the river for sale on global markets.

Prices per pound this last season were low, at only \$3 per pound, but such a price can mean that a salmon of 30 pounds or so can garner \$100 upfront, the same day its fished. For

June's family, these earnings supplement earnings during the rest of the year, but there is a significant portion of tribal families for whom commercial fishing is their primary income stream during the year.

Kerry, 29 and member of Cohort C, is also flexibly employed to support his family, indicating that such activities can have a large monetary impact:

"I'm a family man, doing whatever I can, I fish, I hunt, I cut wood for a living. I make a good \$1200, \$1300 a month over the year, it's pretty much like a paycheck, without having to pay taxes."
According to Bobby, Cohort B, the nearly-instantaneous nature of under-the-table work makes it particularly alluring:

I: Do you prefer under-the-table work?

B: "I do. You don't gotta wait two weeks for the paycheck. When you're done, you get paid. I say I start out at \$10 an hour, they say that's fine. I work 10 hours and make a \$100. I did this old man down there by my house, he had four trees cut down. I made a \$1000 dollars cutting it all up and stacking it. I did that in three days...I hardly ever go over one day. If I can't do it in one day, I don't need to do the job."

Under-the-table earnings are defined by immediate payment, and their untaxed nature is of particular relevance. By not claiming these informal earnings on social service calculations, their families can remain eligible for TANF, SSI, SNAP and other income-capped government programs.

Yet, taxable income is still necessary to claim the earned income tax credit (EITC), and I find, similar to Halpern-MeeKin et al. (2015), that formal employment is deployed strategically to gain this credit and maximize a family's resource base. Bobby explains:

I like the side jobs, I don't gotta pay taxes. But the thing that kicks you in the end, is that you don't get to file taxes at the end of the year... I went to work for four months, my wife went to work, and we ended up getting \$6,000 back last year. We just gotta get one quarter in, then take the rest of the year off. She's already talking about going back to work, she used to work at the hotel, and her old boss said just apply because they're looking for someone that knows everything already. She knows how to do the doors, check people in, clean, do everything there. So, she might get picked up."

In Bobby's family, his wife is better suited to find employment given her previous work experience at the one hotel in town. Together, they are cognizant of their dependence as a family

on untaxed income, yet both were planning for his wife's employment for at least one taxable quarter for the year, to gain the annual EITC.

In addition to complementing EITC-eligible formal earnings and social service-friendly family budgets, flexible employment like fishing and landscaping can also provide intense meaning for tribal men. Bobby, who struggles with meth addiction, is proud to provide for his elders:

“The best time is when you're on the river... Fishing, snagging, hooking on the fish and fighting 'em...It's just you and nature, and then after you catch a fish and gut it, get it all prepared, and then you take it to an elder. Gratitude is when you see their face light-up.”

Ultimately, tribal men enjoy flexible employment—they did it with their fathers, who did it with their grandfathers, in a pattern that goes back to time immemorial, in this very location. The gratitude in the eyes of an elder affirms a responsibility that spans generations: the male provision of sustenance to their families, specifically elders who are no longer able to harvest the river and forests for themselves (Kroeber 1925, 1978).

Beyond personal fulfillment, several respondents indicated a desire to pursue flexible employment over formal work on the coast, even if this means forgoing higher earnings. This is in large part due to the social cost of working off-reservation, for men and women alike.

Henrietta, 69 and the mother of Kerry, is unapologetic in her admission that he “basically raised himself, I was always out at town.” She references her government job on the coast that kept her away from her children for most of the day when they were growing up. Despite the decades that have passed, Kerry, 29, Cohort C, himself seems reticent to consider such jobs for the very same reason:

“Like pretty much I know a lot of people who go to the coast to get jobs. But then, it's back and forth, back and forth. You don't get to see everyone if you have kids, you don't, if they got games, at school or anything, you can't go. That's how my mom was, she traveled back and forth, she worked at [a government office] in Eureka...”

Kerry is a frequent attendee to school functions and athletic events in town, and he notices the absence of those working on the coast: “I see a lot of families, I’m like “where’s your dad?” ‘At work.’”

Peter, 49, Cohort A, also highlights how the flexibility that his “self-employment” on the reservation allows him to meet family obligations:

“I’m trying to get my daughter back, you know, so I gotta talk to different people, social workers... If I worked a 9-5 job, I wouldn’t be able to do that, I could call on the job but it just wouldn’t happen, you know?”

Morris, a father of 4 at age 23, currently works as a fish packer when the local crabbing season is in session, and works around the house caring for his four daughters when laid off. As a member of Cohort C, Morris has contemplated moving to find work, but instead has prioritized proximity to the reservation over better wages. When he discusses his aspirations to work at the local prison, Morris’s enthusiasm is thin:

“I don’t know I don’t really like the fact of sitting in prison all day watching, babysitting a bunch a... *prisoners*. But they pay a lot of money and that’s what I need... I’d rather do like welding class or something, but there’s no welding jobs around here though. Have to move to bigger city or something to get a job like that.

I: Would you rather stay in [Crescent City]?

M: Well, I’d rather stay next to the river somewhere, yeah. I like the river a lot. We used to live off it.”

For Morris and other men in Cohort C, they are operating within a post-decline job market.

Moving off the reservation for work is an ever-present option, but one that will come at a cost.

Like the social ties impacted by Katrina and the removal of public housing, the desire to have access to nonmonetary goods, like child care and emotional support, can override the allure of moving to places with better job markets and lower crime rates (Kirk 2009, Pattillo 2007).

Unlike these communities, living on the reservation is not only socially beneficial, but can also provide access to free or housing, tribal offices, health care, and reservation-specific flexible employment in ancestral forests. Members of Cohorts B & C are struggling to gain formal

employment that resembles that of their fathers' and members of Cohort A, but being flexibly employed on the reservation allows tribal men to not only provide for their families, but also to play an active role in their children's lives and larger social network.

While such decisions to remain on or near the reservation for work are active choices for many, this places them in direct proximity to meth and increasingly opiates/opioids.¹⁵ Such use has increased as labor force attachment weakened and drug sales replaced formal employment. Users and drug counselors alike on the reservation indicate that meth use has peaked, and the use of heroin and nonprescription pain-killers is a problem as evidenced in Table 3.¹⁶ My data suggests that this drug progression is a direct reflection of unconstrained drug use in the context of weak labor force attachment, yet additional research is needed to parse apart the dual processes of meth and opiate/opioid use on the reservations. Further work is necessary to understand how male substance users understand their drug use within a post-decline market.

Table 3. On-Reservation Treatment Snapshot

Characteristics of Those Seeking Drug Treatment at Ki'Maw Medical Center in 2015
56% Male
86% Ages 21-50
97% Native American
56% Unemployed
39% Have been Arrested, 21% Arrested 4 or more times
88% Identify as "severe problem"
12% Identify Amphetamines as First Drug of Choice
15% Identify Pain Medications as First Drug of Choice
12% Identify Heroin as First Drug of Choice

¹⁵ Opiates and opioids represent two distinct but connected groups of drugs. Opiates heroin and morphine are derived from the opium poppy plant, and serve as strong pain relievers. Opioids are simulated pain relievers, largely proprietary, that mimic the effects of opiates, and include Oxycontin, Dilaudid and Vicodin (*Just Believe* 2015). I reference these substances throughout the paper, often together as they have very similar results for pain management, although I distinguish between the two as relevant.

¹⁶ Data made available by Ki'Maw Medical Center, Hoopa, CA.

To summarize, tribal men identify several beneficial aspects of under-the-table, “flexible” employment. First, as observed elsewhere, formal employment is increasingly unavailable to them because of the high incidence of criminal records and driver’s license loss (Wilson 1996, 1999, Pager 2003). Flexible employment is more accessible, and such work affirms tribal men’s identity as traditional stewards of the forest. Like logging, flexible employment is self-motivated and located in ancestral forests (Sherman 2005, Brandth 2006). Additionally, earnings are immediate and untaxed, which provides cash-in-hand the day of the job, sometimes up to the equivalent of a month’s wages at one time. Informal work can also be scheduled to complement their duties as fathers and community members, unlike jobs located farther away on the coastline. The self-worth of tribal fathers depends on their ability to provide, and, while flexible employment affords them this opportunity, informal options like growing marijuana (Kemp 2012) and manufacturing methamphetamine (Burns 2016) increase the likelihood of personal drug use when set within a context of multigenerational addiction, violence and trauma. While further work is necessary to document more general factors shaping drug use on the reservation, this process, from strong labor force attachment in 1985 to low labor force participation in 2015, represents a cohort effect that tracks the decline of the logging industry and the dual rise of flexible employment and methamphetamine use on the reservation.

Discussion & Conclusion:

The timber is harder to get to. And guys are inexperienced, not like the old guys. Them old guys knew how to work. They knew what to do. Them guys did. – Daryl, 55, Cohort A, referring to the tribal men who came before him.

In 1985, the logging industry was strong in the towns of Hoopa, Klamath, and the surrounding counties. Yurok and Hoopa men across the life course saw themselves and their futures as coming from the forests around them. Drug and alcohol use existed, but was governed

by the confines of full employment. Men in Cohort A were coming of age and entering the labor force at this time, yet as they joined their fathers and grandfathers as loggers, their own careers felt the strain associated with mounting environmental regulations coupled with decreased resource availability and labor requirements. Employment rates plummeted as local mills closed, and men in Cohort B experienced the brunt of the transition away from low-skill employment in the forests to the casinos, Walmarts, and gas stations that remained.

As formal work dwindled, men in Cohorts A & B became increasingly reliant on flexible employment whereby earnings were flexibly earned, untaxed, immediate, and off-the-books so that their families could continue to receive public aid. This flexible employment, both licit and illicit, had traditionally supplemented formal wages, yet such work now serves as the primary source of income for men who have been unable to secure employment because of criminal records and/or a lack of credentials.

Men in Cohort C have come of age and entered a labor force that is markedly different from Cohorts A & B, as indicated by a weakened formal labor force attachment on the reservation and an increasing dependence on flexible employment for male job seekers. Despite their position in a post-decline economy, men in Cohort C remember full-time logging employment through their fathers and grandfathers. In the absence of such work, the use and trafficking of methamphetamine can provide a means of family support. This process, from strong labor force attachment in 1985 to low labor force participation in 2015 accompanied the decline of the logging industry and the dual rise of flexible employment and drug use on the reservations.

Finally, I provide policy recommendations based on my findings. Green jobs like dam removal, fisheries, and forest firefighting are all options for formal employment, yet this work is

demanding and must be adapted to meet the needs of men across the life course. Additionally, both tribes must seriously consider “banning the box” when it comes to hiring ex-felons. Our tribe’s vitality rests on our ability to reincorporate offenders into formal employment.

Yet, restoring male labor force participation can only accomplish so much. Tribal leaders and policy makers alike must consider the cumulative, multi-generational aspects of addiction. In some families, substance use spans back three generations or more. As such, there is an intense need for dual-diagnosis rehabilitation services, treatment programs that can accommodate not only an addict’s substance dependency, but also the conditions they may have been self-medicating, like depression, PTSD, and trauma associated with physical and sexual abuse. As it stands, these men are turning to flexible employment and drug use to fill the void left by the logging industry decline. It is ultimately up to us, as a community, to aid these men, our fathers, brothers, sons and cousins, to meet their mantle of provider in healthier ways.

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