Rules of Disorder: A Comparative Study of Student Discipline

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ABSTRACT

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This dissertation is a comparative study of school discipline in the United States and in Greece. It examines the effect that schools, particularly their organizational form and rules, have upon the behavior of students and how this behavior is understood and categorized. The empirical findings show that, despite facing an elaborate system of rules, punishments, and staff dedicated to discipline, students at a New York school were three times more likely to be unruly compared with students in a similar school in Athens, where only teaching staff managed behavior, and formal rules and regulations governing student conduct were virtually non-existent. Drawing upon the theoretical insights of Emile Durkheim, Mary Douglas, Tom Popkewitz, Michel Foucault, Pierre Bourdieu, and neo-institutionalist scholars, this study proposes explanations for this surprising pattern. I argue that increased structural-functional differentiation within schools and heavy-handed sets of rules and punishments for students erode the moral authority of the teacher and create spaces outside the classroom where students can develop and employ identities and cultural hierarchies that lead to more frequent and extreme forms of unruliness. I also argue that the regulation of student discipline is part of the broader system of state regulation and control. In societies where govermentality is a dominant theme, school discipline becomes preoccupied with questions of measurement, care, and efficiency. What is needed, I suggest, is a return to democracy.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

SPECIALIZATION AND EFFECTIVENESS IN STUDENT DISCIPLINE

It was the first day of my work as a teacher in a New York City (NYC) public high school. Waiting at the office for an ID, I overheard exchanges from the Head School Aide’s walkie-talkie that was on: “AP1 to all SSAs! A group of students is running down staircase E.” A little later, “AP1 pick up. Go! We got them! We will take them to the 6th floor Dean’s office now.” Only a few moments apart, a screaming voice said, “85 in Caf” and three people who were talking nonchalantly outside the office, left running. Then, I heard, “Level 3 pick up! Go! We have 3 students at 116.” I am sure I looked bewildered because the Aide rushed to tell me not to worry and that “it isn’t as bad every day.”

The truth of the matter was that I had not understood in what capacity SSAs, AP1, Level 3, and Deans worked and why they were supposed to run after students inside the school building. I found out later, of course, that in NYC public schools student behavior is monitored in all spaces all the time and, aside from the teachers, there is a whole apparatus devoted to student discipline: Deans are teachers in administrative capacities handling incidents that are passed to them by the teachers or that take place outside the class; AP1 (Assistant Principal of Security) is the Deans’ immediate supervisor; SSAs (School Safety Agents) are employees of the New York City Police Department (NYCPD), duties entail patrolling school corridors instead of city streets; Level 3 is their boss.

After some years, I myself became a dean of discipline and with a walkie-talkie in hand I had, among other things, to chase students around the building. I became familiar, then, with the Code of Discipline, known as the Blue Book. I was amazed by the multiplicity of rules, their
organization, and their precision regarding how to address misbehavior. In practicing my role as a disciplinarian I also noticed the formality of the system. The teachers were passing disciplinary incidents to deans with referral-forms, the deans could further refer the students to a Counselor, Social Worker, or Psychologist, and suspensions were announced to students in a formal paper. I could not resist comparing this to the medical practice where the general practitioner doctor (teacher) refers the patient (student) to a specialist (dean) and the specialist, after careful examination, prescribes the appropriate medication (suspension).

Having experienced the Greek school system both as a student and as a teacher, I was, inevitably, making comparisons between the two school systems in terms of their disciplinary approaches. On the one hand is the NYC public school system with high functional differentiation of personnel handling disciplinary matters, a high degree of bureaucratization and formality, the presence of police inside the school building, and medicalized understanding of misbehavior. On the other hand, the Greek system is characterized by its informality, relatively few set rules, and no staff apart from the teachers and one or two administrators responsible for student discipline. Are NYC students so much more undisciplined than their Greek counterparts and in need of an army of specialists to discipline them, or does the NYC school system employ a less effective approach in minimizing student misbehavior? Does one system more than the other possibly contribute to students’ disobedience?

This question became more intriguing after examining public discussions regarding student discipline in NYC and Athens, Greece. I read relevant articles from two prominent newspapers, similar with respect to their editorial orientation, the New York Times and the Greek newspaper *VIMA*¹. I found that there was a good deal of direct discussion on the subject of

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¹ I researched both papers from 1997 to present mostly because the *VIMA* archives were not available before that year.
discipline in schools in NYC, but very little and mostly indirect\textsuperscript{2} discussion in Greece. In the twelve years searched, 1997-2009, the New York Times featured more than 300 articles directly addressing the question of student discipline with countless more that discussed it indirectly. By contrast, over the same time period \textit{VIMA} featured only 28 articles that examined the issue and from these only six did so directly. These six specifically dealt with: the decision of the Minister of Education to ban cell phones from schools; the need for students to dress appropriately; the obligation that schools have to respect students’ personal information and property; bullying; and violence. Are the lack of discussion on this topic in Greece and/or the style of writing about it indications that there is not a problem? Does it mean that Greek students behave well and that there is no need for discussion? Does this silence point to cultural differences regarding how student misbehavior is perceived or defined? Or, maybe, it alludes to the existence of a more effective system of discipline in Greece?

\textbf{Framing and Purpose of the Study}

The model of bureaucratic organization with many rules, formality, and high functional differentiation in disciplinary personnel, which I observed in the NYC school, has, indeed, been established as the standard model of organizational administration in modern educational institutions. Critics, mainly, have been focusing on the broader managerial tendency towards the

\textsuperscript{2} By direct and indirect I refer to whether education and in particular discipline were the articles’ main or peripheral focus. Most N.Y. Times’ articles were presenting happenings in schools with the primary purpose being to inform the readers about these issues and to analyze them. On the contrary, \textit{VIMA}’s articles were giving information to their readers about the disciplinary situation in schools indirectly, as examples, to make a point about something else: the under-staffed police departments; the ineffective bureaucracy of the Ministry of Education; the danger that comes from violent video games; the tendency for illegality in Greek society; the profile of people who tend to exhibit criminal behavior; racism; private education and so on.
Taylorization\textsuperscript{3} of schools. They see the stress on techno-bureaucracy, or educratic management,\textsuperscript{4} as an expression of Taylorization aiming primarily at social control (Lima, 2007). Despite criticism, the need for consistency, predictability, accountability, efficiency, and effectiveness does serve as the model’s advocate. Schools increasingly start either adopting a bureaucratic model or intensifying the one already in place. Specifically in the area of discipline though, high functional-structural differentiation presupposes, and is enforced by, a separation of teaching subject matter from disciplining students. Some studies indicate this to be counterproductive for student discipline (Lefsten, 2002; Devine, 1996). Furthermore, even though much sociological research shows that the presence of control produces deviance (Marx, 1981) schools (and other organizations) treat non-conformity by intensifying their controlling mechanisms and further increasing rules, formality, and personnel.

In framing this study, it became essential to develop an understanding of the NYC school bureaucratic approach to student discipline through the lenses of sociological theories of bureaucracy, neo-institutionalism, and social control. The case of student discipline seemed to be a possible example where, for purposes of legitimacy, the system of bureaucratic administration inadvertently adopts practices for disciplining the students that are inefficient and, inevitably, run counter to the schools’ objective to control deviance (Meyer and Rowan, 1977; Vaughan, 1999). This dissertation looks at the possibility that non-conformity is exacerbated and/or caused by the presence of a controlling bureaucracy and focuses on the roles that schools

\textsuperscript{3} Frederic Winslow Taylor in his \textit{Principals of Scientific Management} (1911) declared that efficiency and productivity would be attained with a high level of managerial control over work practices in industrial production. Morris Cook (1910) in a pioneering study applied this concept to Higher Education.

\textsuperscript{4} For the NYC context, to borrow the term educrat, I name this type of management educratic. The term ‘Educrats’ is used, in particular by the media, to refer to the mostly young, Ivy League graduates without any background in Education who were hired by the NYC School Chancellor Joel I. Klein to manage the NYC school system in a technocratic and business-like way (Herszenhorn, 2004).
themselves, their structures and procedures, may play in the creation of what is perceived and counted as student disobedience. Is the bureaucratic model appropriate to reduce behavioral problems in schools? Is the separating of teaching subject matter from disciplining students (expressed by the high functional differentiation of disciplining personnel) effective? Is the tendency toward increasing disciplinary rules and regulations related to student non-conformity?

In short, the purpose of this dissertation is to examine student discipline in relation to its administration and system of rules; to reach results based on which we could determine whether high functional differentiation, many rules, and high formality in administering student discipline have positive, negative, or no effect upon student behavior. Student discipline in broad terms, across the U.S. and Greece, or even in New York and Athens, cannot be explained in general. The findings of this research will only be able to speak of similar schools and only in regards to the variables that I observe: the administration of discipline and the system of normal/pathological classifications of student behavior.

For this study, the United States represents a highly decentralized, bureaucratically very developed, specialization-oriented system of discipline. Greece represents the opposite pole: highly centralized; minimally developed in regards to the school unit bureaucratic structure; and with little emphasis on specialization. I chose the comparative method to explore what happens if we subject a population of students with similar Socio-Economic Status (SES), academic performance, and transgressive tendencies either to a multitude of disciplinary rules and personnel, or, in contrast, to almost no written guidelines or rules regarding school discipline and no specialized staff for dealing with disciplinary issues.

**Research Questions**
This study looks at student discipline in the two schools and, in particular, the institutional and cultural factors that could affect the patterns of student behavior, by exploring the following questions:

1. What are the patterns, magnitude, and severity of student transgressions in the two research settings?

2. What are school officials’ perceptions or definitions of student transgression in schools of similar students, but with different institutional forms and procedural norms?

3. What regulations, rules, and practices are in place in these settings to address student transgression?

4. How is policy implemented?
   a) Are there discrepancies between general rules, institutional procedures, and actual practices?
   b) Is there formality in following rules and procedures?
   c) How is responsibility for sanctioning students for particular transgressions divided between school personnel?

Since the study is about students breaking school rules, I use the term student discipline throughout the study a lot. With this I refer to the process of students breaking of school rules, the effort taken by school officials to enforce obedience, and the infliction of punishment. ‘School rules’ applies to all class, school-wide, school system-wide, formal (written in manuals), or informal (accepted as institutional norms) rules. School officials are teachers, deans, administrators, school aides, and school safety agents. Below I introduce the rational and the organization of the remainder of the study.

**Rational for the Study**

In this section I give my rational for the focus, framing, and comparative design of the study: Why is my focal point student discipline and why is this topic deserving attention? Why do I examine it from an administrative perspective and, finally, why did I choose the comparative method and the schools I did?
Student Discipline

Student discipline is a key issue for today’s schools. Student disobedience is consistently noted as being a core challenge faced by teachers and schools in our times (Clapp, 1989; Rose & Gallup, 1998; Ingersoll, 2004). Further study into the current state of affairs may advance a better understanding of the issues and lead us to more effective approaches of addressing any problems. Certain factors played a decisive role in shaping the focus of this study. Firstly, there is no organizational theory of student non-conformity per se and, in general, this field is a-theoretical. Secondly, confusion overruns the literature regarding the meaning of the term student discipline, which varies among people and places. Lastly, the approaches that schools follow with regard to discipline are, to say the least, controversial.

As Adams (2000) asserts, concepts of school discipline and school violence are used interchangeably even though they denote different things. School violence should refer to incidents of crime that usually are punishable by adult criminal law. In contrast, school discipline is supposed to refer to the advancement of student training towards a goal, i.e., behaving according to rules, and should include all misconduct, from being late to class to bringing a gun to school. Violent behavior in schools is by default undisciplined, but undisciplined behavior is not necessarily violent.

In this study, I consider both violent and non-violent incidents. My data indicates that in each school violent incidents such as fights constitute about five percent of the cases while extreme incidents such as bringing a weapon to school are less than 0.5 percent. Most studies and reports on school discipline focus on violent behavior, which is minimal. However, the studies ignore the 95 percent of infractions that seem insignificant, but have significant consequences for schools themselves. Although there is evidence that violence in schools has declined in the last
decade (Dinkes, Kemp & Baum, 2009), there is little to suggest that non-violent student disobedience has decreased. To the contrary, teachers cite “student discipline problems” as the second most significant reason, after low salaries, for leaving the profession (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003).

A second misunderstanding stems from the cultural specificity of the problem of discipline. What is classified as undisciplined in one place or by a certain group of people is not categorized as such elsewhere or by another group. For example, truancy is not considered to be problematic behavior in Greece and there is no rule to say that it is. What is considered unsuitably revealing attire in England, where a cold climate and a puritan culture meet, is not considered revealing at all in the Mediterranean countries during the hot months of May and June. Smoking is classified as a serious infraction in places where recent restrictive laws and politically correct anti-smoking campaigns win ground while in other places it is not serious at all. Disciplined or undisciplined is relative and depends on where the divider between the normal from the pathological is set (Canguilhem, 1991). This has many implications for student discipline and needs attention. What N.Y. teachers see in a certain behavior may often be what teachers in Greece fail to see and behaviors that are pathologized in one setting may be considered normal elsewhere. Undisciplined behavior does not exist in a vacuum.

In the early 1990s, indications that violence in schools had increased instigated the launch of zero-tolerance policies in many districts. The purpose was to focus on detection and fast punishment. In zero tolerance policies, detection is achieved through constant surveillance and punishment for violent infractions is serious and automatic. Measures such as patrolling the hallways with professional guards, installing cameras and metal detectors, conducting searches,

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allowing the police in schools and so forth are justified on the grounds of safety. There are reports that, in certain schools, violent incidents reached 30 to 35 percent of discipline infractions (Krauss, 2005). Sharing Devine’s (1996) concerns, I have reservations regarding the interpretation of violence. The ability to separate real violence from simple impressions of violence as measured in victimization polls and the willingness of those who report it to differentiate between student initiated violence from violence that gets provoked by the school itself are open to question. Assuming that these statistics are correct, certain schools may have a reason to introduce zero tolerance policies even though there is no evidence that it reduces violence (Skiba et al, 2006). Why, however, should students in so many other schools be subjected to prison-like measures despite there being a low probability of violence?

Unfortunately, schools apply zero tolerance policies to address the full spectrum of disciplinary infractions. It is normal in a public school to see professional guards running after students who cut class or wear hats; metal detectors constantly beeping for cell phones, belts, or metal buckles; and students being searched for marijuana because other students “saw something” or at least thought that what they saw was marijuana. But the most intriguing question is that of punishment. Schools use removal from class and suspension to punish students for infractions such as cutting or truancy. Does it make any sense to punish a student, whose “crime” is that he simply does not want to be in school, by forcing him to do exactly what he is punished for?

The initiation of zero tolerance policies might be an understandable reaction if violence was a new phenomenon and had taken schools by surprise. However, according to Midlarsky and Klain (2005), this is not the case. Students have been exhibiting serious violent behavior throughout the history of education by beating up their teachers or their classmates and even by carrying guns to school. The contemporary stress on security and especially on surveillance to
detect violence alludes to Foucault’s panopticon for the purpose of regulation and control and needs to be further explored.

**Administration of Student Discipline**

Generally, the literature on student discipline, which I will explore extensively in the literature review section, can be categorized based on what the studies focus on. Either they attempt to: explore the reasons why students may break school rules; concentrate on what schools do or ought to do to better address student non-conformity, the maintenance of order, and/or responses to the social environment; theorize on the necessity of discipline as a process of children acquiring maturity, responsibility, and morality; view it as a mechanism of social reproduction in capitalist societies; or concentrate on the legal issues regarding discipline (Hollingsworth, Lufler & Clune, 1984). In their explanatory effort few studies take into account the role of schools themselves. After all, students spend thousands of hours in school and given that efforts to combat student unruliness are almost exclusively focused on the school day, it is a serious omission not to take schools into account when examining student behavior.

I like to think of a student’s disciplinary incident as a point or successive points where the student, one or more adults in charge, the organization (its imperatives, rules, regulations, and culture, which also refers to the particular cultural patterns that the student body may have developed over time and managed to sustain), timing, particular conditions, and space meet and interact. For example, in the seemingly simple infraction “Student refused to submit cell phone

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6 I do not apply this rationale to inter-student encounters that break out on school grounds. These do not involve an interaction with an adult in charge. When fights for a boyfriend take place and gangs measure their influence or start a vendetta, we should consider this a different category that also requires a different understanding. It is considered breaking of the school rules but involves less complexity in the sense that the students in trouble do not interact with the institutional agents in breaking the rules. They are simply in the physical space of the school and the adults in charge just apply the rules to handle or punish the offenders.
to SSA and Dean,” the infraction has all the aforementioned factors involved and unfolds in at least three acts, throughout the school day and the school building. In order to fully understand what constitutes this infraction we need to dissect it.

Illustration 1.1 The Disciplinary Situation

Based on my observation notes the following happened:

Act one: The student was in *the hallway* and *had* a cell phone. Other students also had phones, but this boy had just broken up with his girlfriend and took the phone out because he *desperately needed to call her* and sort things out. Students had developed *a particular culture of*
communication over the phone between periods and the school had recently intensified the policy on cell-phones: if visible they have to be confiscated. This school was one of the many schools to implement zero tolerance policies. Therefore, the hallways of the school were patrolled and an SSA was passing by the student, saw the phone, and decided to intervene. He approached the student and told him to put it in his school bag because it is not supposed to be seen.

**Act two:** The student disregarded the SSA. Needing badly to talk to his girlfriend, the student not only did not put the phone in his bag but also walked away. The SSA interpreted this as exhibiting a lack of respect for both himself and the school rules, used his walkie-talkie, described the student, and asked any dean or SSA to stop the student if they found him. A dean on duty, who had his radio on, met the described student two floors down and took him to the dean’s office where he had to wait until the dean found the time to address his infraction.

**Act three:** The dean interrogated the student and asked him to submit his cell. The student, fuming by now because not only he had failed to communicate with the girlfriend but also had been chased throughout the building, decided to make a point and continued refusing to submit the phone. One thing that made him more unwilling to do so was the fact that school rules dictated that the phone had to be collected by his parents. They wouldn’t come to school soon because they were working. That would result in the student not having a phone for many days, which he couldn’t afford because he needed the phone for his work.

From here the drama continued. The dean contacted the student’s parents and his punishment was meted out: a 2-day suspension.

Some may say that in this incident the student is to blame for not following school policy. Others may insist that the policies are wrong, still others that young people ‘are given too much freedom’ or ‘are over reliant on’ with the use of cell phones. The bottom line, though, is that
incidents like this happen in schools regularly, occupy school personnel, and prevent students from attending class. Most importantly, the above-described incident could have not happened, or could happened differently, if at least one of the factors stressed in italics was different.

Based on the above, in order to fully understand school discipline we need to study all factors that come together at the point of an infraction. From all these factors (see illustration 1.1) what has been understudied is the organization, the school as a place where student non-conformity is set in motion; where the process of administering student discipline and the effect this has on student non-conformity are taking place; and where student non-conformity is defined. A given misconduct is not an isolated incident. It can be better understood as a serious of sequentially interconnected events and processes, defined and compounded by administrative, legal, and personal factors. Because of this, the task of theorizing student discipline necessitates drawing from fields outside education, in particular Sociology. This study will contribute to the understanding of the topic of student discipline by enhancing knowledge regarding the role of the institution at the point where its policies and practices, as carried out by school staff, meet the students’ educational needs and/or clash with their cultures.

**Why Comparison? Why with Greece? Main Considerations**

In studies, very often, a location specific problem (e.g. American inner city secondary schools suffer increasingly from students refusing to conform to the rules) gets attributed to the uniqueness of this location (low-SES students, inadequate funding, and so on). In examining the comparative method of study, Przeworski and Teune (1970) fervently suggest that researchers should reject the possibility of uniqueness in their explanations, because there is no such thing, and find the factors that need to be explained. These factors, they claim, are better identified in a comparison.
I selected the two cases of this comparison based on key similarities and differences: (1) both are large, inner city high schools with students of low SES and academic performance (research supports that this type of school has the highest percentage of students refusing to conform to the rules); (2) student behavioral patterns are similar in both locations (something that I observed by working in both school systems); (3) despite the similarities in behavioral patterns, the administration of student discipline is different in the two settings. The NYC school has an abundance of rules compared with the Greek school and elaborate methods of employing them. Since one and two are similar, it is an appropriate comparison to examine if and how the factors of administration and the existence and application of formal rules are related to student indiscipline.

It may appear that cultural differences between Greece and the U.S. are such that the integrity of this comparison could be compromised. Given the inherent cultural diversity that characterizes contemporary urban schools in Athens and New York City, however, we shouldn’t reduce the question of the student culture to some national or ethnic stereotype. This may be equally true on a national level; for example there may be more cultural similarities between these student populations in New York and in Athens than, say, between the New York school and its peers in Topeka or Madison. Much more importantly, however, the comparisons here discount the role of student culture because it is not the behavior of the students that will be compared, it is how the school regulates and interprets similar student behavior. It may be the case, for example, that the students in Greece have a higher rate of cutting classes than the students in the New York school and that local student culture may help explain this different propensity to skip classes. What will be compared, however, is not the rate of class cutting but how the school deals with the cutting of classes. Is it an infraction of the rules? How is it
punished? Who administers the punishment? And so on. In this way, even if great differences in student culture were to exist, it would in no way compromise the integrity of the study. Of course, it is possible to characterize the administrative style, system of rules, and roles and responsibilities of the teacher as an outcome or articulation of ‘culture.’ This is no more than a semantic game, however, and it makes no difference if one chooses to call it ‘culture’ or not; the subjective determinations of the actors within the school are inseparable from the institutional structures and administrative regimes that they find themselves within (Douglas, 1966, Bourdieu, 1990).

The fact that Greek schools do not have structural-functional differentiation or a formal system of rules is part of what Mouzelis (1996) and Tsoukalas (1979) consider an “anomaly” in the path of modernization. Many differences may exist between Greece and the U.S. when it comes to questions of development or political institutions and culture. The objective of this comparison is not to explain why the schools are structured and managed the way they are, or what cultural elements operate in lieu of structural differentiation. The structure and character of secondary schools in New York City and in Athens are taken as a given, they are independent variables. In order to answer my questions I compare how the two systems address equivalent infractions. If two supposedly different cultural systems succeed in producing certain similar student behaviors, which the schools address, then, the process of understanding and addressing these behaviors (and not the culture that produced them) can be considered as the cause of the direction their development took. Some could argue that the culture of the institutional actors, (teachers, deans, administrators), whether national or otherwise, also have an impact on the student discipline process. No doubt this is true and precisely one of the arguments of this study.

Significance of the Study
This work contributes to the scholarly literature on education by adding to the few studies that attempt to come to terms with the role that school organization plays in relation to student non-conformity (Gottfredson, Gottfredson & Hybl, 1993; Welsh, 2000). It is the first study to test the fit of the bureaucratic model to the school administration of student discipline and, most importantly, goes against the a-theoretical grain that dominates the field by developing a theory of organizational student non-conformity.

The implications of this study are likely to be very significant for, and possibly inform, educational policy, teacher and administrator preparation programs, and, subsequently, educational practices in schools in general. If my hypotheses are correct and the bureaucratic model does not work in the domain of discipline, decision-makers in the field of education may possibly start redefining their educational philosophy and reconsidering the promotion of formal bureaucratic systems of discipline, which serve to enforce the structural separation of academic learning and student discipline.

**Organization of the Study**

The remainder of this work will be ordered as follows: Chapter 2 is an overview of the literature, which covers three main areas. The first is that of student discipline as it pertains to the fields of Education, Sociology, and the Sociology of Education. The second examines studies of modern institutions and their administration and includes literature on bureaucracy, administration, and the production of deviance. The third area relates to theories of control, power, and the construction of categories. Student discipline is the area this study seeks to contribute to, by drawing from other disciplines.

Chapter 3 is devoted to research methodology. It includes research design, data collection methods and instruments, sampling, limitations of research, and methods of analysis.
Chapter 4 presents the findings from New York City. In the beginning, it provides a brief account of the NYC educational system and its general organizational structure. It describes the administration of student discipline and the system of rules that regulate discipline, and very concisely explains the organization of a typical student’s day and of his educational program. The findings follow and are organized around the themes of student behavior, teacher perceptions about student discipline, the legal framework regulating discipline, and the administration of discipline.

Chapter 5 presents the findings from Greece. It follows the structure of the previous chapter very precisely in order to facilitate the comparison that will take place in chapter 6.

Chapter 6 compares the NYC and Athens findings. It focuses on those that are most significant in the context of this study, the ones that will be discussed in the final chapter.

Chapter 7, the last chapter, includes an analytical discussion, which brings together and analyses the findings based on the conceptual framework of the study. It ends with the study’s theoretical conclusions and practical implications and with directions for further research.

Conclusion

In this introductory chapter I provide the purpose and focus of the study, the research questions, and the factors contributing to the direction and form that the project took. In presenting the rational of this research I touch upon the areas of student discipline and its administration, which I found troubling and poorly understood or rationalized and therefore in need of objective examination and research. I also give the logic and considerations for using the comparative method. Finally, I present the significance of the study and the organization of the chapters that follow.
CHAPTER II
EDUCATION AND CONTROL FOR ALL

What makes students so unmotivated, noncompliant, disrespectful, confrontational, and, even, violent? What can schools do about it? Teachers declare: “We do everything in our power to accommodate students’ needs, to be fair, and understanding.” But, they also add, “These kids have so many problems at home and are exposed to so much violence that it’s a lost cause. School means nothing to them! Why follow instructions, let alone study and learn?” (Teacher Interview, 2006). Almost all interviewees in both schools in this study said something to similar effect. It appears that the initial question, even though tantalizing, is just rhetorical; everyone seems to know the answer. There is always a pervasive pessimism that comes with questions of discipline. Unspoken but yet widely accepted is the conviction that there is little to be done, especially in schools where many students of low socio-economic status (SES) are concentrated. Disciplinary problems are attributed primarily to the children and their home environment (Bear, 1998).

Are current disciplinary practices guided by the aforementioned teachers’ beliefs? In an era where counter-discourses of equality and educational equity are prevalent, it may be expected that beliefs blaming the most disadvantaged would not be allowed to drive educational practice. Teachers and schools, regardless of their deep-seated pessimism, must act as if they believe in their students, find ways to engage even the most challenging of them, ensure their access to education, and employ democratic and constructive ways of handling behavioral issues. The old, coercive methods should have given way to more progressive techniques; yet to what extent has this been the case? Ironically, popular disciplinary programs suggest best practices for ‘managing’ student behavior and making them do ‘what the teacher wants them to do’ while
maintaining a civilized classroom and school environment. Boynton and Boynton (2005), in their disciplinary guide, have focused so much on teacher power that they even figured out the ideal formula of its application, including the exact percentages of the different kinds of power that teachers are using when implementing their model. Indicatively, they argue, if the teacher puts into the mixture 40% referent power, 25% legitimate power, 25% expert power, and 10% reward and coercive power, she will have the best results (p. 4).

Despite the “new” orientation of disciplinary programs and approaches, there is no evidence that schools have been successful in addressing student discipline (Bear, 1998). To the contrary, according to Ingersoll and Smith (2003), teachers encounter significant problems with student behavior. Jay Mathews from The Washington Post, after carefully studying reports on discipline, admitted that he wouldn’t last a month as a teacher in an American public school due to student behavioral issues (The Washington Post, May 11, 2004). Similarly, Education Week reported that, “nearly seven in 10 middle and high school teachers say their own schools have serious problems with students who disrupt classes” (Public Agenda, 2011). In response, as demonstrated by the recently adopted zero tolerance policies, schools have been resorting to even more coercion in order to control their students (Skiba et al., 2006). Are students becoming more undisciplined despite school efforts? Are the methods that schools use ineffective? Or, maybe, do we keep asking the wrong questions altogether, and end up hitting the wrong target as a result? As Kohn suggests:

We prefer to avoid questions about the ends and instead focus on the means—which is to say on techniques. Thus, the problem always rests within the child who does not do what he is asked, never with what he has been asked to do. (2006, pp. 12-13, emphasis in the original)

I would add that the tendency to believe that “the problem always rests within the child” is a fallacy of the “common sense,” which tends to attribute behaviors and attitudes to individuals.
This is alarming since it indicates a lack of systematic resolve to explain social facts in relation to other social facts in the context of their social adoption and development. Mary Douglas (1986) would name this, “the high triumph of institutional thinking [which] is to make the institutions completely invisible” (p. 98). Fuchs would name it essentialism:

Common sense is essentialist in this sense, since it—along with much of social science, philosophy, and cognitive science—validates persons, agency, mental states, free will, and the rest of the humanist and liberal inventory. (Fuchs, 2001, p. 3)

**Literature Review**

Who you are as a person you are depends according to the social and cultural relations around you, and also according to who the observer is in each case where you are being observed and treated in some way. At least this is what the observer “sociology” is equipped and prepared to observe. (Fuchs, 2001, p. 4)

In this section I examine approaches that dominate research on questions of school discipline within the fields of education and psychology. Overwhelmingly, these approaches validate and reinforce existing classifications and ‘common sense’ interpretations of student behavior. In so doing, they fail to adequately grasp and explain school discipline. This weakness, I argue, should not be perceived as accidental, or as a sign of an inability of any given theoretical construction. It is a consequence of where educators, sociologists, or psychologists stand as observers in the network of relations that they are trying to explain. Most explanatory paradigms choose to analyze schools and misbehaving students as if they (schools and students) are in a first-level “observer-actor” relationship being scrutinized by the researcher. In this relationship, the first-level observer (school) approaches the unique experience of the actor (undisciplined student) from a normative and “egocentric” stance, and is likely to see the actor’s (student’s) behavior as a manifestation of personal, inherent qualities due to a series of biases being in
operation. The first-level observer (school) cannot see itself as part of the problem. Nor can analytical approaches that perceive schools as being mere ‘observers’ fully understand the issues since they examine the phenomenon of student discipline from the standpoint of the school as the observer and, therefore they are unable to apply any objective understanding to the dialectical relationship between schools and students.

**The Actor: The Student and his Environment**

When causes of indiscipline are discussed in literature, most emphasis is placed on factors that the school cannot control or alter, starting with the student and his/her environment. Students have personal issues, emotional and developmental in nature, that stem simply from their age (the “hormones go crazy” type of argument, see Lesko, 2001), or from their immediate, troublesome, environment. In modern society, a lack of discipline is frequently blamed on: changes in family structure and culture (i.e., single-parent families, working mothers, lack of an extended family, or parental disciplinary practices that are harsh and inconsistent); violence propagated through the media (Curwin, Mendler & Mendler, 2008; Solomon & Assegedetch, 2007; Skinner & Hales, 1992; Bear, 1998; Hetherington et al, 1981; Hoffman, 1980); and peer pressure and other aspects of teenage culture (Hope & Bierman, 1998; Coleman, 1961; Palonsky, 1975).

Research in the field of behavioral sciences and medicine find evidence that differences in DNA can explain behavioral deviation. For a sizeable percentage of students, misbehavior is attributed to biophysical causes (genetic, hereditary, neurological conditions, and so forth) (cf, 7 For an analysis of observers’ and actors’ perceptions regarding behavior see Jones and Nisbett (1971). They argue that actors tend to see their actions as a result of environmental factors while the observers of these same actions attribute them to the personal qualities of the actors. For the different levels of observation see Fuchs (2001). Action for Fuchs is “how some observers make sense of some events” (p.338), “network location decides what an observer can or cannot see” (p. 21), and there are four social observers: encounters, groups, organizations and networks.)
Farah, 2005; Plomin and Asbury, 2005). In short, it can be argued that genetic reasons lead children to behave badly in school. Conrad and Potter (2000) characterize this as the medicalization of underperformance. It takes the blame from the individual and allows for professional interventions (counseling, therapy etc.), the use of medication (Ritalin is widely used for ADHD), or placement in special education programs (Adams, 2000; Kaval & Forness, 1998).

A factor that dominates discussions surrounding indiscipline is the students’ socio-economic status (SES). Sociologists of education have connected misbehavior with poor academic performance (DiPrete, 1981; Myers, 1987) and poor academic performance with low SES (Coleman et al, 1966; Jencks, 1972). African-American and Hispanic-American children are more than twice as likely as white children to be living in poverty (McKinnon, 2003; Padilia, 1997). This supposedly explains the high occurrence of discipline problems among students of color (Bear, 1998). The SES factor, however, is seen as determining student performance and behavior when there is a high concentration of low SES students in a certain school because this leads to the formation of a student culture that legitimizes underperformance as “cool.” Curwin, Mendler, & Mendler (2008) find this to be so detrimental for students that they declare, “no school should open when its low-SES students exceed 20% unless geographically impossible” (p. 17). Bear (1998) mentions that community characteristics such as a lack of cohesion and population mobility affect student behavior. According to the widely cited African saying, “it takes a village to raise a child” and, apparently, in modern societies, this “village” is absent.

Some researchers examine the perception that student indiscipline has increased in intensity and frequency in recent decades. Although there have always been disobedient students (Midlarsky & Klain, 2005; Purkey, 1990; Nasaw, 1981), their misbehavior has reached new
levels, they say, in our times, and schools struggle more than ever with this issue (Bear, 1998).

For these approaches, to look only at students’ character and social situation neglects at least one very important factor, namely the change in composition of the student population. It is now a legal obligation for all Special Education and low SES students, the ones who most greatly misbehave in schools, to be schooled until they finish high school:

…due to progressive laws protecting the education and civil rights of children, schools now must educate children who previously would have dropped out or would have been pushed out in the past. For example, compulsory education has eliminated dropping out in the early grades and the reauthorization of IDEA has clarified that expulsion without continued services is no longer a school option for addressing the behavior problems of children with disabilities. (Bear, 1998, p.725)

The implications of this are clear: the ten per cent of the student population that repeatedly break school rules would most probably not be in school if the legal framework hadn’t been altered, and the resulting problem of indiscipline might not have become such a visible and urgent issue.

All the aforementioned analyses regarding why students are not following school rules have one thing in common: the school has no control over what it perceives to be the cause(s) of the problem. It cannot change the students’ low SES, culture, or family situation; it cannot affect the media or the peer culture; it cannot control demographic tendencies, or disregard legal requirements. The school is just an observer of misbehaving students and, yet, is still expected to pick up the pieces. To deal with this, schools apply criteria and procedures to separate disciplined from non-disciplined and to tackle indiscipline. They give the problem a name (deviance, maladjustment, effort to belong, etc.) and work on it by following appropriate management techniques. This, of course, absolves the educational community of the accusation that they are not doing anything to address the issue and hinders efforts to consider alternative methods. In addition, unfortunately, the subtext to most of these arguments is that disadvantaged groups (immigrants, Blacks, Hispanics, Mexicans, the poor,
families where the mothers work, etc), are the ones to blame, or, by the same token, to help. From a governmentality perspective, these are the dangerous, abnormal, lazy, stupid, degenerate classes of people in need of intervention in order to secure their own welfare. Resources, technologies, or knowledge must be made available to help them learn, fulfill their potential, and thus add to the prosperity of the whole population (Dean, 2010).

**Behaviorism’s (Mis)appropriation**

In the field of education, most studies concerned with student discipline have focused on classroom management and, again, take students’ misbehavior as a given. Following a Skinnerian philosophy, according to which reinforcement of desirable behavior and learning occurs with operant conditioning, “Gold stars, incentive plans, A’s, praise, other bribes” (Kohn, 1999) and punishments are generously given to all children. Of course, in this context, many programs relying on the use of rewards and punishments, some of the most well-known being ‘Discipline with Dignity’ (Curwin, Mendlel & Mendler, 2008) and ‘Assertive Discipline’ (Canter & Canter, 2001), have been developed to give a helping hand to desperate teachers and many books have been written with the promise that they would deliver classroom management techniques that do work. These behavioral approaches view children as being self-centered. External rewards and punishments are needed to bring their natural inclinations and feelings (a desire to goof off, test teachers’ boundaries, negotiate work requirements, attract attention, struggle for power, take revenge, and so forth) in line with reason (Watson, 2008; Kohn, 1993; Doyle, 1990).

However, even though the behaviorist model has been followed in most schools for a long time (and one might assume a high-fidelity implementation), there are issues that render its application problematic even in the eyes of the behaviorists themselves. As Skinner and Hales
(1992) suggest, Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) has only been half implemented. Specifically, teachers and administrators may praise or punish students (i.e., deal with the consequences that follow the behavior), but they do not try to understand student behavior from a behavioral perspective as well, which requires taking into account environmental factors (“antecedent” events). Regarding discipline, these causative events may include factors such as who the student is sitting next to, but also involves the school, the teacher himself and his teaching approach, the system of rules that the children are subjected to in school, the practices of the school in its effort to enforce the rules, the constant surveillance, the day-to-day routines, and so forth. Skinner and Hales (1992) claim that this happens because educators are conditioned to understand student behavior from an emotional, developmental, or physiological perspective. In short, as in first-level encounters, educators are involved with the students in an observer-actor relationship where the observer sees behavior as a manifestation of personal characteristics, but is blind to environmental conditions. Indicatively, Skinner and Hales(5,4),(995,996) refer to the situation where behavioral consultants try to find environmental variables to explain student behavior, but teachers insist on not viewing it from a behavioral perspective:

…”it’s a stage that all my students go through” (developmental) or “there must be some emotional problems holding this student back-if we could only find someone to talk with this student” (psychoanalytic) or “if the parents would only take this student to the pediatrician-I just know that medication would help” (physiological). (Skinner & Hales, 1992, p. 228)

It seems that most teachers and administrators know how to apply behaviorist methods to control behavior. However, they seem to only apply them partially, where it involves punishing and rewarding students, and fail to recognize that the school’s and the teacher’s approaches may also trigger bad behavior; let alone to make the necessary adjustments. The institutional perspective verifies this tendency as well. Meyer and Rowan (1992), in their discussion on evaluation,
suggest that instruction-related control and principal evaluations are rarely conducted; only data regarding pupil achievement is routinely collected. Apparently, close inspection of teachers and administrators would bring more problems than benefits: conflicts, dissatisfaction, or heavy workloads for administrators.

Behaviorist school practices have been heavily attacked, and scholars with a humanistic, cognitive or constructivist perspective speak of new approaches to learning in which a love for knowledge is cultivated in the student and controlling behavior has no meaning per se. For the purpose of this study I am not going to cover their arguments in detail, but the importance of factors such as the children’s emotional make-up, personal meaning, choice, intrinsic motivation, the capacity of the child’s mind to advance critical thinking and problem solving abilities, or the perception of events by the child and the social construction of meaning, which must involve the child, have been stressed. Surprisingly, though, as this is reflected in current school practices, behaviorists as well as most of their critics, theoreticians, practitioners, policy-makers, and policy-implementers continue not to take into account the school as an institution, which is dialectically, overpoweringly, and in a multifaceted way involved in what they see as an isolated student-teacher relationship. Examining the causes of student behavior without taking into account the organizational structure of the school is, to say the least, negligent. After all, students spend a significant portion of their day in school, misbehavior takes place during school hours, and student actions are defined as undisciplined by school standards.

**Do Institutions Matter?**

The possibility of the teacher affecting student behavior, as opposed to just correcting or controlling it, couldn’t be ignored, and there are studies investigating this matter (Brophy, 1979).

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8 See Kohn 1999; 2000; 2006
Interestingly, when asked to evaluate teachers’ behaviors, students reported that, “teacher-student interactions related to behavior problems are typically shaped by both teachers' and students' role constraints” (Rohrkemper, 1984, p.254). In short, teachers and students interact in ways that may lead to serious confrontations because of school-defined roles and expectations and not due to personal issues. Without ignoring the potential ramifications of teachers’ and students’ personal situations, (“I’m having a bad day,” “I’m very upset; my girlfriend left me,” “I don’t feel well,” “my child’s in the hospital,” “my father’s in prison”), it is important to stress that the personal is mediated by institutional roles; specific situations and behaviors acquire meaning only in relation to other behaviors inside the school (Good, 1979; Chang, 2003).

At first, examinations as to the importance of social institutions were unsystematic and lacking sophistication. In Fuchs’ terms, sociologists of education were not successful in breaking away from first-level observing. As late as 1978, Duke had asserted that studies focusing on the school as an organization tended to be rare and haphazard: “Fewer efforts to blame the school system are based on controlled investigations involving carefully selected samples than are the studies that single out family background, peer group, or teacher variables” (p. 428). From 1978 onwards, however, the importance of the institution (its policies and their enforcement) as a factor affecting student discipline was recognized, and studies were designed more carefully to test its role. Investigators recognized institutional factors such as: school policies that are confusing; the unfair enforcement of rules; a lack of respect for students; a climate of fear (Welsh, 2000); administrators who ignore the treatment of the problem (Hollingsworth et al., 1984); or teachers who sometimes seem to be responsible for the problems they have in their classrooms due to inexperience, poor classroom management skills, or inadequate teaching skills (Vavrus & Cole, 2002; Kavale & Hirshoren, 1977; Anyon, 1997; Khon, 2006).
Despite this newfound attention, the role of schools continued to appear as marginal.

After studying eight schools for three years, Gottfredson et al. (1993) concluded that, simply:

(a) Some individuals are more likely than others to misbehave; (b) Some teachers are more likely than others to produce higher levels of misconduct in their classrooms by their management and organization practices; and (c) Some schools more often than others fail to control student behavior. (p.182)

This is because some students are disadvantaged and come to school with more psychological and behavioral problems, some classroom management and teaching techniques are less effective, and some schools do not have a clear focus when it comes to student behavior for numerous reasons. Beyond the circularity of the argument -- students misbehave because schools cannot control them and schools cannot control the students because many of them misbehave -- there is another issue. Even studies that claim to recognize the importance of the institution approach the issue from a “school disorganization” perspective, and they continue to target the individual. Even though it is acknowledged that some students misbehave due to poor classroom management or unfair rules (Akiba, 2010), schools continue punishing students for misbehaving instead of questioning the methods employed by teachers or changing their rules. Students, in this context, appear as the initiators, the actors, in the process of breaking the school rules, and schools as attempting to correct this behavior. When “school disorganization” approaches refer to the institution as inadequate, it is again because the students are problematic and the institutions simply do not have the appropriate ways to respond to and solve the problem. Therefore, schools have to focus on two things: developing appropriate strategies for managing misbehavior and improving school organization. Regarding analysis, following Fuchs (2001), we could say that another level of observation has been added, that of the observing science observing the school as an institution and promoting institutional engagement in “reflexive” observation (the institution is observing itself, observes its teachers and administrators, and sees
part of itself as not functioning properly). However, it is unable to understand its role as a whole dialectically.

**One Step Further: The Institutions as Actors**

A useful strategy for understanding student discipline is using the definition of “systemic violence” provided by Epp and Watkinson. According to these authors, an individual or group can be physically, psychologically, mentally, financially, culturally, or spiritually disadvantaged due to institutional policies and practices. Systemic violence in schools may range from practices that prevent students from learning to policies that have discriminatory effects or foster a climate of violence (Adams, 2000). This view goes beyond the individual as perpetrator and puts into question the role of the institution as a site of discipline. It is not only the individual student’s disruptive and/or violent behavior harming other students by preventing them from learning. The policies and practices of the schools may also have the same effects (Hyman & Perone, 1998).

Few scholars have been focusing on causes of indiscipline that may stem from an institution’s structure and management, such as the teacher’s organizational socialization of dependency on administrators or the professionalization or deprofessionalization of his role. One manifestation of this is that the task of disciplining students is separated from that of teaching them; the teachers either teach their subject or control the student behavior through rewards and punishments (Watson, 2008). If classroom management is not effective then teachers call security or the administrators. One argument is that, in consequence, reliance on outside-the-classroom personnel or the police to deal with misbehaving students decreases the willingness and determination of teachers and schools to act preventively and also undermines their authority in the eyes of the students who, in turn, misbehave more (Hyman & Perone, 1998; Devine,
The unintended effect of teacher professionalization (allowing teachers to teach while administrators will do the rest) and schools’ reliance on the police is basically the renouncement by teachers and schools of their traditional authority.

Lefstein (2000), presents a similar argument, but from a different angle. Being in agreement with Foucault (1979), he asserts that for modern capitalist societies the issue of discipline and control is central to the operation of all institutions; surveillance of all people in all spaces seems to be the best method of control and, indeed, surveillance has been a key strategy for reducing student indiscipline in schools. In the traditional classroom, for example, the teacher has her desk higher than the students’ desks, and with one glance she can check the whole class. Lefstein has found that, in today’s secondary school classrooms, surveillance has suffered because teachers are seldom trained to think of teaching as being linked with control and surveillance. Teaching and control are presented as separate roles and the focus is placed on knowledge of the academic subject and the methodology of teaching. We again run into this idea of promoting professionalism in teaching by training teachers to concentrate solely on the transfer of academic knowledge and, unsurprisingly, classroom disturbances have multiplied in recent years. The teachers, since they are not trained to deal with disruptive behaviors in ‘progressive’ ways consistent with their ‘progressive’ character of teaching, resort to traditional coercive techniques, which jeopardize their relationship with the students (see also Lewis, 2001). In order to cope with this tension, secondary teachers avoid the role of the disciplinarian, where possible, and refer behavioral problems to the ‘disciplinarians.’ It seems that the structure of modern schooling puts its teaching staff into positions where, unintentionally, they subvert their own power. Of course, the irony of the teachers’ weakening of their position of power vis-à-vis students, when indeed they think they strengthen it, needs to be elaborated.
Institutional factors such as policies and practices contributing to systemic violence, the nature of teacher training, and certain aspects of the professionalization of teaching are linked to the process of student discipline and may affect student behavior. If viewed in isolation though, these factors cannot explain the whole spectrum of student indiscipline and school methods for dealing with it. In observing this issue, sociology needs to take a more holistic approach in its understanding of the school, one that takes into account not only the encounters (students, teachers, school) but also: (a) the school as a bureaucratic organization; (b) the school in relation to society and its array of institutions; (c) the school as a place of expression, creation, work production, socialization, individuation, and consciousness formation of all the actors involved (students, teachers, parents, administrators, and other professionals); and (d) the dialectical relations among all these three. Indeed, the fact that institutional theories of student discipline do not take a “common-sense” approach towards understanding the reality of school life shows the power of institutions. My examination and analysis attempt to interpret the extent and manifestation of this institutional power.

Throughout the conceptual framework that follows, I present a wide range of literature. This literature covers all of the previously mentioned areas of inquiry which I consider necessary in order to understand student discipline in today’s schools: (1) bureaucracy; (2) modern organizations and the division of labor in them; (3) bourgeois schooling; (4) institutions within broader institutions; (4) mechanisms of the creation of new institutions; (5) modern governance and its role in constituting the citizen of the modern state; and (7) principles of student moral education. Each theoretical tradition contributes to the overall understanding of student discipline. My purpose is to locate the inquiry of this study in a position where I (the observer) become able to understand: the undisciplined student in relation to school officials; students and
officials in relation to the school as a modern bureaucratic organization; the school in relation to its array of institutions (inspection agencies, educational authorities, local government etc.), and the operation of those institutions in relation to the school. Through a synthesis of the theories that I present in the sections below I aim to explain what incidents are generally understood as student misbehavior.

Conceptual Framework

In this section I include works from the fields of sociology, anthropology, philosophy of education, and politics, and aim to appropriate their theoretical contributions in order to develop an institutional understanding of student discipline. There are three main questions that guide my framework: (a) what causes indiscipline (i.e., why do students not behave well); (b) by using which conceptual categories can we understand the modern day reality regarding student discipline; and (c) what philosophies should guide disciplinary practices in schools.

On the Causes of Indiscipline: The Capitalist School and the Culture of Reproduction

Before sociologists’ introduction of the concept of social reproduction, the question *what may cause student indiscipline* had been part of psychological inquiry, or was looked at from the perspective of the student-teacher-school-family nexus. In contrast, reproduction theorists recognize Education as being connected with the institution of Capitalism; the schools, they argue, are agents of the capitalist system, and may produce student non-conformity by the way they: (a) train individuals to serve the hierarchies of the capitalist division of labor; and (b) set their own culture to be experienced by and articulated with that of the working class student. For this perspective, working class students are breaking school rules due to the unjust education they are offered, which targets the working class in order to reproduce them (as a class) for the benefit of the ruling classes. They also develop an oppositional stance toward the school because
of the way they interpret the values and culture promoted by the school through their working class lenses. Initially, major thinkers in this field (Bowles and Gintis, 1976; Bourdieu, 1990; Bourdieu, 1991; Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990), who did not focus on student discipline per se, put forth a theory to explain the role and function of schooling in a capitalist society. Others later appropriated their work to better explain particular aspects of education, student non-conformity being one of them.

Bowles and Gintis (1976), in their book *Schooling in Capitalist America*, explain how schools legitimize social inequality through a meritocratic ideology that orchestrates the allocation of students to their “corresponding” positions as future workers in the hierarchy of occupations. They describe the school as an institution that replicates the workplace with respect to day-to-day activities and aspects of authority and control, with the aim of producing docile workers. In this political economic view of schooling, Bowles and Gintis do not concern themselves with the role of consciousness, ideology, and the counter-hegemonic struggles of the dominated classes (Giroux, 1983) in the process of reproduction. They do acknowledge however, that in general, this authoritarian school “also produces misfits and rebels” (p. 12), something that Apple (1995) recognizes as being overwhelming in working-class and inner city schools where students completely reject the “hidden curriculum” by “bugging the teachers,” lateness, truancy, bullying other students, and breaking all kinds of rules.

Althusser (1971) introduced the concept of schools as being Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA). As such, through rituals, practices, and the dedicated teachers’ teaching (for Althusser, teachers function as agents of the State), schools cultivate hegemonic ideologies, which, among other things, conceal the functions of schooling as a reproductive mechanism. ISAs also make the students obedient without exercising force, something that the Repressive
State Apparatuses (such as the Police) resort to. Althusser, however, also noted that the school is the only State Apparatus that is dominating and liberating at the same time. This means that a student can overcome the dominant hegemony through education as well as escape his class position by doing well in school.

The sphere of culture (largely neglected in the early work of Bowles and Gintis) and its mediating effects on reproduction became the focus of analysis in Bourdieu and Passeron’s work *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*, which influenced or shaped much of the sociology of education thereafter. In this elaboration on the function of education, Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) introduced the concepts of symbolic violence, habitus, and cultural capital, which are very useful tools in understanding how “the power of institutions” is exerted on students and how the schools are actually fulfilling their reproductive role. Bourdieu and Passeron view education as a practice of symbolic violence, directed by an authority with the aim of coercing students into a cultural consensus. The students come to school with cultural capital and a primary habitus, taught to them by the family, and have to receive a durable training that will make certain ways of behaving, which reflect and also “serve the material and symbolic interests of the dominant groups or classes” (p. 41), automatic. The effectiveness of the pedagogic work of schools, measured by how much schools can inculcate the dominant habitus, is defined by the extent to which education must impose the dominant culture (re-culturation).

In fact, the more remote the students’ primary habitus (In the case of North America, in groups such as the working class, immigrants, Blacks, and Hispanics) from the habitus of the dominant classes (which is promoted by the schools), the less effective schools are in trying to

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9 In Bourdieu and Passeron’s words (1990), symbolic violence is “the imposition of a cultural arbitrary by an arbitrary power” (p. 5), habitus is a durable training, “the product of internalization of the principles of a cultural arbitrary capable of perpetuating itself after PA has ceased” (p. 31), and cultural capital is the “cultural goods transmitted by the different family PAs” (p. 30). PA stands for Pedagogic Action.
instill the dominant classes’ habitus because, in this case, the inculcation of the new habitus corresponds to a complete substitution of the primary one (re-culturation) (p.44). Education means -- and this appears to be legitimate to most people’s eyes -- training those who do not share the dominant culture, to commit cultural suicide.¹⁰

Bourdieu and Passeron do not discuss any effects that this re-culturation may have on student behavior precisely because of the assumption that schools produce the conditions that allow for misrecognition of the symbolic violence they exert, which in turn produces recognition of the school as a legitimate institution of education. This legitimizes the class relations the school helps maintain because the mechanics of this process can remain unrevealed. In Bourdieu and Passeron’s words, “the educational system objectively tends, by concealing the objective truth of its functioning, to produce the ideological justification of the order it reproduces by its functioning” (1990, p. 206). Therefore, the effects of education are justified in the minds of those who do well in school (and subsequently in the labor market), but also of those who do not, and no one has a reason to turn against the system. However, following Bourdieu and Passeron, Lessig (1995), who also describes education as a violent process “that proceeds from one with authority to one who can be disciplined for resisting or challenging this authority” (p. 974), points out that students are forced to rebel against this violent act that deprives them from getting

¹⁰In Bourdieu and Passeron’s theory social reproduction can take place because the “dominant pedagogic work”, the work of the schools, “does not produce the conditions of its own productivity” (p.51). Regardless of how distant is the primary students’ habitus from the dominant habitus that is promoted in schools, if the schools were true to their aims to inculcate the dominant habitus to the students of all classes then the system would be more egalitarian. Therefore, it is not the student/school cultural difference that really matters: the fact that the schools do not complete their productive work becomes the precondition of the completion of their reproductive function. Bourdieu and Passeron add that, “nothing better preserves the pedagogic interests of the dominant classes than the pedagogic ‘laissez-faire’ characteristic of traditional teaching…(it) seems predestined to serve the function of giving legitimacy to the social order.” This alludes to the importance of the institutions and their practices.
a democratic education that respects their culture. Rebellion against the school may be expressed as oppositional behavior or lack of discipline.

Bowles and Gintis’ and Bourdieu and Passerón’s insights have been used to introduce the notion of rebellion and counter-hegemonic student behaviors. Given that the poor and most disadvantaged in North America are people of color, many ethnographic studies have examined the reproduction theorists’ assumptions from a racial/minority perspective that stresses the way the dominant classes represent the Other and the implications of such representations (Ferguson, 2001; Valenzuela, 1999; Fordham, 1996). The inference developed by this line of work is that it should be expected for students to rebel against a system that disenfranchises and represses them.

A similar view has been introduced by cultural anthropology in what is known as theories of cultural difference. All scholars of this tradition, inspired by the work of Heath (1983), share the following common belief, as epitomized by Eisenhart (2001):

…group differences in culture – defined as patterned ways of behaving, thinking, or feeling, formed over time as an adaptation to specific environmental conditions, and learned through socialization in the home community – set the stage for later success and difficulties in school. (p. 211)

The implications of this are clear. When children of a working-class background go to school, they continue to behave in a manner learned at home, and their middle class teachers perceive them as being undisciplined or slow (Heath, 1983). To say it in Bourdieu’s terms, the bigger the distance of the primary habitus from that promoted in schools, the higher the probability that a child will have learning difficulties and/or be mal-adjusted, i.e., undisciplined.

Therefore, it can be argued that it is through the promotion of bourgeois cultural standards in schools that the student with behavioral problems is created. Behaviors are not inherently problematic, but are interpreted as such from the school’s cultural perspective. Based on this, many students of a working class background are destined to fail or be classified as
having behavioral problems. Of course, the question as to why some students easily adjust to the school culture despite its distance from their home culture remains unanswered.

Between the two extremes, structure and agency, stands the cultural reproduction paradigm. Theorists of this tradition (Willis, 1977; MacLeod, 1987; Anderson, 2000; Foley, 1994), though still focusing on reproduction, stress the inability of the school to complete this reproduction by itself. The culture of those who rebel against it is the main condition allowing the reproduction process to be completed through schooling. Schooling presupposes an embracing of behaviors and a following of rules against which the cultures of low SES students clash. These students’ behaviors indicate their conscious decision not to accept the education that the school offers them; they cut classes, provoke the authorities, make fun of or bully other students, and sabotage the teacher’s efforts to teach. In this tradition of thought, the choice of young people not to conform is viewed as resistance.

The assumption that students’ misbehavior can be perceived as resistance opened a whole new discussion over what constitutes resistance. Is every oppositional act resistance, and if not, then what constitutes such an act? Is cutting classes, insulting teachers and other students, distracting the educational process, or challenging authorities a form of resistance? The insights of Noguera and Canella (2006) are very useful here. They highlight Giroux’s distinction between simple oppositional acts and conscious actions that are “rooted in a deliberate critique of one’s circumstances” (p.335) and conclude that resistance must be strategic or have a purpose. Having fun in school before passively accepting one’s “destiny” (factory work, a menial, low paying job, or no job at all) or following “the code of the streets” shouldn’t be considered resistance (in the sense of a critical stance toward one’s conditions of existence) without examining the student’s motivation. In cases where opposition has the goal of ameliorating the quality of one’s
conditions or bringing about social change in general -- in short, if it points to “non-reproductive ‘moments’ that constitute and support the critical notion of human agency” (Giroux, 1983, p.102) -- then, oppositional behavior is resistance. Otherwise, it stands closer to a manifestation of what Ferguson (2001) sees as, “the power of institutions to create, shape, and regulate social identities” (p. 2) by applying principles of social inequality and control, or what Noguera and Cannella (2006) name “little more than a form of conformity” (p. 336), since by rebelling against the system in a self-destructive manner, these students help the process of reproduction.

The reproduction paradigm does take into account the institutions, but limits its horizons to the power of only a few institutions, predominantly the markets, bourgeois social organization, and working class ideology. Theorists of cultural reproduction in particular recognize the dialectical relationship between culture and structure as well. However, this tradition does not examine the school as a dynamic, bureaucratic organization in relation to other institutions (the meso-level), and neglects the day-to-day processes (the micro-level) of institutional operation. These levels, and their relationships, may potentially affect the proliferation and/or intensity of students’ transgressive behavior over time. I do not believe that the markets or the working class ideology are in themselves sufficient to explain student indiscipline, but certainly, the effect of cultural capital and habitus, the role of culture, and the possibility of resistance need to be examined as contributory factors.

On the Principles of Good Discipline: The Unforeseen Effects of Individualism

The French sociologist Emile Durkheim studied extensively the function and effects of education, and explicitly addressed the issue of student discipline in his work *Moral Education* (1961). In this book, he postulates the very significant thesis that education, if it aims at cultivating moral human beings, should not address only individuals but also the groups in which
these individuals belong. Durkheim’s morality consists of: a) “the spirit of discipline” that promotes regularity of behavior and imposes restrictions with the aim of cultivating self-control in a world, which, in its infinity, may disorient or even void the self; b) a willingness to work for a superior goal; and c) autonomy. I will refer to the last two because their full understanding, I believe, throws light on the disciplinary picture of today’s schools, which stress the first without paying attention to the other two, and “the spirit of discipline” seems to depend on these for its development.

Durkheim argues that a superior goal can only be to serve the common good:

…man acts morally only when he works toward goals superior to, or beyond individual goals, only when he makes himself the servant of a being superior to himself and to all other individuals. Now, once we rule out recourse to theological notions, there remains beyond the individual only a single, empirically observable moral being, that which individuals form by their association—that is, society. (Durkheim, 2002, pp. 60-61)

The role of the school, according to Durkheim, should be to socialize, to unite the child with society. Moral endeavors are only performed inside and for the society, inside and for a group. Even the achievement of individual discipline and self-control (a task confined to the individual) cannot be fully realized in isolation; the child like any person is “a system of ideas, of feelings, of habits, and tendencies, a consciousness that has a content”(p. 73). This content is enhanced only as part of collective representations, of a collective consciousness. For Durkheim, supremacy must be given to society and clearly the group is to be viewed as the unit of education.11

11 In his seminal work The Elementary Forms of Religious Life (1995), Durkheim elevates society to the status of a god of creation due to the unique power it has to synthesize (and synthesis is the mother of creation) the representations of all peoples’ consciousnesses, to create the consciousness of consciousnesses. “A society is the most powerful collection of physical and moral forces that we can observe in nature” (p. 447).
Regarding autonomy, Durkheim (2002) stressed its seeming incompatibility with the idea of discipline in order to reconcile the two with his analysis. How is it possible, he asked, for people to be expected to follow rules and to enjoy self-determination at the same time?

Today, everyone acknowledges, at least in theory, that never in any case should a predetermined mode of thought be \textit{arbitrarily} [my italics] imposed on us, even in the name of moral authority. It is not only a rule of logic but of morality that our reason should accept as true only that which it itself has spontaneously recognized as such. If so, it could not be otherwise with behavior. For since the end and \textit{raison d’être} of an idea is to guide behavior, what does it matter that thought is free if behavior is controlled? (pp.107-108)

He refutes this contradiction by reasoning that people are free when they follow rules that are not imposed on them; when the individuals freely desire and allow these rules to regulate their behavior. This desiring of our limitation can happen only through informed consent, which follows on from a full explanation as to the existence and purpose of the rule. Therefore, in Durkheim’s words, “to teach morality is neither to preach nor to indoctrinate; it is to explain” (p.120).

Using Durkheim’s insights, we can illuminate certain aspects of student discipline in today’s schools. Let us first examine the proposition that the group needs to be the unit of education and examine the degree to which the group becomes the unit of education. It is widely recognized that a typical North American school is organized to promote individualism.\footnote{One reason, I think, is because the effects of organizing the students as a group or groups are unpredictable. As Karen Fields suggests in the translator’s introduction of \textit{The Elementary Forms of Religious Life} (1995), “…the human nature on which we depend, our social nature, is our uplift and our downfall. The only exit from this dilemma appears to be individualism. But the incompatibility of individualist assumptions with human nature as \textit{it can be observed in the real world} was chief among Durkheim’s discoveries in \textit{Formes} and throughout his work.” (p.Ii)} In comprehensive high schools, in particular, students follow an individualized program of studies, and they can only refer to their fellow students in the general sense of the year-cohort rather than a stable group whose members take all classes together and develop a sense of community.
Therefore the students do not have an immediate, stable group (in the Durkheimian sense) to get attached to, and the teachers, likewise, do not have a social group to make it the unit of education; it only seems that they do. What they have is simply individual students who share the same classroom, like passengers who share the same bus to reach a given destination. These classes have a transient character and never pull together as a “unity in the real” with common goals, the achievement of which requires relations and action. Individuals alone cannot arrive at a social “real” because it is the element of the collective that makes it possible. The primary milieu of creation is society in action. As Durkheim (1995) puts it:

This is so because society cannot make its influence felt unless it is in action, and it is in action only if the individuals who comprise it are assembled and acting in common. It is through common action that society becomes conscious of and affirms itself. (p. 421)

Of course, schools are aware of their individualistic nature, and try to organize the students as a school (as opposed to class) community. They have athletic and artistic events, student clubs and so on. This may partially compensate for the lack of the class-group, but it does not make the group the unit of education. I believe that this void by default has at least two consequences. First, the students do not utilize instructional time, during which they enjoy the benefit of adult input, for their own making of the social “real” with collective representations. Second, they are left predominantly under the influence of peer groups (Coleman, 1961, Durkheim, 1995) or the impersonal, imaginary community of markets and more recently the internet (Strike, 2008). In short, the school does not simply miss an opportunity to modify and counteract external influences (as it is usually presented). It actually fails to build the social “real” together with these influences.

The other aspect of morality, which is the cultivation of autonomy in the students, is also an issue of concern in the modern school. As I mentioned before, students may be autonomous in
following rules that constrain them when these rules are freely self-imposed. Students are willing to follow the rules when they “sense the moral authority” in them. Of course there is nothing about the rule \textit{per se} that gives this authority, but rather it is how much authority the teacher, who establishes the rule, puts into it. Therefore everything depends on the teacher and his authority. Durkheim (2002), suggests that the teacher’s moral authority derives from himself and is based on the greatness of the task of teaching, which in Durkheim’s time meant the entire development of a child, the Greek \textit{paideia}. There is nothing like that in the modern school. The professionalization of teaching goes hand in hand with specialization and functional differentiation. Teaching the academic subjects is considered a different role to instilling morality and discipline in the students. Rules that aim at correcting behavior seem to violate the teacher-student relationship. Today’s teachers ask, “What does teaching that aims to free students’ minds and open up their horizons has to do with limiting behavior?” Ironically, Durkheim addressed this question back in 1903, but policy makers, teacher-training programs, teaching institutions, and teachers have all failed to understand his arguments.

To conclude with Durkheim’s contribution on the elements of discipline, I believe that the modern school does not have the structural capacity to instill morality and discipline in its children. Does it educate the whole child, having at the same time the group as its unit of education? Is it capable of cultivating autonomy in the child by instilling a desire to follow the rules? Nothing of the kind! Its individualistic approach and restriction of teachers’ moral authority do not promote an effective approach to student discipline.\footnote{Unfortunately, with contemporary schools, student discipline is not the only area of disappointment. As Valente and Collins (2010) indicate, the schools, under President Obama’s directives, are coerced into teaching, which concentrates on student data and test score improvement. This, the authors explain, is harmful for various reasons, and distorts the nature of education. Teachers are viewed as trainers of the future workers and the students as customers attending a coaching session.} Instead, they contribute to the creation of the conditions, the instance, which triggers student misbehavior. According to
Durkheim (2002) this state of affairs can be described as over-discipline (focusing excessively on the spirit of discipline without cultivating autonomy and the willingness to serve society):

It is not necessary that school discipline embraces all of school life. It is not necessary that children’s attitudes, their bearing, the way they walk or recite their lessons, the way they word their written work or keep their notebooks, etc., be predetermined with great precision. For a discipline so extended is as contrary to the interests of real discipline as superstition is contrary to the interests of true religion, and for two reasons. First, the child sees in such requirements only detestable or absurd procedures aimed at constraining and annoying him—which compromises the authority of the rule in his eyes. On the other hand, if he submits passively and without resistance [my italics], he becomes accustomed to doing nothing except upon somebody’s order—which destroys all initiative in him. …a pattern of regulation so encompassing could not fail to have the most unfortunate influence on the child’s morality. If it did not make a rebel, it would make a morally impoverished person of him [my italics]. (p. 153)

This description of the process of over-controlling student behavior is the reality in most American inner city schools today. It would be unnatural on the part of the students not to rebel. Given this over-controlling, one would expect American inner-city schools to have even more disciplinary problems. What they currently have is considered excessive, but I think that, given the conditions, it could be far worse. In actual fact, the limited non-conformity to the disciplinary regimes of such schools is an unfortunate indication of the damage that schools successfully inflict on their students by over-disciplining: they create the “morally impoverished person” in the students and this, for those who suffer it and for the society as a whole, is tragic and irreversible.

Durkheim’s powerful theoretical contributions have been very influential. Lawrence Kohlberg, for example, combined his cognitive developmental approach with Durkheim’s understanding of moral development to formulate and test the “moral atmosphere” theory in which he “hoped to give priority in the power of the collective in a way that also protected the rights of the individual” – in short, to marry individualism with collective socialization (Snarey
& Samuelson, 2008, p. 58). To this end he founded “Just Community schools,” in which he promoted moral growth through the practice of direct participatory democracy. Kohlberg found that this democratic practice in a unified school community offers the most appropriate environment for cultivating discipline and autonomy because it counteracts forced compliance through group solidarity. I believe that, even though this is very good training in the principles and practices of democracy, a successful approach to discipline and morality needs to also mobilize into action the smaller class unit, as opposed to the whole school, and not only for school governance. To democratize Durkheim, he did not place enough emphasis on the authority of the teacher and instead over-stressed the authority of the whole school community.

It seems that to reach the point where students choose to follow rules (i.e., to be autonomous and disciplined) requires appropriate teaching: that explains and does not impose; that emanates its authority to the rules (which then become worthy of respect); and is able to mobilize action on the scale of the everyday. That is, teaching which inspires the “plus” that the social creation of a soul requires. This creation of the soul in society (creation for the consensus view, but “managing” or “production” for the conflict and power decentering paradigms) is a dangerous and controversial enterprise, and has increasingly become the center of sociological inquiry. While the “correct” (Durkheimian) socialization practices are not in place in schools, education continues to mobilize the creation of new representations, which in turn, institute new subjectivities (these of the undisciplined among others). I review this literature below. The individual is viewed as being one locus of power among other interrelated loci, which aim at the “regulation of individual self-reflection, self-examination, and consciousness” (Popkewitz, 1998, p. 23). These works shed a new light on the understanding of student discipline and help us to look at it from a new and multifarious perspective.
Towards an Understanding of School Discipline

In this section I present literature that provides a conceptual framework to help us understand student discipline in today’s school. I include theorists who analyze: (a) the bureaucratic nature of modern organizations and the functional-structural differentiation of personnel; (b) the preferred practices of modern institutions; (c) the nature of modern governance in general; (d) the construction of the categories of the normal and the pathological in modern societies; and (e) the way all of the above dialectically affect each other as institutions. I believe that knowledge derived from these areas of inquiry provides a comprehensive and objective perspective from which sociology can observe and understand student discipline.

The normal and the pathological.

Disciplined / undisciplined is the expression of the normal / pathological classification applied to schoolchildren. These are: a) either/or classifications in the sense that they encompass the totality of the population: all people (students) are either normal (disciplined) or pathological (undisciplined); and b) negative in nature: first, using rules we define / produce the pathological (undisciplined) and then, whatever does not belong in this category, by default, is understood as normal (disciplined). In short, the pathological precedes the normal, which is defined as what is not pathological. Given that every classification involves rules, the question of rules has been examined from the perspective of the creation of the ‘normal’. As Georges Canguilhem (1991) first argued in The Normal and the Pathological, and as Michel Foucault demonstrated in his various histories of the practices of normalization (especially Madness and Civilization), rules inform us of what is pathological. The term normal itself derives from the Latin norma, which means rule. The normal is that which conforms to the rule. Conforming to the rule when it comes to school behavior thus refers to not transgressing the rules that regulate it (Popkewitz, 1998).
Learners or undisciplined?

After Durkheim’s brilliant interpretation of phenomena such as religion or suicide as social facts, the normal/pathological distinction had to be questioned under this new light as well. How much were conditions such as “insanity” socially constructed? Following Popkewitz (2001), it is easy to understand the disciplined/undisciplined distinction as one of the many governing technologies deployed for the construction of subjectivities in schools. He argues that modernization and the Progressive movement brought with them the appropriate epistemes (systems of knowledge and expertise) to help in achieving the vast transformation they had promised on the political, economic, and cultural levels. For this, a “New Man” had to be created: self-disciplined, able to reason, hard working, responsible, and a good citizen. The schools were supposed to produce this New Man and the epistemes, (psychology and statistics being some examples), were supposed to help by: providing the necessary practical technologies; creating the categories within which people would experience and understand the self and the world; assessing competences and progress through quantifiable measurements and targets; and justifying everything using reason.

Psychology grasped the categories of “attitude” and “personality” and utilized them to turn the self into an assessable and manageable unit (Rose, 1989). It named the children “learners” who had to “develop,” and became the science responsible for having their whole existence (mind, behavior, ideas, feelings) under surveillance in order to construct desired subjectivities (“desired” in the sense of having the internal discipline to contribute productively in the building of the nation). Progressive pedagogies decided that teachers and children were knowledge producers and makers of meaning. While this seems appealing, the practical implications meant the acquiring of knowledge dictated by the curricula, the content of which
has “more to do with administering children than with understanding the processes of knowledge production in the sciences, literature, and history”—something that brings us back to Bourdieu’s insights (Popkewitz, 2001, p.330). This development became the base for a critical separation regarding pedagogic practice, what Popkewitz calls binary: the “cognitive” was detached from the “affective” part of education, with teachers been encouraged to stress the former and neglect the latter. And what if a child is not a learner? What if his dispositions and practices are incompatible with curricular knowledge structures? This child is not normal, and apparently the teacher cannot do anything about it. Responsibility for the affective part of the child, feelings and behavior, is given to other professionals and, in the case where schools do not have these professionals, the child is relegated to the group of students that the teachers call recycling material and declared to be uneducable. These students are left to roam the school hallways, hang out in the suspension / holding room, or are out of school all together.

**Undisciplined, sick, or developmentally challenging?**

Schools today are under a new regime, the science of ‘management’ and control that can also be interpreted as a form of governmentality. The administration watches all interactions among students, among teachers, and between students and teachers intensely, documents all misconduct, and analyzes it scientifically. The management of degeneracy was contested, and branched off among different sections of the state and its apparatuses, including the church, the school, the police, the courts, the social services, and the medical professions. Whoever does not think/act inside the discursive categories that promote self-normalization is excluded from the school, but his “well being” then becomes the center of interest of all these other organizations/professions. The undisciplined student is created in these processes of exclusion because, “concepts [regarding the undisciplined, in this case] are drawn from the values of
particular groups in society, and applied in a way that presumed to judge all children” (Popkewitz, 2001, p. 324).

There has been a long-standing debate about how much of the children’s misbehavior is “real.” In recent decades Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) has become an increasingly commonly diagnosed school-related children’s disorder. Symptoms are characterized by an inability to concentrate and/or control behavior, and these children suffer from restlessness and agitation. This behavior presents problems for teachers and parents alike, and they refer the children to mental health services, the most referred category being that of poor, Black boys (Bregging, 1994). According to a report published in Truthout, the medicalization of children’s mental and behavior problems has proven to be very lucrative:

On April 22, 2009, the US Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality reported that in 2006 more money was spent on treating mental disorders in children aged 0 to 17 than for any other medical condition, with a total of $8.9 billion. By comparison, the cost of treating trauma-related disorders, including fractures, sprains, burns, and other physical injuries, was only $6.1 billion. (Pringle, Feb. 2010)

According to the same source, in 2008 the market for drugs had overall sales of $40.3 billion, of which $4.8 billion was spent on ADHD-related medication. As Sandberg and Barton (2002) attest, before the 1950s doctors believed that hyperactivity was due to “minimal brain damage.” After the 1950s brain damage ceased to be cited as a cause of hyperactivity and was replaced by “minimal brain dysfunction.”

Special education is of a similar nature. A range of categories was created to classify “dysfunctional” children. Tests were developed to diagnose a range of disorders. Professionals were trained to treat and teach “these children.” Funding agencies were created. Special treatment rights were granted. But even more dysfunctional children then appeared. What is it that makes children only in advanced industrialized societies and only in recent decades to be so
challenging developmentally? In the section that follows, I answer this question through reviewing Mary Douglas’ work.

**It is what the rules say: Institutions in action**

Durkheim, in his writings on the sacred, was the one to first question of how institutions classify. In his essay *Primitive Classification* (1903) with Marcel Mauss he supported the theory that in any given society, the way it organizes /structures itself brings about its system of classifications and not the other way around. Classifications express the culture of the societies in which they are developed, and collective representations are shaped by those same structures / classifications, which are embedded in the division of labor. Durkheim used this argument for primitive societies. He couldn’t see how modern men could still be under the influence of institutions after escaping the control of the old, traditional (non-market) organizations. However, Douglas (1966; 1986) was able to interpret modern institutions as well using his theoretical advances.

Douglas’ analysis of ‘rules of separation’ in *Purity and Danger* (1966) illustrates how rules function to establish the boundaries between that which is appropriate and that which is inappropriate. Douglas argues that societies will tend to declare “any object or idea likely to confuse cherished classifications” (p. 37) as impure or dirty. These classifications, in turn, are themselves dependent upon a conceptual structure “whose key-stone, boundaries, margins and internal lines are held in relation by rituals of separation” (p.42). The rules are synonymous with the system of ideas. In attempting to understand the issues relating to student discipline, it is a mistake to assume that certain behaviors, in themselves, are transgressions. The wearing of hats, chewing gum, going to the bathroom without a hall pass, riding in the elevator, not going to school, and so on, are all behaviors that may fall into the category of disorderly conduct in one
context but not in another. Only by referring to the rules of discipline within a particular cultural frame of reference can we identify which behaviors would be categorized as disorderly. Therefore, the discipline rules themselves are a key factor in understanding how behaviors have come to be categorized and perceived as orderly or disorderly and the proliferation of discipline rules greatly expands the range of behaviors that can be categorized as disorderly. More importantly, the rules help to shape the perceptions of these behaviors as disorderly and trigger the administrative process, which, in itself, disrupts classroom and school routines.

Douglas’ work on classifications is a key starting point in the understanding of schools as social institutions, but her book *How Institutions Think* (1986) constitutes the foundation for it, since she describes the development of all social institutions. She refers to “shared classifications” (Durkheim’s “collective representations”) as the result of collective action. All ideas are rooted in social processes. People build institutions through their social interaction by indicating to each other what is right or wrong thinking, by forcing their practices and ideas in to a common schema, which can prove their opinions to be right by the simple number of independent, individual agreements with these opinions. All opinions seem to be people’s personal, independent opinions and beliefs, and this freedom to have an independent, personal opinion is recognized as the basis of social life and morality (Douglas, 1986, p. 91). As Foucault also stressed, institutions triumph over the thought of individuals and make them conform to their conventions (Douglas, 1986, p. 92). Douglas makes the point that institutions cannot have intentions and plan consciously; only individuals do. Therefore she takes Foucault’s argument a step further. It is people who classify, not the institutions, but the institutions (and that is how they establish themselves and survive) filter the information, which people use to classify. They do the filtering in two ways: a) by advancing some information while completely erasing other
information—thus controlling memory; and b) by changing their establishing metaphors according to the changes in the organization of work through directing of the economic payoffs and the constitution of language. Of course, individuals, even though they do the classifying, are not in charge of it; they are only involved in the cognitive process of its creation. “Individual persons make choices within the classifications. Something else governs their choices, some need of easier communication, a call for a new focus for precision. The change will be a response to the vision of a new kind of community” (Douglas, 1986, p.102). New organizations make old classifications obsolete and different classifications come to replace them in a deceptively smooth and seemingly innocuous manner:

Institutions systematically direct individual memory and channel our perceptions into forms compatible with the relations they authorize. They fix processes that are essentially dynamic, they hide their influence, and they rouse our emotions to a standardized pitch on standardized issues. Add to all this that they endow themselves with rightness and send their mutual corroboration cascading through all the levels of our information system. No wonder they easily recruit us into joining their narcissistic self-contemplation. Any problems we try to think about are automatically transformed into their own organizational problems. The solutions they proffer only come from the limited range of their experience. If the institution is one that depends on participation, it will reply to our frantic question: “More participation!” If it is one that depends on authority, it will only reply: “More authority!” Institutions have the pathetic megalomania of the computer whose whole vision of the world is its own program. (Douglas, 1986, p. 92)

Institutions do not simply classify; they produce “new” kinds of people by producing new labels. People who are labeled start behaving according to the requirements of the label they are assigned. Institutions ensure that they create the necessary realities for every label and that the individuals will assume the role of their allocated label. This creation of people is a recent phenomenon that started with the nineteenth century statistics; all of a sudden unknown up to that point medical and moral conditions appeared in abundance:
A veritable avalanche of numbers started to pour out of government statistical offices in Europe from about 1820. The exercise of counting, once started, generated its own thousands of subdivisions. As fast as new medical categories (hitherto unimagined) were invented, or new criminal or sexual or moral categories, new types of people spontaneously came forward in hordes to accept the labels and to live accordingly. …This is not like the naming that, according to nominalist philosophers, creates a particular version of the world by picking out certain sorts of things, for instance, naming stars, foregrounding some and letting others disappear from sight. It is a much more dynamic process by which new names are uttered and forthwith new creatures corresponding to them emerge. …people are not merely re-labeled and newly made prominent, still behaving as they would behave whether so labeled or not. The new people behave differently than they ever did before. (p.100)

The new people behave according to labels simply because they hope to get some comfort, or to benefit from it. Classifications, naming, and the making of institutions work in a never-ending cycle: people make institutions; institutions classify and name; institutions take the appropriate actions when people act according to their label; in the process of acting according to labels new people are created; these new people squeeze their new ideas in to the creation of new institutions, which continue to classify etc. and this goes on and on. People and things are rearranged and redefined with the incentive of new possibilities. Therefore, understanding ourselves involves understanding the institutions and the classifications typical of their kinds. Douglas asserts that most likely there are particular processes of classification involved in religious institutions and different ones in educational or medical institutions, which respond, of course, to particular kinds of reasoning. Comparing the styles of classifications would be similar to comparing styles of reasoning.

The institution of education is not an autonomous locus where people are provided with categories of thought, identities are fixed, and the parameters for knowledge and self-knowledge are set. It is part of the nexus of many social institutions that are interrelated, dialectically affect each other, and endlessly create new institutions while keeping their work invisible. Labels,
classifications, and styles of thought come ready-made and mobilize the educational community into the creation of new institutions. The student-learner, the professional teacher, the academic subjects and their importance, the developmentally challenging student, the right to education, the well being of the child, the notion of being competitive, the idea of security and so forth, all are institutions that come into the school. The problematic student is also an institution, having meaning only in relation to other institutions, and grows with attention and care: the more we care about learning, the right to education, professionalism, the well being of the child etc. the more we justify the production of “uneducable,” “at risk,” “hallway hangers,” “suspension material,” “cutters,” or “truants.” We develop more institutions (professions, programs, etc.) to attend the new categories and we find even more people in need of the new services.

Another very useful insight for this study is Douglas’ use of Durkheim’s “sacred” in connection with institutions. Institutions “must secure the social edifice by sacralizing the principles of justice” (Douglas, 1986, p.112). The sacred is the only one of the controls that institutions apply that is not supposed to remain invisible. According to Durkheim, the sacred has three recognizable characteristics: it is dangerous, in the sense that if it gets disrespected very bad things happen; it is referred to with tangible symbols; and attacks against it generate in members of the community a natural inclination to defend it. The sacred is an artifact, “a set of conventions resting on a particular division of labor which, of course produces the needful energy for that kind of system” (Douglas, 1986, p.113). It constitutes a point of stability; where nature and social order meet and reflect each other as they maintain the status quo.

Douglas analyzes the idea of justice as a social sacred by referring to Hume’s teaching about justice as an artificial virtue. Such an attack against justice, the legitimizing concept of our social order, raises many defensive attitudes: it is considered immoral, and a danger to our
society (something very close to Durkheim’s ideas about the attacks against the sacred in primitive societies). The idea of justice does not stand far from the idea of sacred for primitive societies:

…it is difficult to think about it impartially. In spite of a wide belief in the modern loss of mystery, the idea of justice still remains to this day obstinately mystified and recalcitrant to analysis. If we are ever to think against the pressure of our institutions, this is the hardest place to try, where the resistance is strongest. (Douglas, 1986, p.113)

Education can be viewed as becoming one of the sacred institutions in modern societies. No one dares to question its value; it is considered immoral to even say that schools may harm children. There are many organizations whose purpose is to protect the right of children to an education, but there is little open, critical discussion on umbrella terms such as “education for all,” “no child left behind,” or “effective schools.” The overwhelming majority of the population tends to defend education as sacred.

**Administration, bureaucracy, and differentiation**

The need for formality in the generation and enforcement of rules is directly related to why, for Weber (1978), legal-rational authority presupposes bureaucracy. Legal-rational authority is founded upon instrumental reason; the decision of whether or not to obey a command is founded upon a cost-benefit analysis (p. 215). In order for the costs of not obeying to be known and measurable, rules have to be stated and formalized and their enforcement needs to be consistent. Thus, having formal, stated rules and punishments becomes a necessity in a modern bureaucratic society.

In the school context, this implies that the rules of the school need to be written and available to the students. Similarly, the enforcements of the rules have to be consistent, and the punishments meted out in predictable ways. Otherwise, students will lack a rational framework
upon which to decide their school behavior. Is cursing in the hallways against the rules? What is the punishment? Is it actually enforced? The role of bureaucracy in this context is as an impartial hierarchical mode of administration where those at the bottom of the organization, those who are applying and enforcing the rules, have little room to interpret the rules in their own way or to only enforce them some of the time. If students know the penalty for disobeying a command, and they also know that if they are caught the rule will be enforced, then they can make a rational decision regarding the relative benefit versus the likely costs of not obeying a rule.

This basic Weberian insight on the functional necessity of bureaucracy in modern societies was taken and further (mis)developed by Talcott Parsons (1960, 1966) and the structural-functionalist school of social thought. For structural-functionalist social science, societies can be plotted along the axis of tradition and modernity. The more modern a society or organization, the more complex it is and, thus, the more differentiation that it should include. This move from simple to complex, traditional to modern, leads to ever increasing levels of bureaucratic growth and diversification (Black 1966; Lipset 1981; Mouzelis 1996). With economic and technological growth, we now have many new institutions to manage and new industries and technologies to regulate. With the growth of population and scale, we also have developed ever-increasing levels of governance and administrative agencies as well. As universities grow, for example, they become organized into an ever-increasing number of schools, departments, and institutes. Once schools had only one room, with one teacher for all subjects and levels. Now schools assign teachers to specific grade levels and/or subject areas and have separate staff for administrative and other non-teaching related tasks. It is the same with student discipline: as the schools develop and become more modern and complex, they tend to
include a greater number of discipline rules and staff to deal solely with enforcing obedience. New rules are now made regarding the use of mobile phones for example, rules that were not necessary only a few years ago, when this technology did not exist. Where teachers may have been predominantly responsible for student discipline many years ago, now there are specialized members of staff to deal with such questions; and, as time goes by, more members of staff come to acquire increasingly narrow and more particular specializations. As society grows larger and more complex, social institutions also become more elaborate and, in the increasingly difficult task of ensuring social cohesion and reproduction, develop ever more elaborate systems of rules and structures. From the point of view of modernization theory or structural-functional social theory, these changes in school organization and in discipline rules are completely understandable and unavoidable, little more than a reflection of the growing size and complexity of modern society.

A related body of literature is on Taylorization and efficiency (Cooke, 1910). The Taylorization of the workplace, the increasing division of work into as many separate functional tasks as possible, will presumably increase the efficiency of production. Specialization will allow the workers to become better and faster at their tasks, will make employees more replaceable, and will allow for a greater degree of management control over the production process. In the modern school, at least at the secondary and postsecondary levels, a teacher who knows many things is not necessary. Teachers of very particular types and subject areas are necessary. No teacher is irreplaceable. Similarly, the separation of the administrative functions from the teaching functions allow for a much greater degree of control of schooling and school personnel. Also, with responsibility for student discipline, by creating a specialized group of staff, we are able to employ those with special training and who, by repeating this task over and over, become
increasingly better at it. So, from the Taylorist perspective as well, the increasing bureaucracy and structural-functional differentiation of schools should make them more ‘efficient’ and, when it comes to student discipline, we should expect to see schools becoming ever better at controlling students.

**Institutions’ legitimacy: Neo-institutional remarks on “best practices”**

Organizations align their practices with the prevailing rationalities in order to increase their legitimacy and expand the chances of their survival, despite the actual efficacy of the new practices. Sometimes these new practices hinder efficiency and then efforts to boost efficiency undermine the newly adopted practices. This in turn undermines the organization’s legitimacy (the reason these practices were adopted in the first place). Therefore many organizations embrace institutionalized practices ‘ceremonially,’ in other words they keep a gap between official policy and actual practices, keeping the two ‘loosely coupled.’ This means that many modern organizations have two differing sets of principals they operate with: one to comply with their institutional environment (‘formal structure’) and another to address practical, everyday demands of the work place (‘informal structure’).

In trying to understand the institutional basis of formal structures, Meyer and Rowan (1977), present the very beginning part of Douglas’ argument about the role of the institutions and the way “they” think. People create institutions (programs, technologies, professions), which get squeezed into organizations as formal structures (which means that new institutions are created) with all the consequences this entails. Douglas directs her argument toward the creation of “new people” through institutional classifications. Meyer and Rowan stress that:

…the elements of rationalized formal structure are deeply ingrained, and reflect, widespread understandings of social reality. Many of the positions, policies, programs, and procedures of modern organizations are enforced by public opinion, by the views of important constituents, by knowledge legitimated
through the educational system, by social prestige, by the laws, and by the
definitions of negligence and prudence used by the courts. Such elements of
formal structure are manifestations of powerful institutional rules, which function
as highly rationalized myths that are binding on particular organizations. …These
rules define new organizing situations, redefine existing ones, and specify the
means for coping rationally with each. They enable, and often require,
participants to organize along prescribed lines. …New and extant domains of
activity are codified in institutionalized programs, professions, or techniques, and
organizations incorporate the packaged codes. (Meyer and Rowan, 1977, p.24)

These “packaged codes” are Douglas’ “ready-made classifications” according to which we think
and act. In this paradigm, rationalized institutions act as “myths” that force organizations to
expand toward directions that make them “isomorphic” with these social institutions or “myths”.

Reading this through Douglas, I find the word “myth” problematic, because it refers to “a
widely held but false belief or idea,” a “misrepresentation of the truth,” a “fictitious or imaginary
person or thing,” or a traditional story about supernatural beings or events (Webster’s
Dictionary). In any case, the phrase “not true” rings hollow and the writers do not make clear
what is not true in the case of the institutions they name “myths.” Do these institutions really not
exist? This is obviously a fallacy, because the authors name them (they are “professions,”
“programs,” and so on) and also indicate their impact (they force organizations to expand in
specific directions). Do they exist as token social institutions that do not deliver what they
promise, which makes them not fully true? For example, many programs exist and there is much
discussion on the subject of environmental protection, but this does not mean that the
environment is better protected. Do they exist as societal institutions, having little real effect,
with organizations continuing to function as before? I see the third scenario as being the case, but
I have my reservations on how much these institutions remain “myths.” Following Douglas, I
would be cautious in also using the word “myth.” We know that only by introducing certain
institutions in the blueprints of organizations and by making their introduction widely known
(since they are a means to legitimacy and more resources) do new classifications get pushed through, which gradually, become categories of thought, the base for the creation of “new people,” and in turn the creation of even more social institutions. If we take into account how “loosely” formal organizations and their day-to-day practices are “coupled,” the term “myth” is perhaps, a logical choice. But if we examine the long-term effect that “loosely coupled” institutions have on an organization, the word “myth” is a proof of how institutions discretely and inherently classify and organize the thinking for us.

Coming back to the neo-institutional argument, there are problems involved when organizational survival depends on isomorphism. First, efforts to conform to the environmental institutionalized requirements may conflict with operational efficiency, because these efforts concentrate on following “categorical rules” and not on “concrete effects.” Following “categorical rules” can entail rising costs without offering tangible benefits or the flexibility to contend with unique conditions. Second, the institutions the organization is supposed to conform with, may be in conflict with one another, which, when incorporated, become incompatible. In short, a “formal” structure differs from an “efficient” structure. The first concerns itself with following appropriate procedures (“categorical rules”), whereas the second is results-oriented.

Foucault refers to the difference between “formal” and “day-to-day” organization as well. Regarding programs, such as programs of discipline, he says that they never work as they are meant to, but this difference between the model and the practical application is not the difference between the pure of the ideal and the impure of the real, but rather reflects that there are different strategies operating, some of which influence or contradict others. These effects make sense if we examine their rationality despite the fact that they are different from what was initially planned (Burchell et al. p. 80-81).
Governmentality: Statistics and the common good

We deepen our understanding of institutions through Foucault’s definition of what governing a state means, known as governmentality. Dean (2010) defines “government” as “conduct of conduct,” which could be succinctly explained as directing the self-direction of behaviors and actions. Dean gives the following definition:

Government is any more or less calculated and rational activity, undertaken by a multiplicity of authorities and agencies, employing a variety of techniques and forms of knowledge, that seeks to shape conduct by working through the desires, aspirations, interests and beliefs of various actors, for definite but shifting ends and with a diverse set of relatively unpredictable consequences, effects and outcomes. (p.18)

We need to stress some key elements, which are fundamental for understanding governmentality. First, rather than having one aim, that of the common good, modern government has multiple ones. Rather than urging the citizens to obey the law, government ought to dispose “things” in the most effective way. As Foucault puts it:

There is a whole serious of specific finalities, … which become the objective of government as such. In order to achieve these various finalities, things must be disposed – and this term, dispose, is important because with sovereignty the instrument that allowed it to achieve its aim – that is to say, obedience to the laws – was the law itself; law and sovereignty were absolutely inseparable. On the contrary, with government it is a question not of imposing law on men, but of disposing things: that is to say, of employing tactics rather than laws, and even of using laws themselves as tactics – to arrange things in such a way that, through a certain number of means, such and such ends may be achieved.” (Burchell, Gordon & Miller, 1991, p.95)

By “things” Foucault means:

…men in their relations, their links, their imbrication with those other things which are wealth, resources, means of subsistence, the territory with its specific qualities, climate, irrigation, fertility, etc.; men in their relation to the other kind of things, customs, habits, ways of acting and thinking, etc.; lastly, men in their relation to that other kind of things, accidents and misfortunes such as famine, epidemics, death, etc. (Burchell et al., 1991, p. 93)
Apparently, population\textsuperscript{14} is at the center of a government’s interests/activities and, as Foucault stresses, in order to reach its aims and acquire its completeness, government cannot simply rely on laws and regulations. Rather, a range of complex tactics is needed, one being a good knowledge of all the “different elements, dimensions and factors of power” -- all the “things” -- (Burchell et al., 1991, p. 96), which can be rephrased as knowledge of the population. That is how the science of statistics, “the science of the state,” came into existence allowing for quantification of phenomena related to population. Statistics reveal regularities in the areas of labor, wealth, health, epidemics, mortality, etc., and are a precondition for informed government.

Second, economic efficiency and progress is at the heart of all government activity. For this, man is viewed as “economic man” and becomes a “manipulable man”; his activity is affected by and responds to the environment. Therefore he is constantly under a behavioral modification regime with the aim to reach the behavioral standards that secure maximum productivity. Human capital in the neo-liberal discourse is made of two parts; one is referring to the natural equipments of the body and the other to acquired skills, aptitudes, and competencies. Values produced by these competencies (with the aim to yield and further the profits of capital) are not only commodities but also satisfactions (which are the condition for securing the production of commodities). In this respect, each person needs to operate as an enterprise of the self with the aim to “make adequate provision for the preservation, reproduction, and reconstruction of one’s own human capital” while satisfying his quest for self-awareness, realization and presentation (technologies such as psychology, fashion, or the leisure industry emerged for these purposes) (Burchell et al., 1991, p. 44).

\textsuperscript{14} Pasquino (Burchell, Gordon & Miller, 1991, p. 114) explains how population as a social body is basically constituted by “isolated persons, individuals” and replaces the group.
It is important that each individual sees the social whole as a collective body on which he has an obligation not to impose an unnecessary burden (preventive care is an example of such effort); this body is responsible for compensation in cases of harm. The effort to behave and maintain the self in a manner that does not present risks to the social body is applied willingly by individuals because it is functioning as a currency in all socioeconomic exchanges. Since the social body is responsible for compensation in cases of harm, the state is viewed as the supervisor of exchanges between those who try to take good care of the self and those (individuals, groups, enterprises, or agencies) who try to make a profit in this process (Burchell et al., 1991, p. 45). This opens up new fields of government interventionism. The new administrative rationality, as well as technological and scientific advances, allow for the identification of all those individuals who, voluntarily or involuntarily, present risks to the self and to society. It subsequently proposes a range of technologies developed by the psychiatric, psychological, or social sectors to try to manage them. Based on this, different categories and disorders (disable and handicapped, developmentally challenging, hyperactive etc.) are established in order to justify its interventions.

Third, governmentality presupposes the idea that the governed is also an actor (and therefore has to regulate the self in the first place). In this respect, governance is the effort of governments to define and develop areas of possible governmental action, which has the aim to direct self-action and self-control thereby maximizing benefits for the population as a whole. Good governance needs to make the population, which represents the focus of all governmental activity, both the ‘subject’ and ‘object’ of this activity. It makes the population a Subject in the sense that government encourages individuals to self-develop and realize their needs, desires, and demands by becoming subjects “on a certain mode,” which accrues self-benefits, but also is
viewed as the precondition of proper governing (Foucault, 2010, p. 294). The way to achieve this is to address the soul (e.g., passions, pleasures, esthetics, attitudes etc.), something that Foucault names ‘psychagogy’. Government makes the population and Object in the way that it addresses its interests as collective interests as opposed to any individual interests, in the process of “intervention in the field of economy and population” (Foucault, 2010, p. 101). In short, the population is subjectified as individuals and objectified impersonally and as a whole.

All citizens need psychagogy, but especially people acting on uninhibited instincts. In particular, the poor and their cultures are at odds with the requirements of a society that focuses on economic progress. In short, economic progress has to be supported not only with economic, but also with cultural interventions because the poor, if unsupported, refuse to abandon poverty. Therefore, the mental attitude of the economic man has to be implanted using political technologies to those intractable classes in order to forge the desired “social citizen” (Burchell et al., 1991, p. 38).

Finally, better management of the population can be achieved through the art of discipline. Aided by constant surveillance, such management aims to cultivate internal controls and docility. In the social sphere security, as a governmental concern operates, according to Foucault, in a functional but also a “transactional” manner: government action controls the social field, but also gets problematized by it and this results in “an interplay between the exercise of power and everything that escapes its grip” (Burchell et al., 1991, p. 36). Therefore, the exercise of power from below is a reality according to Foucault, and any action (conscious or unconscious, resistance or not) when it escapes the grip of the powers that exercise governmentality may have unforeseen effects on social formation.
In light of Foucault’s insights education can be seen as an enterprise that stands removed from common beliefs about the function of schools. Instead of cultivating the minds of the children, the institution of education is laboring to give birth to homo economicus. It is training the future citizens of the state to become subjects, while treating them as objects. It collects a range of statistics on its students to be able to better manage them, methodically categorizes them in order to identify who may present a danger to the desired order, and becomes increasingly sophisticated in disciplining the undisciplined (with the supposed intention of helping them). Foucault finds over-reliance on laws contradictory to the notion of modern governance as such. The implications of this will be examined.

A Synthesis

The theories that I present in the above section may look unconnected at first glance. They examine different phenomena, have a different scope, or stand poles apart from each other regarding the way they explain the same problems. One paradigm may also critique another for addressing issues inadequately, or for overlooking areas that should be of concern. The early reproduction theories, for example, overstress the power of the capitalist social structures in maintaining the status quo through schooling and completely ignore agency. Bourdieu and Passeron added the sphere of culture and used concepts such as habitus, cultural capital, or symbolic violence to present a more refined analysis. They, indeed, laid the theoretical principles, which help us to understand why students who are not sharing the bourgeois culture promoted by schools, are more likely to reject education. However, the agency was still missing from their analyses; the capitalist system / bourgeois culture seemed to pull working class students into rejecting education, or not performing well academically, despite their effort to the contrary.
The cultural reproduction theorists came to close this gap. They explained how cultural identities motivate students to reject the only state apparatus that, according to Althusser, is repressive, but at the same time liberating. The working class culture, for example, makes the potential long term benefits of education appear in the minds of the students as unattractive and/or unattainable. The cost-benefit analysis that the students perform, involves weighing pain against pleasure, upward mobility against class identity (especially as this is connected to sexual roles), or the immediate, tangible benefits against future (but possible only after hard work) advantages. This cost benefit analysis is both logical, but also libidinal in nature and leads students to independently reject education. The reproduction needs the students to be complete and indeed, students complete it.

However, variation in place and time remains unaddressed. Why don’t all schools of similar populations generate similar levels of rejection on the part of the students? Students in some schools are more successful academically than in other schools. Why do seemingly similar schools have different trajectories regarding student behavior? Students in some schools are becoming increasingly disorderly while those in other schools remain the same, or become more cooperative. In order to answer these questions I needed to incorporate theories that could guide my understanding in at least four areas:

(1) Process in which cultural categories/values are generated and become institutions, which guide behavior, but have varying force depending on place and time. Why are some students under the influence of particular cultural categories more than others? Why do some schools have more behavioral problems?

(2) Rational and effects of the state in promoting only certain types of institutions and categories. How significant is it to measure occurrences of behaviors and performance? How important is to
reward for good behaviors? What are the goals of good governance supposed to be? Are governmental agencies properly aligned with schools in order to have the desired effects?

(3) Examination of the school as an organization that mediates the power of incoming institutions and as a generator of new ones. How are schools incorporating polices and what ideologies are promoted? What practices are preferred and what are the effects of those practices?

(4) Principles that would guide schools in their practices. What are the essential elements that schools need to recognize in order to promote good student behavior?

Based on the above four points, the reader may see why theorists like Mary Douglas and Michel Foucault were necessary to understand the social sphere, its interaction with the school, and the production of institutions. Max Weber, Talcott Parsons, Neo-Institutionalism, and Taylorism were vital for examining the function of schools as organizations, and Emile Durkheim for illuminating on the principals of discipline. By synthesizing elements from all these theories I will address the issue of variation across time and place, with regard to the production of the undisciplined student.

**Conclusion**

The idea that student behavior is a product of psychological, physiological, or environmental ‘deficiencies’ cannot explain the increasing numbers of undisciplined students in our schools today. Even if we accept that these ‘deficiencies’ are to blame, the question becomes why in advanced industrialized countries and only in recent years the ‘deficiencies’, and thus the undisciplined students, have multiplied. Observing the student-teacher-school interaction is not enough to answer the question. This requires an understanding of the logic institutions apply as actors and of their interactions with other institutions. The schools, as parts of this modern
institutional nexus, classify and become the recipients of classifications, create and in turn get created over and over again by what they, in cooperation with all other institutions, have created; the undisciplined student being only one such creation.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

Rather than focus on what the disciplinary situation is in the selected school settings, this dissertation examines how student discipline came to take its current form; how responsibilities are separated, how infractions are classified, how people are expected to act, and how the discourses which “found, justify and provide reasons and principles for these ways of doing things” (Foucault, 1991, p. 79) are produced and developed. This chapter presents the design of the study and an explanation of the instruments I use, gives reasons for the choices of schools and samples, and elaborates on the method of analysis. I conclude with the limitations of the study giving special attention to issues of validity.

Research Design and Instruments

The purpose of this research is to examine if and how the tendency in today’s schools toward an increase in disciplinary rules and regulations and the separation of teaching from the disciplining of students (which has been accompanied by the emergence of specialized personnel to deal exclusively with disciplinary matters) relate to student non-conformity. In short, I attempt to investigate the fit of the bureaucratic model, as discussed in the previous chapter, to the administering of student discipline in practice.

Research Questions

My inquiry had two points of focus (the first being a pre-condition for the second): (a) to uncover and describe the actual disciplinary reality in both research settings and (b) to investigate the institutional and normative factors pertaining to this reality. Specifically, I targeted the areas indicated by the following four questions:

1. What are the patterns, magnitude, and severity of student transgressions in the two research settings?
2. What are school officials’ definitions and perceptions of student transgression and disciplinary procedures in these two schools?

3. What regulations, rules, and practices are in place in each setting to address student transgression?

4. How is policy implemented?
   a) Are there discrepancies between general rules, institutional procedures, and actual practices?
   b) Is there formality in following rules and procedures?
   c) How is responsibility for sanctioning students for particular transgressions divided among school personnel?

**Comparative Method**

I designed this to be a comparative case study between two schools located in New York City and Athens, Greece. I deliberately excluded the single-case study and the same-country-comparative-case study designs in an effort to create a better testing ground for my hypotheses. The purpose is to explain student discipline (variable y) in relation to the administration of the school, the system of rules, and the ways school officials construct the disciplined /undisciplined categories (variable x). I want to determine whether there is a correlation between x and y and to examine the possibility of causality, i.e. how x plays a role in causing y.

As I explained in the introduction, it is often the case that, in single-case studies we tend to attribute ‘the what’ to the uniqueness of a setting. In order to avoid speculative assumptions such as this and examine the issues objectively, I chose a comparative method, which enables the researcher to identify factors that would have remained unexamined otherwise. By eliminating certain factors, such as the student SES, from the study, my hypotheses are that the administration of a school, the existence and application of formal rules, and the construction of the categories of disciplined and undisciplined significantly affect student discipline. In order to test my hypotheses, I selected two inner city high schools with similar student population
characteristics for the comparison. Single-case studies do enhance the understanding of complex issues or enrich our understanding of what is already known from previous works, but generally do not allow for the testing of specific factors (Tellis, 1997).

The other methodological dilemma was to choose between a one-nation and an international comparison. Due to my experience both as a teacher in Greece and in the United States, where I worked in Greek-American and New York City public schools, I came to believe that school administration and the application of policy tend to be similar among similar schools in a given country, but can vary significantly from their counterpart schools in a different country. In New York, inner city schools are organized along similar lines, their rule systems and disciplinary practices are comparable (Devine, 1995), and their staff and pupils (institutionalized actors) are expected to have similar beliefs and expectations regarding student behavior (Douglas, 1966). In Athens, inner city schools with a similar student intake differ from their NY counterparts in terms of administration, rules, and the construction of the disciplined/undisciplined categories. Therefore, a comparison between schools in New York and Athens appeared to be appropriate for this study. To put it differently, in a same-country comparison of similar inner city schools the effect on student discipline of administration, rules, and the disciplined/undisciplined categories couldn’t be objectively or as easily isolated and tested.

For this study, the structure and composition of secondary schools in New York City and in Athens are taken as a given, as exogenous variables. In order to answer my questions I compare how the two schools address similar infractions. If two different societies are found to have similar student behaviors, which their schools subsequently address using significantly different methods, then, the process of dealing with the behaviors (i.e. the schools’ policies and
practices) can be considered to be the most significant factor in determining the development and outcome of the behaviors and not the students’ SES and character (i.e. the culture that produced those behaviors.\textsuperscript{15})

The Selection of Cases

In selecting the two schools for this study I took into account: (a) the students’ SES, (b) ethnic and racial diversity, (c) school size, and (d) the school’s rank and category. I looked specifically for large, inner-city schools with diverse students of a working class background and low SES. According to the literature (Anyon, 1997; Devine, 1996) we expect to find more disciplinary problems in these settings and therefore a greater number of measurable incidents.

For each of these four selection criteria I chose indicators taking into account limitations and/or cultural specificities: a) for poverty I considered the students’ eligibility for free and reduced lunch in NY; and in Athens, unemployment rates, as estimated by the European Union Urban II Community Initiative (2007), and the existence of a food-shopping pattern known locally as “tefteri” or “veresse”\textsuperscript{16}. This is not an indicator used by the Greek Statistics Organization or the Eurostat. It is, however, what national newspapers use to describe the state of affairs regarding poverty; and the Greek people understand its meaning and relate to it (ETHNOS, Saturday, 2010, VIMA, Sunday, 1997).

\textsuperscript{15} The question of endogeneity, the possibility that observed similarities in behaviors across the two sites could, indeed, be a function of the different disciplinary practices and rules, shouldn’t be of concern in this study. I do not assert that the different styles of administration and rule systems produce certain behaviors, which turn out to be similar in the two sites. I study how the existing structures and rules address behaviors that students are inclined to exhibit anyway, such as talking on the phone, coming late, cutting class, etc. the similarity of which, I believe, is due to the convergence of culture in Greece and the United States.

\textsuperscript{16} This is a practice that was widely used in the ’60s and ’70s, when, due to poverty, people did not have money to pay for their grocery shopping. The shop owners gave them what they needed, and instead of taking money at the moment of the exchange, kept a list of the unpaid amounts in little booklets named “tefteria” with the hope that they would get their money back at a later point.
b) The NY schools keep a record of their student body racial composition, but there is no such statistic in Greece, where diversity as a category came into existence only in the late 1990s, due to the influx of mostly Albanian and Eastern European citizens. It has to be noted that diversity in Greece tends to be of an ethnic rather than a racial nature. A school is ethnically diverse when it educates children of non-Greek descent. School officials gave me rough estimates of the percentage of non-Greek students they had by looking at their students’ last names. Numbers above 15% or 20% were considered very high given Greece’s homogeneity, which counted 95-98% of the population as Greek in previous decades.

c) Enrollment is a category that needs careful attention due to the way the schools are organized. In NY the schools have three, four, and in some cases five or six circles of study and offer individualized programs to their students: students enter the building at different points during the day and have study programs of different lengths. Therefore, in a school with five circles all students co-exist in the building for only a few hours between 10:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m.; those who begin at 7:00 a.m. start leaving from 12:00 onwards. In Greece all schools have only one circle of study: students come into and leave the school building at the same time and study programs are not individualized.

Many NY inner-city schools are large and about 50% of all schools are overcrowded (Monahan, 2010; Colodner, 2010). There are claims that this affects student behavior and also the schools’ organization, day-to-day operation, and ability to control their students (Devine, 1996; Barker & Gump, 1964). The Greek Ministry of Education, following the Western model, had established schools as big as 1,200 students, but found that the management of these schools became very problematic. Rather than adopting appropriate administrative approaches they decided that no school should comprise of more than 300 students (Circular 351/02) and proceeded to partition
all large schools. The year of my research this process had been virtually completed, the only exception being the schools of the neglected area I chose.

d) By *category* I mean that the chosen schools were inner-city, and by *rank* I refer to a ranking, which has unofficial status. The two educational systems are organized differently, and I found categories such as *Student Performance* or *Entrance to 4-year Colleges* not to be comparable. However, the academic ability and character of the students that comprise each school is known and “rated” in the minds of those who “know the system well.” Therefore, by *rank* I mean the way in which schools are ranked officially or unofficially based on the differentiating role they are meant to accomplish and their “desirability” in the minds of officials, parents and students.

In N.Y., as Devine (1996) very well puts it:

> The 126 regular public schools in the city may be thought of as composing a pyramid divided into three strata. At the pinnacle are the four prestigious schools known as the specialized high schools. Admission to these leading schools is limited to those students who are able to pass a competitive entrance examination. … Most high schools, however, fall into the middle stratum. These are neither the best nor the worst; here one finds many of the academic-comprehensive high schools located in fairly well-integrated neighborhoods. Board of education jargon for these middle-tier schools is “ed-op” or “educational option”. … Although not elite, the ed op schools are also viewed as highly desirable schools and, so, attract students from other neighborhoods who are serious about education. … Occupying the bottom stratum of the pyramid are the lower-tier schools. … no one has a precise definition of “lower-tier” … But people well acquainted with the system have their own private listings of which schools fit in to the most undesirable category (pp. 22-23).

In Greece, there are two kinds of public high schools: the General and the Technical Lyceums, which, after 2006, have been known as EPAL. Technical Education has always been considered by Greek society as less prestigious. Students with a lower academic ability who were unlikely to succeed in the General Lyceum, i.e. in a college-based academic environment, would choose to go to EPALs. Generally, if we could divide the Greek students into high, middle, and low performers, the academically very good and middle-range students aspire to go to 4-year colleges
and stay in the General Lyceum, while the EPAL student population is a self-selected body of generally unmotivated, low performing, at-risk students.

The selection criterion figures for both schools in the comparison are presented in table 3.1. The NY school’s figures are based on the New York Department of Education statistics and the Athenian school’s figures on information I collected independently from European Union Reports, the school personnel, and the Greek newspapers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3.1 SCHOOL SELECTION CRITERIA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Enrollment</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student SES</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eligibility for free lunch: 60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eligibility for reduced price lunch: 11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Diversity</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanics or Latino: 56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian or Native Hawaiian/ Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Islander: 16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* This was the biggest school that existed in 2008.

**Research Instruments**

Data collection includes a) teachers’ and administrators’ interviews, b) document analysis (the study of legal statutes, rules and regulations, and school disciplinary records and documents), and c) observations. I wanted to see what was actually happening in both schools
with regard to student discipline, how their disciplinary records were constructed, how through
the school personnel’s perceptions and philosophies such constructions were supported, and how
policy and practice were articulated. The following table 3.2 defines which instruments I used to
answer each of my research questions and what information was collected with each method:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESEARCH QUESTIONS</th>
<th>INSTRUMENTS USED FOR THE COLLECTION OF DATA</th>
<th>FOCUS FOR THE COLLECTION OF INFORMATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What are the patterns, magnitude, and severity of student transgressions in the two research settings?</td>
<td>a. Documents analysis</td>
<td>Registered infractions &amp; school interventions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. Interviews</td>
<td>Predominant patterns of transgressions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. Observations</td>
<td>Predominant patterns of institutional reaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What are school officials' definitions and perceptions of student transgression and of the disciplinary procedures followed in these two schools?</td>
<td>a. Interviews</td>
<td>Definitions of disciplined / undisciplined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher and administrator educational philosophy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Knowledge and interpretation of rules / readiness to enforce them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reported/preferred practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What regulations, rules, and practices are supposed to be in place in each setting to address student transgression?</td>
<td>a. Interviews</td>
<td>Official disciplinary policy and how widely and thoroughly it is known and understood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. Document analysis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. How is policy implemented?</td>
<td>a. Observations</td>
<td>Policy implementation/how much are the rules followed by school officials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) Are there discrepancies between general rules, institutional procedures and actual practices?</td>
<td>b. Interviews</td>
<td>Style of implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Is there formality in following rules and procedures?</td>
<td>c. Findings from Question #3</td>
<td>What they choose not to implement and why</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Is responsibility for discipline divided between school personnel and if so how?</td>
<td>d. Document analysis</td>
<td>The role of specialists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The role of the administrators and the police</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Interviews

For the interviews I used semi-structured interview guides that were adapted to reflect the different roles and responsibilities (structural positions) of teachers and administrators. Interviewees were free to further elaborate on their answers and analyze areas they felt knowledgeable about. Interviews were designed to last 45 to 60 minutes, but most of them lasted about two hours, some even took three to four hours.

The questions focused on: the participants’ perceptions of disciplined/undisciplined behaviors; knowledge of and willingness to enforce school rules; evaluation of the rule and punishment system of their schools; the process they follow and criteria they use for disciplining or referring the students for punishment; and their most common and most difficult experiences with undisciplined students. They also elaborated on the division of responsibility among school personnel regarding student discipline, the contribution of specialists and the police in the process of student discipline, and their own perceptions regarding their roles as disciplinarians. Interviews with the administrators included questions regarding policy priorities, the school philosophy regarding student discipline, constraints in policy design and implementation, and perceived expectations from their employees.

I piloted both the English and Greek language versions of the interview guides. In NY, I interviewed three teachers from my research site, selecting from those who were not included in my sample. In Athens, I interviewed five teachers from schools other than my research site over the phone. I personally conducted all 70 interviews in the language, English or Greek respectively, of the interviewees. All but five were recorded and transcribed (see table 4.4 for sampling details).
Document analysis

This category includes laws, regulations, policies, and school documents (see table 4.3 below). Regarding laws and regulations I considered it necessary to examine: (a) those that determine the disciplinary processes in the two schools, indicatively, the Rules of Conduct, which also includes the suggested/allowed disciplinary procedures and punishments for N.Y. and the Presidential Decree 104/76, which addresses the issue of school discipline, for Athens; (b) the elaborate N.Y. regulatory system regarding certain key behaviors for which there are no provisions in Greece. Examples of these include regulations for behavior, which can be interpreted as discriminatory, bullying, harassment, or abuse (verbal, physical, or sexual), specifications for special categories of students (homeless, parenting, suicidal), and student rights; (c) provision for the same categories of transgressions when these exist in both countries such as policies for attendance, corporal punishment, or cell phone usage; and (d) the laws and policies that provide a framework for the operation of Greece’s educational system, allocate responsibilities to school personnel, and regulate the function of the student councils. Greek laws 1566/86 (known as the framework of the Greek public education), Ministerial Decree Y.A. Φ.353.1/324/105657/Δ1/16-10-02, and Circular Γ2/4094/23-9-86, define the Greek system. Of course, there are laws that are not directly related to education (such as N.3500/06 on the Combating of Intra-family Violence, and addressing corporal punishment), which do affect educational policy and therefore these were also examined, but not in detail. This not-directly-related-to-education category of Greek laws does not specifically focus on student discipline, but yields significant information on the subject indirectly by defining the responsibilities of teachers, students, and administrators.
School documents in the NY schools included student files, teacher referrals, truancy records, school building rules, memos, and letters distributed by the administration. In the Athenian school, I examined the documents: *Internal Regulation of the School’s Operation*, the *Attendance Record* for the year of the research, the minutes of the teacher assembly meetings, and the *Poinologio*.17

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3.3 DOCUMENT ANALYSIS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CATEGORY</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School records and documents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal statues, regulations, rules, policies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Observations**

17 Poinologio is the Greek counterpart of the American student disciplinary files. The difference is that infractions are recorded in a single book for all students in the school, rather than separately in individual student files, and in the order they take place, i.e., in chronological order.
Given that this study focuses on the school organization as a whole and not on the classroom as a site of student non-conformity, I observed places other than the classroom. Countless studies have already dealt with classroom disciplinary problems, as a simple internet-search under *Classroom Discipline*, and the many guides for teachers on how to effectively discipline their students, will attest.\(^{18}\) I decided to focus my attention on the places in each school that would most enlighten my research: (a) the deans’ offices for the N.Y.C. school, and the Principal’s and Assistant Principal’s offices for the Athens school, where disciplinary incidents that took place in the classroom or in other areas of the school came to be dealt with; and (b) the hallways and cafeteria in both schools, and two very small yards in the Athenian school, where infractions were taking place.

**Sites and Sample Selection Process**

I chose the research sites very carefully in order to secure the highest possible comparability. I took the NYC school as a starting point, and then examined information about Greek schools to find an appropriate comparison. For interviews, documents and observations almost all sampling was random, to eliminating bias, with the exception of some categories where I studied the entire record for one or three years, or interviewed the whole population. When I chose to study the full set of records, it was because either I found these categories very important in illuminating the study or it seemed more practical to study it as a whole than to sample it. The choice of laws and regulations was information driven; I thoroughly studied those that seemed central to the study.

There is not an exact correlation between the two settings regarding the instruments and sampling. The documents and school records I examined, the number of teachers and

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administrators I interviewed, and the locations where I conducted observations all have differences, which I will mention in the sampling of each category that follows. This is justified of course by the fact that the two settings were selected exactly because they are different from each other with regard to their organization/administration and the ways in which they understand the appropriate/ inappropriate behavior distinction. Roles, rules, and space functions are setting specific.

**Site Selection Process**

I selected the NY school out of convenience (having worked there as a teacher for nine years and as a dean of discipline for two). However, I concurred with “convenience” only because the school was a good example of a typical, large, overcrowded, inner-city, “lower-tier” public school.

Finding the Athenian counterpart was very difficult due to the lack of (available) statistical data (ΕΛ.ΣΤΑΤ, 2008). Therefore, I initially relied on expert opinion, newspaper articles regarding poverty in Greece, and some European Union studies (see section “Selection of Cases”) in order to find which urban areas had the population characteristics I was looking for. I then, personally contacted all the schools in those areas with the purpose of obtaining information about student enrollment and ethnic diversity. I called 41 schools in the area of Athens, 11 in the area of Thessaloniki, and 15 in Piraeus. During this process I learned about the actual meaning of the distinction between General Lyceums and EPALs and was persuaded that I needed to concentrate on EPALs. When I enquired as to which areas most mirrored the population of the NYC school, all educators directed me to the area I finally chose.

**Interviews**
Following the assumption that the larger the sample, the more representative it becomes, I interviewed 20% of the school personnel in N.Y. (putting together teachers and deans, i.e., 40 out of 202). Deans are overrepresented in the N.Y. sample because of their central role in the disciplinary process and their unique position, which in a sense is similar to that of the Greek teachers. I chose the entire population of deans and utilized the systematic random sampling technique for the teachers. From the administrators, I purposefully interviewed the principal and the assistant principal of security.

In Greece, the function of the dean of discipline does not exist. Instead, the teacher acts not only as a teacher (in the way we know it in NY), but also as a dean, academic advisor, and an extension of the administration. Given this task multiplicity I couldn’t imagine in advance how much variety their views would have, and I needed to ensure that my sample fully represented the reality of the entire school. Therefore, I made the sample of Greek interviewees bigger than the one I had had in NY. Using systematic random sampling I chose 33% of the teachers, (24 out of 72), and included the entire population of the administrators, four in total. All were eager to give me an interview.

Documents

The choice of laws and regulations was information driven; as mentioned before, I thoroughly studied those that seemed central to the study. For example, The Chancellor’s Regulations constitute the backbone of the organization of the NYC public education system and

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19 In the NY school the deans were teaching three periods and deaning three other periods each day. This equates to a work schedule similar to that of the Greek secondary school teachers, who teach an average of four periods each day and are also responsible for dealing with their students’ discipline including the patrolling of hallways.

20 In systematic random sampling the researcher knows her population (N), decides on her sample (n), calculates the interval size k by dividing N/n, and chooses from a list of her population in a random order in the following way: After selecting randomly the first integer from 1 to k, let’s suppose it is 6, starts with 6th and continues picking every kth unit. In this study wherever I refer to systematic random sampling I used lists of population in alphabetical order.
The Discipline Code is supposed to be the “Bible” in dealing with infractions. The Greek Law 1566/86 forms the framework of the public education system in the Greece, while the Presidential Decree 104/79 was issued to address issues of school indiscipline. In cases where an infraction was common to both school systems (the use of cell phones being an example), I had to find the Circulars or the Ministerial Decisions issued to address it, given that in Greece there is nothing akin to The Discipline Code, where all rules regarding student behavior are concentrated.

In my examination of student files I included 10% of the sampling units. Discipline referrals were impossible to sample reliably, and therefore, I simply examined all incidents in the student files and deans’ offices during the days of observation. As far as the truancy record is concerned I couldn’t think of any way to sample other than registering the entire year in which I was observing. My initial aim was to study truancy records going back three years, but the deans were unable to find the registers from the previous years. I chose to study all records in Greece in their entirety for reasons of compatibility. Due to the different record keeping and administrative approaches in Greece, I was initially unable to find a method of sampling, which would reliably represent the situation in the Greek school in a format, which enabled comparison with the U.S. school. (I later did find the appropriate format after organizing and studying the data.)

Observations

I carried out observations in the hallways of both schools, in the cafeteria of the New York school, in the yards of the Athenian school, in the three deans’ offices of the New York school, and in the principal’s and assistant principal’s offices in the Athenian school. In each location I conducted three, five to six hour-long observations, with the expectation of establishing patterns of behavior in each of them. Having completed the three observations in every location I did a preliminary, brief examination of the results with the intention of
continuing to observe in those locations where, and if, all three observations had yielded very different outcomes. That was the case only in the principal’s and assistant principal’s offices in Athens\textsuperscript{21} where I observed five rather than three days. As far as the Teacher Assembly meetings in the Athenian school are concerned, I was invited to observe twice.

I decided on the times to observe each location using a simple random time-sampling method. I had two bags, one with the locations to be observed and a second with all the days of the semester during which I was observing each school. First, I drew the place of observation from the first bag and then from the second bag the three days this location would be observed. I scheduled the interviews to be conducted during the remaining days. Some participants were willing to stay after their work hours or come earlier in the morning in order to be interviewed and therefore, on certain occasions, I also had interviews before or after an observation.

For a concise description of sampling see table 3.4 below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3.4</th>
<th>SAMPLING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SAMPLING UNIT</strong></td>
<td><strong>Population N</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N.Y. TEACHERS</td>
<td>182*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATHENS TEACHERS</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N.Y. DEANS</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N.Y. ADMINISTRATORS</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATHENS</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{21} The offices of the principal and the assistant principal in Athens are treated as one office because disciplinary issues were handled by the assistant principal and, during the periods he was teaching, or in cases of extreme importance, by the principal.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ADMINISTRATORS</th>
<th>Documents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N.Y. STUDENT FILES</td>
<td>1662</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N.Y. REFERRALS</td>
<td>Not-Known</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATHENIAN POINOLOGIO</td>
<td>4 books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATHENIAN TEACHER ASSEMBLY MINUTES</td>
<td>89 T.As.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N.Y. TRUANCY RECORD</td>
<td>1 book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATHENIAN ATTENDANCE RECORD</td>
<td>Minutes from 3 T.A. meetings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Observations |
|----------------|-----------|
| N.Y. OBSERVATIONS IN HALLWAYS, CAFETERIA AND OFFICES OF THE DEANS | 30 days | 10 places | Simple random time-sampling (three observations in each location) |
| ATHENIAN OBSERVATIONS IN THE HALLWAYS, YARDS, AND OFFICES OF THE PRINCIPAL/ASSISTANT PRINC. | 18 days | 6 places | Simple random time-sampling (three observations in each location) |
| TEACHER ASSEMBLIES | 2 days | 1 place | Dates were predetermined by the school. |
* In this number deans and people on leave are not calculated

*2 The Head Dean refused to give me an interview. A female dean was suffering from a difficult pregnancy and even though she was willing to be interviewed I decided not to ask her to do so.

**Analysis of Data**

I analyzed the data in two stages, and used mixed methods. The first stage was descriptive, and my data sets, in particular all data from school documents, were quantitatively summarized. I used simple descriptive statistics and frequency tables to present the disciplinary picture in each school. In the investigation of my dependent variable, *student discipline*, even my qualitative data, gathered through interviews and observations, was quantified. Following Ryan and Bernard (2003), I had phrased many of the interview questions in such a way as to produce “systematic elicitation” of “free lists,” which are then easier to quantify. For example with the question, “Which student transgressions do you consider to be serious?” interviewees produced lists of behaviors, which I then counted. In observations, I registered transgressions, a count of which gave basic statistics. From the study of laws, circulars, rules and regulations, I generated tables for each of the schools being compared, and related these to other tables that indicated the extent to which these laws were being implemented.

In the second part of the data analysis I measured my independent variables qualitatively. I used NVivo to analyze the NY data, but I did the Athenian counterpart manually. NVivo made the process of coding and the triangulation of data easier for the NY case, but in order to be able to do the comparison with Athens, I had to transfer all the results and then create most of the tables and charts using Excel.

In this study, my dependent variable is *student discipline* and I investigate it in relation to two independent variables, a) *school personnel beliefs and perceptions about student behavior*
and b) the administration of student discipline. Personnel perceptions were explored regarding: (a) characterization of, and beliefs about, student behavior; (b) the status of student discipline in their school; (c) school rules; (d) the school punishment system; (e) the division of responsibility for sanctioning the students; (f) the role of specialists; and (g) the preferred way of disciplining students. Regarding administration, I examined: (a) the system/policy of student discipline that is supposed to be in place in each school; (b) the disciplinary processes and rules that are supposed to be enforced; (c) the actual practices of school personnel; and (d) the division of responsibility and labor. I separate the variable of administration into attributes that are imposed externally and affect school policies and those that are decided in the school itself. For a detailed presentation of variables and indicators see table 3.5 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VARIABLES</th>
<th>FOCUS ON</th>
<th>INDICATORS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>(DEPENDENT)</strong> STUDENT DISCIPLINE</td>
<td>a) Patterns</td>
<td>1) How many transgressions per student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) Magnitude</td>
<td>2) Percentage of serious and very serious transgressions (seriousness is measured according to the NYC Discipline Code; Level 3 being serious and Levels 4 &amp; 5 very serious)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c) Severity</td>
<td>3) Common transgressions in the classrooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>4) Common transgressions outside the classroom</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5) Attendance, cutting, and truancy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6) Percentage of N.Y-ONLY transgressions</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7) Percentage of ATHENS-ONLY transgressions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**INDEPENDENT**
SCHOOL PERSONNEL 
BELIEFS / PERCEPTIONS

| a) Student behavior | 1) Definitions of disciplined and undisciplined |
| b) The school administration of student discipline | 2) Distinctions between serious and not serious |
| c) The preferred method of tackling student indiscipline | 3) The degree of agreement with the school’s classifications and willingness to follow official procedures |
| | 4) Impressions regarding the magnitude of student indiscipline in their schools |
| | 5) Adequacy of the rule system |
| | 6) Effectiveness of the punishment system |
| | 7) Effectiveness of the existing division of responsibility regarding student discipline |
| | 8) Their own power in the process of discipline |
| | 9) Their preferred method of addressing student indiscipline |

**INDEPENDENT**
ADMINISTRATION* 
OF STUDENT DISCIPLINE

| Not controlled by the school | 1) Areas of legal provisions / lack of provision |
| a) Legally, State/City defined student discipline framework **Negotiated on a school level** | 2) Specificity of the Law / lack of specificity |
| b) Institutionally defined framework / policy / procedures | 3) Number of school rules and behaviors targeted |
| c) Enforcement | 4) Specificity of school rules |
| d) Division of labor/ responsibility | 5) Punishment range and organization of its distribution. |
| | 6) Knowledge of rules by school personnel |
| | 7) Formality of procedures for enforcing the rules |
| | 8) Willingness to enforce the rules and extent to which they are implemented |
| | 9) With whom and how is responsibility shared for controlling / disciplining the students (functional / structural differentiation) |
| | 10) The role and availability of specialists |

* With the term Administration I refer to the legal framework that directs and shapes school policy, the school policy itself, disciplinary procedures, and the differentiation of school personnel regarding student discipline.

Having personally conducted all observations and interviews, transcribed almost all of the interviews and typed all notes, I began to identify, from the early stages of data organization,
common themes, which were supported and corroborated through analysis of the data.

Gradually, as I applied my analytical framework, categories that at first seemed unconnected started to make sense as elements of the same theoretical/explanatory constructs. In a few cases, my data enabled me to see a different reality from what I had suspected at the beginning of the analysis, a more interesting one, I believe. The point in question is if and how the dependent variable is affected by the independent variables: what impact the administration of student discipline and the perceptions of school personnel regarding student non-conformity have on student discipline. My hypothesis was that they do have a great impact, and my data supports it.

**Limitations of Research**

In this section I discuss issues of internal and external validity as well as other methodological concerns and how the logistics of data collection might have compromised the study. The aim was to establish correlations between the independent and dependent variables, in the hope of finding a cause-and-effect relationship. Anticipated and unanticipated factors related to the research methods weakened the internal validity while design limitations do not promote external validity.

**Internal Validity**

I conducted extensive interviews and observations, but these data collection methods have inherent limitations. According to Maxwell (2005), the bias of the researcher (her subjectivity), reactivity (the influence of the researcher on the setting), and reflexivity (the interviewer’s influence on the interviewee) undermine internal validity; the researcher may select data that a) fit her existing theory or preconceptions and b) ‘stand out’ to her (p.108), or she may influence the answers/behavior of the subjects she interviews/observes. Even though my theoretical perspective, life experience, and perceptual lens couldn’t be eliminated, I tried to
enhance internal validity by sampling randomly (see sampling section), collecting rich data, being intensively involved, often eliciting respondents’ validation, and triangulating with data from sources that do not have the same biases, such as observations, interviews, and records.

I experienced reactivity, the “experimenter’s effect” in Weiss’ term (Weiss 1994, p. 211), particularly at the beginning of my observations in both schools. The students initially were very suspicious of me. In NY they named me “The Agent,” while in Athens “The Principal’s Snitch.” A few days later, after I explained my work to those who asked me, they either acted wildly in front of me or made clear that they were not in violation of any school rule. Teachers and administrators were also cautious in my presence, less in NY than in Athens. In Athens I presented myself and gave a general overview of the study to the Teacher Assembly before starting any work, but some teachers were under the impression (maybe due to the very enthusiastic support expressed by the Principal) that I was sent by the Ministry of Education to evaluate their work. During my hallway observations, teachers going late to their classes were stopping to explain why. I overcame this problem to a great extent by my sustained stay at the schools and involvement on a personal level in various social gatherings.

A very interesting phenomenon, with respect to reactivity, came out of my observation of two Teacher Assemblies in Athens. I needed 100% agreement by the faculty to be able to sit in on those assemblies, and I felt honored when they all voted yes. It happened that assemblies for disciplinary matters took place toward the end of my observing period. Not having been in previous assembly meetings, I did not know what to expect, and I could not possibly separate occurrences influenced by my presence from regular ones. The discussions, especially in the second assembly, were very lively. Many teachers expressed their opinions with passion, and were not reluctant to disagree with their colleagues and the administration. They exhausted all
the time they had, and voted openly by raising their hands. Afterwards many teachers, the principal, and one of the assistant principals told me that what I had observed was unusual, but a positive effect of my presence in the school: people were less prone to express their opinions before, and simply wanted to finish and go home. After being interviewed and/or talking with me about student discipline, a change of attitudes took place. Unfortunately, I did not have the opportunity to observe more assemblies and see whether this new form of teacher participation was idiosyncratic or a more stable, positive effect of my study. In addition, I could not have being able (or willing maybe) to control this effect.

A source of bias in N.Y. was the fact that I had worked in the school for almost nine years. Most teachers had dealt with me as a dean on numerous occasions. This might have affected their answers to a certain extent; they might have presented information they thought I would have liked to hear, or misrepresented what was happening in their classrooms in order to save face as professionals. In four cases, I felt that the interviewees were reluctant to fully express their views. I had to reassure them repeatedly that what they were telling me would be treated in the strictest confidence. The rest of the participants seemed very comfortable; they were openly critical of the administration or their colleagues on many occasions and this was an indication of trust. As Weiss (1994) suggests however, the respondents needed to understand that I required a full report with detailed, substantial material that captured their reality in all its complexity. Of course I am not in a position to say how much I succeeded in eliciting that report; one never knows what or how much a respondent decided to withhold and thus cannot estimate how biased the study was on this level.

In Athens, I faced a different problem with interviews. It was the over-willingness to accommodate me that proved to be a threat to validity. On the one hand, most teachers were
looking forward to giving me an interview, and some were very disappointed when I explained that they couldn’t be part of my random sample. They wanted to talk about their school and, in on a few occasions, it was difficult to keep them focused and elicit information pertinent to the study. On the other hand, some of the participants, though willing to give me an interview, were very reluctant to elaborate and express their actual feelings on controversial matters. Obviously, despite my assurance of confidentiality, I failed to generate trust in them. In the second interview in which I felt that the participant was not feeling comfortable, I stopped and had an in-depth discussion with him about the source of his reluctance. He told me that it was the taping; having their voice permanently registered can make people uneasy. At the same time, knowing how difficult it was for me to keep notes, interviewees were reluctant to refuse to be audio taped. After that, I made sure to adequately explain at the very beginning that writing was not a problem and that the most important thing was for them to feel comfortable in expressing their honest opinions. Five people, out of 28 I interviewed in Athens, preferred not to be taped and I therefore made copious written notes.

What I consider to be the most serious of the internal validity threats is a bias that may have resulted from the comparative method itself, due to the lack of Greek statistical data (see section, Site Selection Process, pg. 82) and the incompatibility of some of the indicators of key concepts. To my knowledge, the Athenian school I chose was the best candidate for this comparison, and I did experience many similarities and familiar situations during the four-month stay in the school; for example, the students exhibited similar behaviors and attitudes. However, local cultures (rather than the independent variables of administration and teacher perspectives)

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I decided not to keep notes during the interviews and instead used two high quality recorders because I needed to concentrate on how I would elicit the most out of my participants by paraphrasing some questions or asking for clarifications when needed. It happened though that during research in Athens I had a problem with my right wrist, which was therefore bandaged most of the time. This did not keep me from writing, but I was unable to write quickly and the extra effort involved was obvious.
may explain many of the differences in student discipline. To overcome this bias, during the analysis of the data, among other things, I chose to compare similar behaviors between the two schools and investigated how the institutional structures, sets of rules, and teacher/dean attitudes transform a behavior into a discipline problem or not, and how they specifically address it.

**External Validity**

Limitations regarding external validity and generalizability of the findings of this study are due to its scope; the study is confined to a comparison of only two inner city schools. It focuses on student discipline in relation to the variables of administration and the construction of the categories of “proper” and “improper” behaviors. In order to achieve comparability and eliminate confounding factors I deliberately and very carefully selected the two schools I did, because they are typical of the category of schools they represent in their particular school system (NY or Athens). Therefore, findings are relevant only for similar schools, not for all schools in NY and Athens, and definitely not for schools in general. However, being in agreement with Maxwell (2005), I believe that any theoretical contributions of this study can be applied more generally:

…the generalizability of qualitative studies is usually based not on explicit sampling of some defined population to which the results can be extended, but on the development of a *theory* (italics in the original) that can be extended to other cases (p. 116).

**Data Collection Logistics and Evaluation**

My data collection period extended from the middle of December 2006 to May 2009; I spent four full months, January, March, April, and May of 2006 in the NYC school, had a break of one and a half academic years, and then spent another four months, January, March, April, and May of 2009 in the Athenian school. Therefore, I observed each school during a spring
semester, even though I had not planned it to be that way.\textsuperscript{23} In both cases I took the month of February off due to family obligations.

Generally, the only problematic stage of this project was getting research permissions on time from the New York City Department of Education and from the Greek Ministry of Education. Beyond that, there were no surprises, and research in both schools not only ran smoothly, but also turned out to be a rewarding experience both for the participants and myself. My random sampling, good, timely organization of research activities, long observation periods in both schools, and the spending of time with school personnel on social occasions paid off. All teachers (with the exception of one in NY) and administrators (again with the exception of one in NY) were very willing to help me; many were even staying late in order to give me an interview. One administrator in Greece gave me a four-hour interview; we stayed at school until 7:30 p.m. sharing a life experience that could, by itself, become a great book. At the conclusion of my research, teachers and students alike who were used to seeing me every day in the hallways with my writing pad were upset to see me leave. In Greece the teacher assembly had a get-together to officially send me off; many teachers expressed gratitude for staying in their school for so long and accepted that my research had educational value for them: indirectly it encouraged them to evaluate their beliefs and attitudes regarding student discipline and education in general.

\textbf{Conclusion}

To organize a study methodologically and plan its execution is a challenging task. Choosing the method of study, deciding on sampling, addressing issues of validity, choosing the theoretical framework that will guide the research, and calculating the logistics of the data collection constitute the backbone of the study and require technical knowledge, analytical

\textsuperscript{23} I was supposed to have obtained permission for research from the Greek Ministry of Education at the beginning of September 2008 but did not received the necessary document (without which I couldn’t start research) until January 2009.
capacity, and organizational skills. The choices we make as researchers determine the quality of our study and/or can make the process of data collection easier. That is why I found the balance between resources and the quality of work to be the most challenging part of this dissertation.

For this project, although initially the over-planning and allowance of a month’s time in each setting in order to gain the participants’ trust seemed wasteful, it has proven to be the most critical decision in terms of enhancing the internal validity of the research.
CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS IN NEW YORK CITY

In this chapter I present the findings from the New York City school. In order to put these in context I first of all give a concise description of the school and its institutional environment. By “institutional environment” I refer to the administration of the NYC school system, its power structure, and its policy regarding discipline. In discussing the school, I describe the area that the school is located in, briefly outline the actual school building, and give a general account of the curricular and structural categories, which affect the students’ activity in the school.

The New York City School System

The American educational system is very decentralized. The Federal Government has traditionally devolved responsibility for education to individual States, and each has its own Department of Education. The New York State Department of Education is responsible for: the setting of general educational policy; the allocation of funds to the State School Divisions; the setting of curricular standards and maintenance of quality; the overseeing of student learning and evaluation (with tests such as The Regents); and teacher training and certification; at both elementary and secondary levels (NYS Education Department, 2006). Cities and towns, however, have responsibility at a local level for more direct financial matters, the setting of policies, the appointment and administration of personnel, and the formation and implementation of a curriculum, which takes into account local requirements and priorities (e.g. culture, history, languages).
Administration of New York City Schools

The New York City public school system is very large, with over a million students attending approximately 1,700 schools. Its governing institution is the Department of Education. The head of the department is the Chancellor, who is appointed by the Mayor and has an advisory board, the Panel for Educational Policy (Arnold, 2003). In 2003, under the Bloomberg/Klein administration, the city school system (elementary, junior high, and high schools) was reorganized under a scheme that was in effect during the year of this research. Specifically, the schools were divided among ten Divisions administered by ten Regional Superintendents. These Superintendents were responsible for improving instruction with the help of 100 Local Instruction Supervisors. Each Division was subdivided into Districts and each had under it between two and four Districts. There were also six Operational Districts, which were assigned with overseeing issues such as budgeting, transportation, and school facilities for all Divisions. The only District not under the ten Divisions’ scheme was District 75, which was responsible for Special Education. The smallest units in the Department of Education’s administrative scale comprise the individual schools (Advocates for Children’s Guide to NYC Public Schools’ Reorganization, 2003, pp. 1-3).

A New York City school is led by a principal, who, traditionally, is: the top bureaucrat; the head of the school community; its instructional leader and day-to-day manager; the chief disciplinarian; coordinator; and record keeper (Briner, 1960; Litchfield, 1985; Grasman and Heck, 1992). Principals are supported and assisted by assistant principals and heads of departments (academic and administrative) and receive both District- and Region-wide support. The school principal is the liaison between the school and all external educational offices (the

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24 The NYC school system was reorganized again after 2006-2007 but these changes are not presented here.
District or the Regional Offices, the Department of Education or the State Educational
Governmental Bodies). Ideally, the principal will establish a school-community network, be a
public relations leader (Morris and Vrabel, 1978), and promote policies to respond to community
needs (Riehl, 2000).

The teachers comprise a separate body that positions itself in contrast to ‘the
administration’. They are organized in a closed shop union, the United Federation of Teachers
(UFT), which, among other things, negotiates salaries and work conditions, and also handles any
conflicts with the administration. In recent years the UFT, being unable to counter the ongoing
neo-liberal attack on unions (MacShane, 1999), has being losing much of the power it gained
during the sixties. In a contract signed in November ’05, teachers gave up their right to contest
evaluations placed in their professional file by their principals who, in New York City schools,
have the power to hire and evaluate their employees.

Administration of Discipline

In New York City public schools, separate personnel are responsible for student
discipline. Their number depends on the nature and size of the school; in the case of large high
schools this can be a whole department of security (Interview, L.O., 2006)\textsuperscript{25} administrative in
nature, while small schools have only a handful of deans. Indicatively, in the school where I
conducted my research, responsibility for discipline and security is in the hands of 20 deans of
discipline under the leadership of an Assistant Principal (A.P.) of Security. There is a very
distinct functional differentiation; the teachers are to instruct while the deans enforce the rules
school-wide, deal with misbehaving students, and administer punishment. This is not to say that
teachers cannot discipline their students. To the contrary, they are expected to cope with

\textsuperscript{25} In order to secure confidentiality, I name all deans and teachers using two letters, which do not
correspond to their actual name initials.
misbehaving students in their classes by talking to them, calling their parent/s, or by altering teaching practices to accommodate different learning needs and styles.

Schools are further assisted in their enforcement of rules by the school police, the School Safety Agents (SSAs), whose responsibilities include ensuring that the students are not in the hallways and conducting activities that teachers and administrators are legally prevented from undertaking (body and property where theft, drug dealing, graffiti, or possession of weapons is suspected; performing arrests etc.). A disciplinary incident may evolve as follows: the misbehaving student is referred to a dean by a teacher, an SSA, or other school personnel; the dean who acts on behalf of the principal, conducts the necessary investigations; the parents are contacted; everything is documented in an “anecdotal card”; a punishment is decided based upon the Chancellor’s Regulations of Conduct; and the delivery of punishment is planned based on each school’s policy. New York City public schools have what is called “In School Suspension;” when a student is suspended s/he does not stay at home; s/he comes to school and stays in a room designated for hosting the suspended students. Their teachers continue to provide them with work for the day(s) of their suspension. According to New York State (NYS) educational laws, denying education cannot constitute a form of punishment and suspended students are obliged to have instruction for at least two hours per day. There are two categories of suspensions, depending on the seriousness of the ‘crime’: Principal’s Suspension (1-5 days) and Superintendent’s Suspension (more than 5 days). In the first category, suspended students serve their time in the school, but for the Superintendent’s suspension, the students are removed and offered education at an offsite educational setting, which is usually a school /center designated by the Department of Education (The Discipline Code, 2005).

**The Rules of Discipline**
In disciplining their students, each school relies on the *Citywide Standards of Discipline and Intervention Measures*, known as the *Discipline Code*, or “the Blue Book.” This is a 27-page document that details all infractions, suggests a range of possible disciplinary responses, sets out the discipline procedures, and includes a Student Bill of Rights and Responsibilities.

According to the *Discipline Code* (2005, pp 10-16), the behaviors are classified as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.1</th>
<th>CLASSIFICATION OF INFRACTIONS ACCORDING TO THE DISCIPLINE CODE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level 1</strong></td>
<td>(Insubordinate Behaviors)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-- Unexcused absence</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-- Failing to wear the required uniform</td>
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<td></td>
<td>-- Cutting classes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-- Being late</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-- Bringing prohibited equipment (cell phones, etc.) to school</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-- Failing to be in one’s assigned place</td>
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<td></td>
<td>-- Disrupting the educational process (ex. by being noisy)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>-- Being verbally rude and disrespectful</td>
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<td></td>
<td>-- Wearing provocative clothing or headgear</td>
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<td></td>
<td>-- Posting or distributing materials on school premises in violation of DOE policy</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-- Failing to provide the required identification</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-- Using school equipment without having the appropriate permission</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Level 2</strong></td>
<td>(Disorderly Disruptive Behaviors)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-- Smoking</td>
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<td></td>
<td>-- Gambling</td>
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<td></td>
<td>-- Using profane, obscene, vulgar, lewd or abusive language or gestures</td>
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<td></td>
<td>-- Lying or giving false information</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-- Misusing others’ property</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-- Being disruptive on the school bus</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-- Engaging in a pattern of persistent Level 1 behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level 3</strong></td>
<td>(Seriously Disruptive or Dangerous Behavior)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-- Leaving class or school without permission</td>
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<td></td>
<td>-- Being insubordinate; defying or disobeying the lawful authority of school personnel or safety agents</td>
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<td></td>
<td>-- Entering or attempting to enter the school without authorization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-- Using slurs based upon race, ethnicity, color, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-- Fighting/engaging in physically aggressive behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-- Bringing in or allowing entrance to unauthorized visitors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-- Engaging in gang-related behavior (i.e. through attire or gestures)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>-- Altering school records or documents</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-- Engaging in intentional damage of school property</td>
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<td></td>
<td>-- Falsely activating a fire alarm or making a bomb threat</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-- Engaging in sexually suggestive comments, innuendos, propositions or conduct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-- Engaging in sexual conduct on school premises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-- Theft or knowingly possessing others’ property without authorization</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-- Violating the DOE Internet Use Policy</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-- Posting or distributing libelous or defamatory material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-- Engaging in scholastic dishonesty</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Level 4 (Dangerous or Violent Behavior) | - Engaging in intimidation, coercion or extortion, or threatening violence, injury or harm to others  
- Creating a substantial risk of or causing injury on the school bus  
- Engaging in intimidating and bullying behavior  
- Possessing controlled substances  
- Engaging in gang-related threatening, dangerous or violent behavior  
- Participating in an incident of group violence  
- Threatening to use an instrument that may cause an injury  
- Engaging in behavior that may result in injury  
- Engaging in sexual aggression or forcing another to engage in sexual activity  
- Committing arson  
- Inciting/causing a riot  
- Possessing any weapon (as defined in Category II: acid, chemicals, imitation gun, loaded or blank cartridges, stink bombs, stun pens, laser pointers, any sharp or pointed instruments such as scissors, nail files, broken glass, chains)  
- Using controlled substances without authorization  
- Engaging in a pattern of persistent Level 3 behavior |
| Level 5 (Seriously Dangerous or Violent Behavior) | - Using force against school personnel or safety agents  
- Using extreme force against or inflicting or attempting to inflict serious injury upon students or others  
- Selling or distributing controlled substances  
- Possessing or using any weapon (as defined in Category I: firearm, shotgun or any machine like gun, air gun or spring gun, any knife, billy club, blackjack, bludgeon, chucka stick, metal knuckles, sandbag and sandclub, sling shot and slung shot, martial art objects, and explosives.)  
- Using any weapon (as defined in Category II) to attempt to inflict injury upon personnel, students, or others |

On page 17 of the booklet, a list of objects that are considered to be weapons is given, which range from pistols and knives to acid and nail files. Weapons are classified in “Category I” or “Category II”, the second listing possessions for which “a purpose other than the infliction of harm exists, e.g. a nail file” (The Discipline Code, 2005, p. 15). For each level of infractions, a corresponding range of appropriate punishments is suggested. The disciplinary responses begin with admonishment by a pedagogical school staff and conclude with the most serious of the punishments, which is expulsion (this is only for General Education students and only if they are at least eighteen years old). For a full range of the disciplinary responses see table 4.2 below.
Table 4.2  RANGE OF POSSIBLE DISCIPLINARY RESPONSES ACCORDING TO THE 2005 EDITION OF THE DISCIPLINE CODE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Admonishment by pedagogical school staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Student/teacher conference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Reprimand by appropriate supervisor (e.g., assistant principal, principal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Parent conference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>In-school disciplinary action (e.g., detention; exclusion from extracurricular activities, recess or communal lunchtime)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Removal from the classroom by a teacher (after a student has been removed from any classroom by any teacher three times during a semester or twice in a trimester, a principal’s suspension must be sought if the student engages in subsequent behavior that would otherwise result in a removal by a teacher.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Principal’s suspension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Superintendent’s suspension that results in immediate reinstatement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Superintendent’s suspension that results in continued suspension for a fixed period of 6-10 school days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>Superintendent’s suspension that results in extended suspension for 30 to 90 school days with an automatic review for early reinstatement after 30 or 60 school days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>Superintendent’s suspension that results in a one year suspension and assignment to an alternative program with an automatic review for reinstatement after 6 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>Superintendent’s suspension that results in a one year suspension and assignment to an alternative program without the opportunity for early reinstatement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Expulsion (only for general education students who turned 17 prior to the beginning of the school year, which is July 1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Discipline Code, 2005

It is, however, recognized in the *Discipline Code* that student misbehavior may sometimes be symptomatic of other problems that students experience and, therefore, it is important that the school personnel respond in a supportive manner. That is why page 18 lists additional responses to students breaking the rules, which are mostly supportive in nature, and may be used in conjunction with punishment. Examples of such responses include: intervention by mental health staff; counseling; peer mediation; community service; referral to a community based organization or mentoring program; guidance conference; transfer to another school; development of individual behavior contract; or short-term behavioral progress reports (The Discipline Code, 2005).26

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26 A new edition of *The Discipline Code* came out at the beginning of the 2010-2011 academic year. This stresses the interventions by spelling them out in the same manner as the punishments.
The Discipline Code, even though it allows for different interpretations and modifications on a case-by-case basis, and offers a range of disciplinary or supportive responses to each level of infractions, is a very precise document. Most infractions are included and listed according to the degree of seriousness based on the effect that they could have on school order and safety. Infractions are detailed with great precision, as are the corresponding punishments, or, rather, range of punishments. The Discipline Code (at least in my research site) is distributed in the form of a manual to everyone involved in the educational process -- administrators, teachers, other school staff, parents, and students -- and is supposed to be adhered to by them all. It ensures “both consistency and equitable treatment for all students and also enables principals and superintendents to exercise discretion and educational judgment,” given that there is a range of punishments (The Discipline Code, 2005. p. 1).

The School Setting

The school in this study is a high school, located in a working class, racially mixed, immigrant neighborhood. New, but also first or second generation, immigrants have concentrated in this area. The surrounding environment is an amalgam of abandoned buildings, junkyards, warehouses, garages, cheap-looking shopping centers, fast food stores, housing projects for low-income families, and newly-erected, modern, high-rise apartment buildings, which are attracting young professionals. A few small parks give an impression of freshness and cleanliness, even though the air pollution in this area can reach relatively high levels. The school is near the crossing of two very busy streets where the public transportation buses stop; the subway station is located nine blocks away. Many students walk to school, but a good number of them come by bus or by train. Few parents, of course, drive their children to school themselves.

The School Building
The school is a six-floor, relatively new, and well-maintained building. It was designed to house up to 2,500 students, but has problems with overcrowding since its opening year. The central entrance of the school leads a visitor to the Main Lobby, located in the middle of the first floor, which houses the offices of the Principal and the Assistant Principal of Organization, the Main Office, the Attendance Office, one of the three deans’ offices27, the swimming pool, and the auditorium. The building has six exits in total: three doors in the front, the main entrance and two side doors, all of which face North; two doors that lead to the athletic field facing West; and one exit to the East. The inside layout has the shape of the letter H; the two long sides being the South and North Hallways (SH & NH) and the line in between being the Connecting Hallway (CH). There are six staircases, two in the CH and four, one at each end of the SH and NH. The student cafeteria is on the sixth floor. The Counselor’s Suite for General Education is on the third floor and for Special Education on the fifth. Each floor houses the offices of two academic departments and the remaining rooms are classrooms, computer labs, and gymnasiums.

**Organization of the Students’ Program**

The school is a typical example of a large comprehensive high school where the students have a great variety of classes to choose from, akin to a “shopping mall” that Powell et al. (1985) have described. Beyond all the mandatory classes, there are Advanced Placement, Honors, Culinary Arts, Theater, Visual Arts, Music, Technology, Business, and seven Foreign Language programs. There are also many athletic teams for the students to join. The mission of the school is challenging the students’ minds to reach their full potential with quality educational

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27 The school has three deans’ offices, two for General Education students and one for Special Education students. Each one of the twenty deans is assigned to a given office for a semester or year and may be assigned to one of the other two offices the following year for reasons mostly related to the deans’ schedules rather than to the students’ needs.
experiences in a way that secures a balanced combination of traditional academic, athletic, and aesthetic development.

Students choose the classes that they want to take based on preference, academic capability, need, future aspirations, talent, and availability; or their guidance counselors place them in some classes (Oakes, 1985; Hallinan, 1992). In New York City, students have individualized programs, and they are required to complete 44 credits in a typical time span of four years in order to graduate. Two students may graduate from the same high school and never take the same classes. Many students choose, or are placed in, academically less challenging classes, which require minimal work to pass, while others are placed in Advanced Placement, or Honors classes, which are more demanding. Some are unable to take the classes that they have asked for, and others, in order to take the classes they need to graduate, stay in school very long hours. I have seen programs where the students come to school at 7:00 a.m. and do not leave until 4:15 p.m. In general, scheduling all this activity is very difficult, and affects the structure of students’ lives and their behavior greatly.

The Students’ School Day

New York City high schools have different circles of study, which refers to the scheduling of students’ classes in a way that allows them to start their day at different points, and this school has five (students can enter at 7:00, 7:50, 8:45, 9:30, and 10:20 a.m.). Students start and, of course, end their school day at different times. Some students have only three or four classes in their schedule, because this is what they need to graduate, and others have twelve or thirteen. Students by law are required to have one period for lunch and, most of the time, they are offered what the school calls “study hall”; a period (or more) during which the students sit in the auditorium with other students and often do nothing, even though the name, “study hall”,


indicates that they are supposed to study. For every class, students go to a different classroom. The time between classes (indicated by bells) is only four minutes, and sometimes their programs require them to go from one end of this large building to the other. The students must have their program and ID cards on them at all times so that everyone in the school community can recognize and address them. Additionally, every time they enter the building, students are required to swipe their ID card and record in the computer the fact that they have entered. They are allowed to enter the building only once each day. If they re-enter, it implies that they have cut classes. Also, it is illegal for a student who is under eighteen-years-old to leave the school premises if an adult does not come to pick him up. Only handicapped or sick students are allowed to ride the elevators, and for this purpose an elevator pass is issued to those who need it. The students, in order to enter the lunchroom, auditorium, or library, have to show a program card to prove that this is the place where they are supposed to be at that specific class period. If a student needs to go to the bathroom or to get a drink of water, s/he needs to ask the teacher for the class pass. The class pass is a sign, approximately A5 in size, which shows the name and the signature of the teacher whose class the student is attending for that period. In general, students are not allowed to walk the hallways without a pass, because this implies that they have cut a class. The administration, in an effort to minimize cutting, suggests that teachers do not keep their students beyond the period and requests all officials to provide the students that they see in their offices with an office pass (an official, signed note) upon dismissal.

**Research Findings**

This study concentrates on three variables: one dependent variable, student discipline; and two independent variables, school personnel beliefs and perceptions, and the administration of student discipline. During the research design process I decided on a series of indicators for
each variable, for which I collected data. Therefore, in this section, I publish the findings for each of the indicators and subsequently answer each research question by examining the corresponding variable and analyzing the findings of each indicator. I give both numbers and percentages of what was counted in documents, observations, and from the answers given by participants in interviews and enhance these findings with quotations from interviews and/or observation notes.

**Anatomy of the Disciplinary Occurrences**

In exploring the dependent variable *student discipline*, I chose three points of focus: patterns of discipline, magnitude, and severity. This is expressed by the first research question, *what are the patterns, magnitude, and severity of student transgressions*. Indicators for this variable are: (a) registered disciplinary encounters; (b) the location of the infraction; (c) the pattern of transgressions inside the classrooms (according to records); (d) the pattern of transgressions outside the classrooms (according to records); (e) the degree of severity of all registered transgressions (based on the DOE classification); (f) the pattern of occurrences inside the classrooms (according to teachers and deans); (g) the pattern of occurrences outside the classrooms (based on observations); and (h) punishments and/or additional supports.

**Registered disciplinary encounters**

I calculated this as disciplinary encounters per student per year. The school population during the year of research was 3,091 students and I weighted the number of infractions against how much time each student had an opportunity to be undisciplined. I opened 161 student files (10% of all files) and registered 850 disciplinary encounters. I estimated that the encounters corresponding to each student per year were 1.4.28

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28 I estimated the total number of encounters for the students enrolled in 2006-07 to be 8,500 (850 x 10), and the total student school years to be 6,041. Dividing the number of total disciplinary encounters by the
Here, however, I must introduce a differentiation between disciplinary encounters and disciplinary infractions, which guides the calculation of percentages from this point on. There were encounters that consisted of two or more infractions and these were written in two distinct ways. Either it was recorded that two or three separate infractions took place (“Student was cutting, had his hat on, and did not have ID”), or that the first infraction escalated or brought about more infractions (“The student was cutting and when asked to ID himself, ran away from SSA” or “The student refused to yield hat and started cursing at the Dean”).

Specifically, I recorded 850 disciplinary encounters, 633 (74.5 %) of which correlated with only one infraction; 170 (20%) with two; 25 (2.9%) with three; 4 (0.5%) with four infractions; and in 18 cases (2.1%) the infraction was not on record. The total number of infractions is 1,082. This makes the number of infractions per student per year to be 1.8 (10,820/6,041).

All percentages of infractions are calculated based on this number (1,082), whereas percentages related to disciplinary encounters are calculated based on the number of encounters that were recorded (850).

**Place of disciplinary encounters**

A little more than half of the disciplinary encounters took place outside the classroom, mostly in the hallways. 43% were classroom infractions and there was no information for 3% of the cases. By observing the deans’ offices and the hallways, however, I later concluded that most of these students were brought in to school by police or were found in the hallways by the deans and SSAs.

total of student school years gives 1.4 encounters per student per year. I calculated the total student school years by multiplying the population of each grade by the number of the years I estimated the students had been in school (Freshmen 0.7, Sophomores 1.7, Juniors 2.7, and Seniors 3.7). I collected data from student files between February and March. Therefore only 0.7 of the research year counts for this calculation.
A core of undisciplined students was almost constantly in the hallways, playing hide and seek with school authorities. The following is an excerpt from my observation notes:

Dean to Layla: “You are not in class! You do not want to be in a fight today, do you?” Layla: “No Sir,” and moves with her friends toward staircase F. When the dean walks away she says, “And if so, am I going to tell YOU?” Layla, with her friends, stop at Peron’s class. Peron comes to the door: “Layla go to class, you are not supposed to be here, you are cutting, you are bothering me.” Layla leaves. Another group of students, Nilda and her friends, is moving toward me. … They see the head dean. One imitates his voice: “Let’s go ladies” and all pretend to move on. The head dean does not see them and therefore it is safe to stay there. They laugh.

There is an activity on the floor with 10 to 15 students who are cutting. A teacher addresses one of the cutters: “Where are you?” Student: “I was outside.” Teacher: “Why don’t you come to class?” Student: “I don’t know.” Teacher: “I give you chances, but you are not trying.” Student: “No, I am trying.” Teacher: “No, you are not! Cutting is not trying.”
The teacher leaves and the student says, “You are going to fail me anyway! What the fuck!”

At this point, the head paraprofessional from the Main Office comes holding her radio and calls security. The students are the usual suspects, Nilda, Innes, etc. They disperse when this happens. Only Layla and two of her friends remain on the floor, but they hide in the Guidance Suite. The head paraprofessional tells me that she is calling their houses. After she leaves Layla comes out and says to me, “We do nothing! Why do they keep calling our homes? And if they call, so what?”

**Pattern of transgressions inside the classrooms (according to records)**

Less than half of the disciplinary encounters took place in the classrooms and some transgressions are more common. Specifically, the 369 classroom disciplinary encounters correspond to 467 infractions, which, based on what the teachers had written on the referrals, I classified into seven general categories (progressing from higher to lower in frequency): (1) *disruptive and insubordinate behavior*, 53%; (2) verbally abusive or disrespectful behavior, 24%; (3) attendance related, 6%; (4) work related, 5.5%; (5) physically aggressive and potentially dangerous behavior, 5.5%; (6) having and/or using forbidden items, 4.7%; and (7) other, 1.3%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General categories</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
<th>Specific infractions</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Mildly* and/or seriously) disruptive and insubordinate</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>- Talking</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Making noises</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Stupidity in class</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Throwing paper</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Being disruptive</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Being a bad influence</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Insubordination</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Refusal to …</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Took w/out permission</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Left w/out permission</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Inappropriate behavior</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intruder</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbally abusive and disrespectful</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Being confrontational</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Using bad language</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Cursing</td>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Being disrespectful</td>
<td>33</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Being rude</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Threatening behavior</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Harassing</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance /Punctuality</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Cutting</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Wandering the halls</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Being late</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work related</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Does not do work</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Is playing</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Is unprepared</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Cheating</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physically aggressive and / or dangerous</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Wrestling</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Hitting a student</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Kicking a student</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Fighting</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Play-fighting</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Safety risk</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Throwing an object</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Punching a student</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Pushing a teacher</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having or using forbidden items (Building requirements)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Cell</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Walkman</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- MP3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Hat</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Soda</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Attire</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Drugs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Gang related</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Stealing</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Littering</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>467</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The distinction between mildly and seriously disruptive and insubordinate behavior is unclear. All interviewees put the four categories in italics in the mild categorization. I am not in a position to judge objectively what behavior teachers were referring to when writing on referrals disruptive, bad influence in class, insubordinate or inappropriate behavior and how serious or mild these behaviors were.

**Pattern of transgressions outside the classroom (according to records)**
A little more than half of the disciplinary encounters, specifically 481, took place outside the classroom and correspond to 564 transgressions (54% of all transgressions). I have divided them into eight general categories based on what was written on the referrals and the student disciplinary cards. I list them going from higher frequency to lower frequency categories: (1) *attendance related*, 267 infractions (49%); (2) *disruptive and insubordinate behavior*, 100 infractions (17.7); (3) *verbally abusive and disrespectful behavior*, 70 infractions (12.5%); (4) *physically aggressive and / or dangerous behavior*, 35 infractions (6.2%); (5) *school document related*, 25 infractions (4.5%); (6) *having or using forbidden items or clothing*, 22 infractions (4%); (7) *student reporting problems*; and (8) *other*, which comprise 18 infractions (3%) each.

<p>| Table 4.4 FREQUENCY OF OUT-OF-CLASS TRANSGRESSIONS: BASED ON REFERRALS Sample size: 564 infractions (53.8% of all infractions) |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| General categories                                          | Number | Per cent |
| Attendance                                                  | 276    | 49       |
| - Cutting                                                   |        |          |
| - Running halls                                              |        |          |
| - Reentering                                                |        |          |
| - Truancy                                                   |        |          |
| - Being late                                                |        |          |
| Disruptive and insubordinate behavior                       | 100    | 17.7     |
| - Refusing to…                                              |        |          |
| - Insubordinate behavior                                    |        |          |
| - Disregarding authority                                    |        |          |
| - Running from…                                             |        |          |
| - Leaving w/out permission                                  |        |          |
| - Being disruptive                                          |        |          |
| - Yelling                                                   |        |          |
| - Intruder                                                  |        |          |
| Verbally abusive and disrespectful behavior                 | 70     | 12.5     |
| - Being disrespectful                                      |        |          |
| - Being rude                                                |        |          |
| - Cursing                                                   |        |          |
| - Verbal altercation                                        |        |          |
| - Inappropriate comment                                      |        |          |
| - Harassing                                                 |        |          |
| - Threatening behavior                                      |        |          |
| - Having an attitude                                        |        |          |
| Physically aggressive and /                                 | 35     | 6.2      |
| - Fight related                                             |        |          |
| - Throwing an object                                        |        |          |
| - Safety related (Ex. pulling a fire alarm)                 |        |          |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Or dangerous behavior</th>
<th>-Pushing</th>
<th>-Attacking</th>
<th>-Beating up</th>
<th>-Hitting</th>
<th>2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School document related</td>
<td>-Did not have ID</td>
<td>-Using another student’s program</td>
<td>-Giving program to another student</td>
<td>-Falsifying records</td>
<td>-Defacing records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having or using a forbidden item / clothing</td>
<td>-Cell</td>
<td>-Nintendo</td>
<td>-Stolen pass</td>
<td>-Head phones</td>
<td>-Side kick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student reporting</td>
<td>-Stealing</td>
<td>-Lying</td>
<td>-Graffiti</td>
<td>-Being in elevator</td>
<td>-Illness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>564</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Seriousness of transgressions (based on the DOE classification)**

I put all 1082 transgressions into categories according to the degree of severity following the Citywide Standards of Discipline and Intervention Measures of the N.Y. Department of Education published in 2005 (the Discipline Code). For classification of infractions see table 4.1 on page 101 of this chapter. I allocated all 1082 transgressions to one of the five categories: Level 1, Level 2, Level 3, Level 4, and Level 5. By default I had two more categories: one comprising cases where it was difficult to specify the level of seriousness because that category was not in The Discipline Code (e.g. “Unprepared for class” or “Student was loitering”); and a second one for those cases in which the infraction was not written on the student card or referral. The distribution of infractions inclined towards Level 1 (48%) and Level 3 (32%) infractions.
with some concentration at Level 2 (12%), but a very low degree of occurrence at Level 4 (5%), and transgressions were almost non-existent at Level 5 (0.09%). I could not classify 15 infractions and for 18 cases the column *Infraction* was blank.

The interviewees’ and the observer’s gaze on indiscipline.

All reported transgressions became part of the official disciplinary record of the school, which I have presented in previous sections. I also wanted, however, to check the nature and magnitude of all unreported infractions in order to better comprehend the disciplinary reality of the school. To this end, I asked the teachers and deans to describe their classrooms with regard to student behavior and I conducted extensive observations outside the classrooms in the hallways of the school to personally determine the nature of student misbehavior and that of the institutional reaction.
Patterns of transgressions inside the classrooms (according to teachers and deans).

Teachers, and deans who also teach, gave me information about the student infractions that were most prevalent in their classrooms. Their answers fall into the categories of: (1) punctuality/attendance, (55% or 22 interviewees); (2) lack of respect for building requirements (use of cell phones and other electronic devices belongs in this category), (47.5% or 19 interviewees); (3) mildly disturbing the class, (47.5% or 19 interviewees); (4) character related / verbally abusive, (27.7% or 11 interviewees); (5) insubordination / creating a serious disturbance, (22.5% or 9 interviewees); (6) not doing academic work, (17.5% or 7 interviewees); (7) miscellaneous, in which I included things such as being a suspect of stealing, eating in class, or loitering, (10% or 4 interviewees); and (8) physically aggressive behavior, (7.5% or 3 interviewees).

If we put compare the findings (see table 4.5 below) from records with the categories of the most common classroom transgressions as reported by teachers and deans (indicators c and f), we can easily deduce that the categories of 1) punctuality and attendance, 2) lack of respect for building requirements, 3) mildly disturbing the class, and 6) not doing academic work are the most likely to be underreported to the deans. As the teachers explain, they deal with these infractions on an everyday basis themselves and report the students only under circumstances that I explore later in this chapter.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General categories</th>
<th>Per cent of recorded classroom infractions</th>
<th>Per cent of teachers reporting this to be among the most common transgressions in their classes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mildly and / or seriously disruptive and insubordinate behavior</td>
<td>52.9 *</td>
<td>47.5 mildly disruptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbally abusive and</td>
<td></td>
<td>22.5 seriously disruptive and insubordinate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misconduct</td>
<td>Amount</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disrespectful behavior</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>27.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance / Punctuality</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work related</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physically aggressive and/or dangerous behavior</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building requirements/ having or using forbidden items</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>47.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Of the 247 infractions in this category only 30 can be characterized as mildly disruptive incidents according to the interviewee’s definitions and from this we can deduce that this category is generally underreported.

**Patterns of transgressions outside the classroom (according to observations).** During my observations in the hallways I registered all observable undisciplined activity and the institutional reaction to it. I counted: (1) students with hats; (2) cell phones and other electronic devices, mostly Walkmans; (3) students in the hallway after the second bell; (4) students in the hallway during the teaching periods without a pass; and (5) incidents of insubordination. As I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the hallways of the school are H-shaped. This complicated my observations because there was not a position from which I could see the whole floor. I chose to stand at the junction of the North or the South long sides and the connecting hallway from where I could cover two out of three sides (the one long side and the connecting hallway). Therefore my counting each time covers students that move either on the North and the Connecting hallways or on the South and the Connecting hallways, which is only approximately $\frac{2}{3}$ of the whole floor. Therefore, I decided to increase the number in each case by a third to compensate for this unobservable area. I completed three observations on each of the six floors and also three in the cafeteria. For the majority of the time I was standing at the post that I had chosen for the day for approximately six hours with a very small break for lunch.
Hats were very easy to count, because students like to wear strong colors, mostly red, bright blue, or multicolored. A few were wearing white. The do-rags were more difficult, because the predominant color was black. The three-day average of hats and do-rags in the cafeteria was about 35; for the 6th floor, 19; for the 5th floor, 11; for the 4th floor, 37; for the 3rd floor, 43; for the 2nd floor, 22; and for the 1st floor, 3. The school-day-average of hat and do-rag wearing was 170.

Electronic devices and cell phones were more difficult to count, because students were usually trying to be discreet when they were using them. I counted the ones that I could see; these were the students who were trying to provoke the authorities or simply “did not care”; the ones that the school authorities were also catching. The three-day average of electronics/cell use on each floor was 3 for the 6th floor; 2 for the 5th; 6 for the 4th; 7 for the 3rd; 9 for the 2nd; and 3 for the 1st floor; but 39 for the cafeteria where the students were mostly playing games on their phones or listening to music while eating. The school authorities completely refrained from enforcing the ‘no cells’ rule in this area. The relatively high numbers in the cafeteria brought the school-day average up to 68.

The primary responsibility of the School Safety Agents’ (SSAs) and the deans was the clearing of the hallways. The time allowed for changing classes was 4 minutes. During that time the students had to move from one class to another, and, by the bell, be seated and ready to work. Of course this was rarely the case for the majority of students; deans and SSAs had to remind the students to keep moving and not obstruct the hallway. Also, the administration had being instructing the teachers to remain at the door of their classrooms during this four minute changeover in an effort to encourage their students get in to the room before the bell, and thus facilitate the clearing of the halls. The students, in contrast, were socializing and delaying their
arrival at the next class. Deans and SSAs seemed to regard a one-minute delay almost as normal. During that time, they were shouting, “Let’s go ladies and gentlemen, let’s go! Walk and talk, walk and talk!” and “The bell rang already, you are late, move, move!” or something to similar effect. Most students were getting out of the hallway, some choosing to go to class and some to hang with their friends elsewhere. However, a significant number of them were ignoring the authorities and kept talking with their friends. Usually there was one dean and one SSA on each floor. Sometimes a single dean or SSA was trying to make the crowd of students move.

In order to put pressure on the students and make the “clearing of the floor” operation more effective, the Principal asked the SSAs, deans, and assistant principals (APs) to conduct what they called “hall sweeps”, a coordinated effort to trap on a targeted floor all those students that were intentionally late or cutting. Two deans, two SSAs and the AP(s) who had office(s) on the targeted floor closed all the exit doors and stopped all the students after the second bell to check whether they had a legitimate reason to be out of their class. If not, the students were stopped from going to that period’s classes and were transferred to the deans’ office “to be processed”; their name was registered, parents were informed about the incident, and students were given a class re-admittance slip. If they had multiple incidents of being caught in hall sweeps, the students were then suspended.

I counted the number of loitering students in each of the hallways I was observing to the best of my ability. I counted twice on each floor and for the same time period, for six periods each day.

Thirty times over two days I registered many (about 80), 13 times 35 to 60, and 4 times less than 35. From the above we can deduce that approximately 300 to 350 students were in the habit of socializing in the hallways after the second bell each period before getting in to their classes.
A percentage of these students, however, were rarely going to class. They preferred to remain in the hallways with their friends and usually they were hiding. Their hiding places were either the back staircases, which the SSAs and deans rarely patrolled, or the cafeteria and the auditorium if they could succeed in getting in. In some cases, however, they were provoking the authorities. I registered those students separately and starting counting from the point where each floor was declared to be “99 condition”, meaning virtually empty of students who were changing classes. In this school it was easy to separate the students who were cutting from those who were out after they had asked their teacher for permission, because the latter group of students were holding a classroom pass. The average in the category students without a pass per floor was 46 for the 6th floor; 54 for the 5th; 36 for the 4th; 132 for the 3rd; 53 students for the 2nd floor; and no one was cutting on the 1st floor. This equates to an average of 321 students cutting classes inside the school each day. The numbers are for the whole day of observation.

The final category I recorded was student insubordination to deans and SSAs. This includes incidents in which the dean or SSA approached a student to ask for ID or a program card, because they had a cell or other electronic device, were cutting, or for any other reason, and the student did not respond in a respectful manner, did not follow the dean’s/SSA’s suggestion, created a scene, or totally ignored the dean/SSA who, in turn, followed procedures and escalated the problem. As an example: Student A wants to get in to the cafeteria at an unauthorized time. He is denied access and the dean on duty is called. The dean asks for ID but the student refuses to show ID and walks away. The dean calls the SSA and tells him to give the student a summons. The SSA escorts the student to the deans’ office and the student starts screaming, “What the fuck! She is crazy! She is constantly stopping me, asking for ID! Let me go!” In an effort to get out of the office, the student pushes the SSA away from the door. The SSA grabs the student’s
arm, pulls him inside the office, and urges him to calm down. Finally the SSA persuades the student to provide his ID and gives his name to the dean.

The average number of insubordination incidents that I observed per floor was: 3 in cafeteria; 3 on the 6th floor; 1 on the 5th, 4th, and 3rd; and 2 on the 2nd and 1st floors. This equates to an average of 13 incidents of insubordination inside the school each day. The following table (4.6) presents a summary of all observed infractions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.6</th>
<th>FREQUENCY OF SELECTED OUT-OF-CLASS INFRACTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3-day average</td>
<td>Cafe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wearing of hats</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electronics/phones</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cutting in-school</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insubordination</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-hallway after bell</td>
<td>Average of 60 to 80 students after every 2nd bell per location</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If we compare findings from records and observations it is remarkable how much the numbers do not match. In order to make the stark difference between observed and registered infractions better understood I have estimated the numbers for each of the categories I compare for a year.29 (See table 4.7 below).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.7</th>
<th>FREQUENCY OF OUT-OF-CLASS INFRACTIONS: PER YEAR COMPARISON BETWEEN RECORDED AND OBSERVED INFRACTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Category of infraction</td>
<td>Estimation of recorded incidents (per year)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insubordination</td>
<td>445</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electronic devices</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wearing of hats</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

29 The multiplier for estimating recorded infractions for a year is 5. (There is an average of 1.4 encounters per student per year (see pg. 108). The year of research the school had 3,091 students. Therefore, we expect around 3,091 X 1.4 = 4,327 encounters for that year. We can find the multiplier for infractions by dividing 1082 with 850 = 1.27. In order to find infractions for the year we multiply 4,327 X 1.27 = 5,495 infractions per year, which is about 5 times 1,082. Therefore, to approximate a yearly total for the recorded infractions, we have to multiply all categories by 5). I multiply the daily-observed incidents by 180 days the public schools are open to estimate the observed incidents per year.
When the referring person writes “insubordination,” he/she refers to a student who refuses to do what the authority had requested. Usually these incidents escalate and it is generally expected that the student will be referred to the dean’s office and subsequently suspended. However, comparing observed incidents with those that are recorded demonstrates that only a very small number are ever reported. Regarding cutting and running halls, an even smaller number reach the dean’s office, and when it comes to the wearing of hats, using electronic devices, and lateness only a minuscule proportion are ever registered. Even if we accept that many of the students I was counting in the hallways are repeat offenders, there is still significant underreporting and it becomes clear that it is almost impossible for the school authorities to be aware of all infractions, let alone to deal with them all and to do so effectively.

As I found out during observations and from interviews, there are two main categories of institutional reaction. One applies to hats and electronic devices, and the other to running halls and being late to class. Specifically, the wearing of hats and using of electronics devises are problematic for the school authorities not as infractions per se, but for what they symbolically stand for when students refuse to submit to the authorities’ request to take the hat off or to not use the cell phone. Regarding the cell phones dean I.L. said, “I will tell you what’s unruly. When they get caught and they won’t put it away! That’s unruly” (I.L., 2007) and regarding hats, dean J.M. expressed himself in a similar manner, “Well, wearing the hat in and of itself, I wouldn’t say that’s unruly. Failure to take off and to keep off the hat, that’s unruly” (J.M., 2007). This is better spelled out in the following quotation:

It’s nothing inherently hat no hat! It’s not that important! It’s the symbol. It’s to say, “I am submitting to the authority by not wearing a hat in school. I am arguing...
or challenging authority by wearing a hat when I am in a school with a no-hat rule. So, it’s not... it’s challenging behavior. That is what it is. It’s saying, “I am not recognizing, I am willing to accept the fact that this is a special place with special rules. I wanna make my own rules.” (Dean K.N., 2007)

When a student refuses to submit to the authority by not taking off his hat or by failing to stop using her phone, insubordination is taking place; the infractions acquire a different level of seriousness.

Regarding lateness and cutting inside the school, it seems that there is a silent agreement among some school authorities in dealing with “the usual suspects” (students who are constantly in the hallway): as long as they are discreet with their cutting, as long as they do not break the not coming late or do not cut rule in a provocative way, some authorities pretend that they do not notice. Discreet expresses that, which does not interfere with the job and professional reputation of deans or SSAs and has mostly to do with timing, who observes the incident, and if there are also other professionals involved. This can be deduced from the attitude of some SSA and deans in calling, “Get out of my floor” and “I do not care where you are going, but you do not stay here,” as if it is OK if these students become “the problem” of deans and SSAs in other floors. When it comes to being late to class the attitude of the student is important, “If it is constant, then it’s unruly” (D.N., 2007), “If the child cannot enter quietly and be…and not be noticed, but if they, by their very coming in they are causing other problems then that would be unruly” (O.Y., 2007).

**Punishment and additional responses and supports**

Not all referred students were punished; in most cases the dean(s) gave a verbal warning to the student(s), or there was no record of any punishment, not even of a verbal warning. Suspensions were given mostly from the deans, a few from the principal, and very few from the superintendent. There were few detentions, and in four cases, there were unique interventions
such as giving a police summons, referring the student to Administration for Children’s Services (ACS), or ordering a search for the suspected possession of illegal substances. In nineteen cases the student couldn’t be suspended because he was already suspended, and in eight cases the deans did not even find the students in school, let alone be able to punish them.

I separated all punishments into categories based on the Discipline Code. Admonishment, conference with the student, detention, conference with parents, exclusion from extracurricular activities, and removal from the classroom by the teacher are all appropriate for Level 1 infractions, even though they can also be used for Level 2 and for some Level 3 infractions. Suspensions are allowed only for Level 2 or more serious infractions, and Superintendent’s Suspensions are reserved for Level 3, 4, or 5 infractions. Under the category “Other,” I include cases where the student was already suspended for a different infraction or unable to be found in order to be punished, the deans referred the student to ACS, and the police gave a summons or ordered a search. There was no record of any punishment for 31% of the cases and the dean simply had a conference with the undisciplined student for another 38% of all cases. Detention was used only in 32 occurrences, (4%), and there were 6 instances, (0.7%), of a Superintendent’s Suspension. In the category “Principal’s Suspensions,” which covers 22% of all cases, it has to be noted that only 26 out of the 191 suspensions were 5-day suspensions (which had the actual signature of the Principal). The remaining 165 were deans’ suspensions mostly for 1, 2, or 3 days. In the school, despite the Chancellor’s Regulations, the principal allowed the deans to suspend undisciplined students from all their classes instead of giving teachers the power to remove students only from the classes where they were acting out. It is likely that a high percentage of these 165 suspensions were supposed to be teacher removals from class or other interventions. Alternatively, some may have been serious enough to warrant a principal’s
suspension but the deans, in an effort to avoid the necessary paper work downgraded them to a dean’s suspension. Counting of suspensions per student file indicated that there are some students who are almost constantly suspended (certain students had been suspended 4 to 6 times and few had 8 to 12 long suspensions).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.8</th>
<th>INTERVENTIONS / PUNISHMENTS (APPROPRIATENESS PER LEVEL OF INFRACTION)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No record of any action</td>
<td>Level 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>266 cases (31%)</td>
<td>Conference with student and / or admonish.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>321 cases (38%)</td>
<td>32 cases (4%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the referrals, the box “Called Home” was checked in 466 cases (55% of the incidents) and in each of these instances the word “spoke” was used in the student’s card only 33% of the times (in 152 cases). In 30% of cases the deans made it clear that they did not establish communication and the response was the vague comment “Called Home” in 37% of cases. This is not good evidence of the school’s assertion that it recognizes the parents as partners in their children’s education particularly in declaring the need for school authorities to keep them informed as to their children’s performance and behavior. “It is important that we contact the parents”, said dean P.P., but “Sometimes we forget, we call down the kid and then we don’t, you know, depending on the situation.”

With “Additional Responses and Supports,” the Discipline Code refers mainly to intervention by mental health staff, counseling, guidance conferences, conflict resolution, peer mediation, the development of individual behavioral contracts and progress reports, restitution,
community service or referral to Community Based Organizations, transfer with consent or non-voluntarily, and academic sanctions but only for scholastic dishonesty. The box “Referral to Guidance” was checked in 11% of the infractions. Students were referred to a psychologist only once and to counseling only twice. As I found out in the interviews, the assumption on the part of the deans was that the guidance counselors would refer the students to the appropriate mental help and social services if they deemed it necessary. However, as the interviews and observations showed, and with few exceptions, this was not the case, and the Guidance Counselors did not intervene in a meaningful way. Mediation by staff took place only fifteen times (1.75% of cases) and peer mediation only six times (0.7% of cases). All other possible responses and supports were minimally used. Only four students were engaged in the development of the individual behavior program; there was one non-voluntary and two voluntary transfers; in 16 cases restitution was attempted, and only in five instances was the student’s program changed.

**Most distinct colors in the picture of discipline**

All indicators I reported on in the above sections answer the first analytic question, *what are the patterns, magnitude, and severity of student transgressions* in the New York school as follows:

- The NYC research site has an average of 1.4 disciplinary encounters per student per school year, which corresponds to 1.8 infractions per student per year.
- Of all encounters, less than half, (43%), take place inside the classrooms.
- The majority of classroom infractions that are referred relate to *disruption and insubordination* (53%) and *verbal abuse and disrespect* (24%). All other categories do not exceed 6% of the total number of infractions each.
• According to 55% of teachers and deans the most common infractions are related to attendance and punctuality. Following closely are lack of respect for building requirements and mildly disturbing behaviors with 47.5% of teachers reporting each of them.

If we take into account teachers’ and deans’ reports with regard to frequent student infractions, we can deduce that the categories of infractions that go largely unreported are incidents relating to attendance/punctuality, building requirements, mild disturbances, and lack of academic work.

• For outside-the-class infractions the most frequent categories are: attendance-related incidents (49%), disruptive and insubordinate behavior (17.7%), and verbally abusive and disrespectful incidents (12.5%). Physically aggressive and dangerous behavior reaches 6.2%, while everything else falls under five percent.

• I observed 170 students wearing hats around the school per day, 68 students having/using visible electronic devices, 321 students cutting inside the school, and 13 incidents of insubordination. Finally, 300 to 350 students, school-wide each period, are in the hallway after the 2nd bell and either go late to class or cut class.

Comparison of records, observation data, and interviews showed that incidents such as the wearing of hats, the using of electronic devices, students being in the hallway after the second bell, students cutting inside the school, and even insubordination go under-reported.

• Regarding severity, most infractions (48%) are Level 1, 12% are Level 2, 32% are Level 3, 5% are Level 4, and only 0.09% are Level 5.

• 23% of the infractions were punished with a suspension (Principal’s or Superintendent’s), 31% of cases were not even dealt with, and for 38% of the cases the dean had a talk and/or admonished the student.
• Parents were not very much informed of their children’s behavior. Only in 152 out of 850 cases had the deans definitely spoken to a misbehaving student’s parent.

• Finally, one very important finding is that the supporting services are under-utilized in the school. The predominant institutional reactions were: suspension, just talking to the student, or not even addressing the misbehavior.

**Personnel Perceptions and Beliefs Regarding Student Discipline**

The first independent variable of the study is the school personnel perceptions and beliefs regarding (1) student behavior, (2) the administration of student discipline by the school, and (3) their preferred method for handling student discipline. This is captured by the analytic question, *what are school officials’ definitions and perceptions of student transgressions and of the disciplinary procedures followed in the school?* Indicators for this variable are: (a) educators’ definitions of disciplined and undisciplined behavior; (b) their (dis)agreement with classifications set by the school; (c) their impressions regarding the magnitude and seriousness of student transgressions in the school; (d) their impressions regarding the sufficiency of the system of rules; (e) their impressions regarding the effectiveness of the system of punishments; and (f) their opinions regarding the effectiveness of the existing division of responsibility in the area of student discipline.

**Defining undisciplined behavior**

In defining the undisciplined student 19 out of 40 interviewees (47.5%) stressed both, *talking and disrupting the class and not responding well to authority*, in short behavior exhibited by:

…a student who continues the talks and one asked not to do so continues to do the behavior, whatever it is, it could be talking, it could be writing, it could be touching things, a student who keeps doing it even though you asked him to stop.

(Teacher I.S., 2007)
Sixteen interviewees (40%) stressed behavior such as being rude or disrespectful that shows bad student character, and the same number stressed poor punctuality or attendance as being undisciplined. Eleven interviewees (27.5%) mentioned the breaking of rules in general, and six (15%) stressed issues such as a lack of academic interest or inappropriate physical behavior (fighting, kicking, or running).

While mentioning undisciplined behaviors, teachers juxtaposed both serious and non-serious. A majority stressed verbal assaults and physical attacks as being very serious, but mildly disturbing behavior in class as well as punctuality and attendance as being less serious. As a criterion for this differentiation the majority of teachers and deans mentioned safety. However, all interviewees, at different points of their interviews, referred to “respect” and “being allowed to teach” as issues that they care about. Since they see these issues as vital, they observe and attempt to correct behaviors that hamper their ability to teach and/or are disrespectful more than other behaviors. Poor attendance or punctuality are also considered undisciplined and are reported as being common (see table 4.5), however they are not seriously undisciplined behaviors from the point of view of the teacher. Not respecting the building requirements is also listed as a common and less serious behavior, but it is not mentioned in the list of what teachers believe to be undisciplined. Teachers do not report these behaviors to the deans because they are

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.9</th>
<th>STUDENTS CONSIDERED TO BE UNDISCIPLINED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Sample size: 40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior</td>
<td># of interviewees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not respond well to authority</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disruption of the class (incl. talking)</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor punctuality and attendance</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bad character (rude &amp; disrespectful)</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breaking the rules in general</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of interest in academic work</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inappropriate physical behavior</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
so common. However, physically aggressive behavior is considered very serious and is always reported.

**(Dis)agreement with classifications enforced by the school**

In order to see how much teachers and deans are in agreement with the school’s classification of student behavior I took some very common behaviors, specifically wearing a hat, using a cell phone, leaving class without a pass, cutting class, and coming to class late and asked deans and teachers to tell me if they considered these behaviors to be undisciplined and if so, to be worthy of a disciplinary response. Most interviewees said that they view cell-phone use, leaving class without a pass, cutting class, and coming to class late as undisciplined. Wearing a hat was the only category where 22 of the interviewees (55%) did not see the behavior as unruly while 13 participants (32.5%) did see it as unruly. Six interviewees (15%) stressed the culture, the particular circumstances, or the symbolism connected with wearing hats, which makes it a very particular category to discipline:

I would say it shows no respect but sometimes they are injured and something with the stitches and something like that, and I have seen that, and I never want to…because I have had a situation when I asked somebody to take off their hat and they had surgery and they were really…you know…so am I gonna say, you know, you have that percentage where if somebody was hurt and they are embarrassed with the hair, how can you say, you know…(Teacher N.X., 2007)

As far as I am concerned…the hat rule is symbolic. Nothing more or less in that…it does not make the kid a bad kid. Inherently this does not make them a bad kid if they wear the hat, but the point is, what we try to say is, that in the school, because it is a special environment we have special rules. And some of them are directly related to education like being quiet and behaving and going to class, and some of them are symbolic of the fact that you are in a different kind of building and therefore you are expected to behave with different kinds of rules, and the hat rule is that. … Some churches you go to church, you put on a hat. Other churches when you go in you take off the hat. (Dean K.N., 2007)
In the category of *lateness*, 25% of the interviewees said it depends, stressing how late, how often, and under what conditions: “It depends! If it’s continuously and if they make a big ruckus when they walk in the door, yes! But once in a while with a pass, no!” (I.S., 2007)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Wears a hat</th>
<th>Uses a cell phone</th>
<th>Leaves class w/out a pass</th>
<th>Cuts classes</th>
<th>Comes late</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Undisciplined</strong></td>
<td>13 (32.5%)</td>
<td>34 (85%)</td>
<td>36 (90%)</td>
<td>31 (77.5%)</td>
<td>23 (57.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Not undisciplined</strong></td>
<td>22 (55%)</td>
<td>5 (15%)</td>
<td>4 (10%)</td>
<td>6 (15%)</td>
<td>7 (17.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>It depends</strong></td>
<td>5 (12.5%)</td>
<td>5 (10%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>3 (7.5%)</td>
<td>10 (25%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stress culture / symbolism</strong></td>
<td>6 (15%)</td>
<td>1 (2.5%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 4.10**  
**BEHAVIOR IS CONSIDERED DISCIPLINED / UNDISCIPLINED**  
(Sample size: 40)

**Impressions about the magnitude and seriousness of student transgressions**

Teachers and deans gave me rough estimations regarding the percentage of students they believed were breaking the rules, and of the cases for which they thought help by specialists (psychologists, counselors, social workers) was necessary. Regarding the first group, teachers and deans divided the students into three categories: (1) those who break the rules, but do not get caught; (2) those who get caught breaking some rules; and (3) those who “keep the deans busy,” “the usual suspects.” Almost one third of the interviewees discussed each group. In reference to how many students actually break the rules the teachers were divided. One half believed that most students were unruly and the other half said that only a small percentage of students violate the rules.
Regarding the need for specialists, I was curious to see how many students, according to the teachers’ and deans’ impressions, were simply rebelling against the school and how many had deeper issues that needed specialists’ intervention. Eleven out of forty interviewees (27.5%) thought that very few or none of the students needed specialist intervention, very few being less than 2%. Some interviewees, however, stressed the difficulty of handling even this very low number:

Aaaa…is the number high? No! But if I tell you there are maybe 15 or 20 kids in the school of over 3000 that’s very small percentage wise, but I got to tell you 15 or 20 kids are always in your face. (Dean K.N., 2007)

Thirteen out of 40 (32.5%) answered few, and specified it between 5% and 10%. Ten interviewees (25%) said, “many”, meaning more than 30% and only three interviewees (7.5%) said, “a lot, maybe all”, with a lot meaning more than 50%. From this I deduce that the deans and teachers do not have a clear and objective perspective in regards to the nature of the disciplinary incidents and the need for specialists. A majority stress that few or very few cases warrant the intervention of specialists while a sizeable minority has the opposite conviction.

The disciplinary rules

In disciplining its students, the school follows the Chancellor’s Regulations, the Discipline Code of The Department of Education, also known as “The Blue Book,” and its own building rules. Of course each teacher can have his/her class rules as well. I asked teachers and deans if the existing system of rules is sufficient, and if they would like to have a stricter or less strict rule system. 23 out of 40 respondents (57.5%) said that the rules are fine. Some deans commented upon the Discipline Code with the following words:

I think it’s actually pretty fair, most things are covered, I have not really found something that is not covered in there, and there are lists of strategies, you know. Let’s say, if you are starting out, let’s say, if you are a teacher and have been reading it, let’s say, a) follow this first, talk to the parent, b) talk to the kid, c)
maybe pull the kid out of class with a counselor, and it goes all the way to e, f, g, up to like suspend the kid. It’s really not that bad! It is adequate I would say. (Dean L.O., 2007)

Nine interviewees (22.5%) found the rule system inadequate. Few complained about the legalistic nature of the Discipline Code. Some said that the school needs stricter rules, and others advocated for more “finely tuned” rules because there is a lot of detailed discussion about serious offenses (that happen rarely) but not about transgressions that happen more often:

I think it (the Discipline Code) tends to concentrate more on the, I don’t know, almost publicity offenses. There is a lot of time spent on the serious offenses concerning weapons and discussing this is this kind of weapon and this is that kind of suspension. Because of this kind of weapon and then is that kind of weapon and we have various kinds of fighting and lot of stuff about intentional damage and so on … We had some other things like interfering with the educational process or some vague things but always something…just was not there. There probably should be more elaboration on behaviors that interfere with the proper functioning of a school, maybe some more fine tuning in terms of this general interfering with the educational process, which a lot of teachers tend to quote that in their referrals because I think somebody told them that that is the key to having a student punished. That is you say, “They are interfering with the educational process”. What the heck does that mean? (Dean K.N., 2007)

Only 6 interviewees (15%) expressed a belief that there are too many rules, “Fewer would be better, we don’t need more rules” (Y.C., 2007); or, they said, the rules are targeting behaviors that shouldn’t be categorized as undisciplined. The “No hats” rule received the highest criticism:

Kids wearing a hat, and he wants to wear a hat, I mean, I do not really understand that rule, about why hats are not allowed. Who came up with that? But yet, for some religious reasons if they are supposed to wear a hat that’s O.K. So, what is the reasoning behind it? Where is that rule come from, because they may belong to different gangs? So if they wear different clothing? If they wear red, you are going to outlaw the color red? I mean, how you…it creates issues. (Teacher C.M., 2007)

The system of punishment

The discussion about punishment became heated with many interviewees. The majority of the participants (75%) said, “it is inadequate” and 55% of them had something else to suggest.
Interviewees justified the system of punishment (in the form of suspending the students) as being ineffective by providing the following arguments:

(1) It does not change student behavior for the better. Suspension does not teach those who get suspended not to repeat the offenses they got in trouble for in the first place. A teacher said, “Six years here I never saw a change in an individual after being in In-House” (F.P., 2007).

(2) It is not set up and implemented in order to be effective. The suspended students often do not attend In-House, and those who do attend do not do any work. In general no one really “follows through” regarding the effectiveness of the In-House Suspension programs:

   Principal’s Suspension for five days! The child stays in school. Whether they show up or not, nobody really follows through on it. We are limited in what we can do or what we can’t do with them or without them. The system does not work. (Dean Y.B., 2007)

A teacher frames this differently:

   Well there is no punishment, that’s how these kids understand it because they have In-House Suspension so a lot of kids just don’t come those days for the In-House. If they do come in they don’t do the work that the teachers leave them. They just like… will sit there… well it depends on who is in charge. Usually they force them or tell them, “you have to do some work”, so whatever work they do, a lot of them they pretend to do the work. But… I have never gotten anything back from any of my students that I have given and as I said, students don’t show up there. (Teacher S.D., 2007)

(3) It is not strict enough. The students do not experience suspension as punishment because, basically, they have a shorter day (by law they are allowed to leave school at 11:00 a.m.). Nothing that they value is taken away from them.

(4) It does not address the individual. The school has a system in place that indicates which punishment is appropriate for each infraction, but it does not properly investigate the reasons for a student’s misbehavior. It does not address the problem; it just punishes. Another concern is that the system works only for the teachers and the deans, not for the children:
I don’t think it works for the kids. Example: we have one student, ‘Donna’ who has had the In-House, the In-House, the In-House, Principal’s, Principal’s, Principal’s, Principal’s, and everything you can imagine. And it does not work. Does it work for the teachers, and does it work for the deans because we don’t have to deal with her for that amount of time that she is gone? Absolutely! Does it work for her? No! Because she just repeats it over and over and over again! And she is not the only one. (Dean F.K., 2007)

(5) There is no consistency in its application, “I think for every behavior it should be a consequence every single time, and then that behavior would stop” (I.L., 2007); “We have stated punishments but we don’t apply them; there is no even-handedness in the application of the punishment that is listed there” (O.Y., 2007). A good example of the lack of even-handedness regarding strictness was given by a teacher who compared two incidents that she witnessed:

Well, I mean, for instance like one of my students recently got caught writing graffiti on my desk and I was really amazed that he got arrested for that. I thought that was way too harsh of a punishment and so I went and talked to the dean about it. … He got arrested because he wrote on my desk? You know, that’s ridiculous! … another time like I saw a couple of kids dealing drugs outside my classroom, and I followed one of the kids in to a classroom and I said… I called up the dean and I said, “Listen, I just saw a drug deal going down, and this boy went to this classroom. I think you should go in and search him”. And the dean said to me, “Oh, we can’t do this, that’s against the law. I cannot drag a kid out of a class and search him for no reason”. And I am like, “Really?” (Teacher H.R., 2007)

Another teacher put it well: “I think it depends on who writes up the kid, who the dean is… I think there is a lot of other factors that make it very unfair” (I.S., 2007).

(6) Disciplining the students has become a political game. Teachers are supposed to discipline keeping in mind their students’ well being and not the administrators’ preferences. Sometimes the parents intervene without understanding what harm they may be doing to their students. Unfortunately, sometimes the teachers do not have the authority to do what most benefits their students:

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30 All names are pseudonyms.
I am very disciplined in my class and again, because it’s safety driven, it’s non-negotiable. We had a situation where a Social Worker came in and demanded that a student in a wheelchair cook at the stove. And the student in the wheelchair, her eye level is right in front of the flame. The flame was right in front of her face as she sat in the wheelchair. And any type of spatter or hot oil or hot water splashing would hit her right in the face. And she said, “I have a letter from her mother saying that she wants her to cook.” And I said to her, “She is not cooking whether the Chancellor comes up here. Because when she gets burned in the face everybody is gonna run for cover: the Chancellor, you, her mother, everybody, and I am gonna be the one sitting… and the young lady is gonna be the one on the short end. She is not cooking because it’s too dangerous.” So the discipline is non-existent. They just need to accommodate… what they ARE doing is accommodating the parents and their own game, getting away from the problem. That’s what they are doing. (Teacher J.T., 2007)

In short, deans and teachers openly and overwhelmingly expressed the opinion that the system of punishment, as it is currently set up and implemented, is ineffective. Ten participants (25%), however, said that the system of punishments works for the students because, “If they don’t feel that there is punishment they might do worse” (F.K., 2007). Some interviewees, though, justified the fact that it works by referring to the arguments of those who suggested that it does not work:

If it’s something that has happened in the classroom, if a student has thrown things and cursed, it is good for the teacher that the student is removed for a few days. So in that sense it can be effective because it can be good for the class that that student is not there. It can be good for the teacher because the teacher can teach, and when the student comes back, I said we have these repeat offenders, but they don’t repeat right away! So there is some effect I think. When they come back they might try and they fall to their old habit. So there is some benefit! (Dean N.Q., 2007)

There is therefore, some ambiguity as to whom the current system of punishment is supposed to benefit: the undisciplined student, his fellow students, or his teachers and deans. If it is the student, the system is definitely ineffective; if it is the teachers and deans then, there might be “some benefit,” but if it is his fellow students I think that we must open the issue for debate.
Division of responsibility for student discipline

For this indicator I asked teachers and deans (who also teach) to tell me: (1) if the current method of dividing responsibility between staff for punishing the students is appropriate/satisfactory, or if they would prefer a different configuration of responsibility and power; (2) which are the disciplinary issues they think should be handled exclusively by specialists; (3) what are the various roles of all the authorities involved in the “student discipline operation;” and (4) whether or not they believe that are meaningfully involved.

Regarding the first issue, it was interesting that the interviewees understood the question from the perspective of their structural position and the answers also reflected each respondent’s structural position. Specifically, I asked them the question, should responsibility to discipline the students be dispersed? Many teachers, being under the assumption that in the existing system they were sharing this responsibility with the deans, understood the question ‘dispersed as it currently is or more’ and answered, “yes”, because they are overwhelmed with work and would be happy to be relieved of some responsibility. “How can you expect the teachers to mark papers, prepare stuff, and to…to do…you know, teachers need to teach…” (N. X., 2007). Or, “It makes sense because we have other students who need our attention” (L.V., 2007). Interestingly though, many teachers expressed a belief that they do not have “credible authority”, that students do not perceive them as having the legitimacy to handle discipline:

Yes! Because teachers sometimes don’t have the…we do have the authority but we don’t have the credible authority. We won’t have as much of an impact in yelling at a student that a dean may have. It’s the impact of seeing a security guard, the impact of seeing a dean with the walkie-talkie, the impact of a police officer, just the idea of them. It’s the credible authority. We are not enough some times. (Teacher A.K., 2007)

Many deans, however, assuming that most disciplinary matters are already in their hands, and not those of the teachers, also said, “yes”, expressing a desire for the teachers to take a more
active role in disciplining the students of their classes instead of referring everything to the deans:

I believe in this, if you have a student and you are a teacher in a classroom or in the gym or whatever, you should handle you own matters. That’s what I believe…number one. (Dean Y.B., 2007)

This, of course, is in line with the deans’ experience (and constant complains) because of particular teachers who refer everything to the deans, and have fully withdrawn themselves from disciplining their own students. Out of the 18 deans I interviewed, 13 (73%) said that academic matters shouldn’t be referred, 8 (44.5%) said that punctuality / attendance is not a deans’ matter, 8 (44.5%) insisted that classroom management in general must be the teacher’s responsibility, and 5 deans (28%) mentioned that they would appreciate it if silly stuff does not reach the deans’ office.

Some teachers and deans feel that the teachers are too involved with the students, and that they need somebody impartial to provide objectivity, “Teachers would be biased against the student because of past problems” (O.R., 2007). They also feel that a third person may make a difference in helping students to understand why what they are doing is wrong, “Yeah, I would send him to a different person hoping that it has an effect” (F.P., 2007). One teacher emphasized the importance of having a third party, someone other than the student and the teacher, as a safety net to counteract the erosion of trust that parents once had for teachers, and also adds more credibility to what the teacher says:

It’s definitely something worthwhile. It is another person involved. We have people in denial, like parents, and they swear that it’s a personal vendetta from the teacher to the student. So you have somebody else saying, well so…the dean saying the student did this to the parent also, so it’s a second person. And a lot of time, even better, the dean has better resources of the student’s behavior throughout their whole entire school career. And they can bring that in too, they can say, “Well you had this problems three times now with three different
teachers. So I know you are lying and Mr. So and So told the truth about this, or possibly told the truth because you did it three other times”. (Teacher J.T., 2007)

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<th>Table 4.11 SHOULDN'T RESPONSIBILITY TO DISCIPLINE BE DISPERSED?</th>
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<td>(Sample size: 40)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Answer</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>It depends</td>
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The 14 respondents, mostly deans, who suggested that responsibility shouldn’t be dispersed stressed factors such as the need to coordinate punishment and to have one decision making center, because otherwise the school could end up giving too many suspensions to its students. The two teachers who said that responsibility shouldn’t be dispersed actually meant that teachers must be given the power to punish the students, because if they do not, the wrong signal is sent to the students, a signal that deans and administrators are more powerful than the teachers:

To do it perhaps they can do it, but I think it would be more effective if they did it with me. So that we seem…otherwise it seems as if they are more powerful than me, I know administrative wise they are, but to the student they don’t have to be. They have to be to us. Why do they have to be to the student also? That’s the tone many schools have. “Oh! That’s the Assistant Principal, you better be good” but why can’t they react to the teacher the same way? (Teacher F.P., 2007)

The structural position of the school staff was again decisive in their approach to the issue of punishment. All deans, except one, said that punishment must be in the hands of the deans or the administrators if someone else has to be involved. They could not even imagine another way of doing things. Apparently teachers react differently. 10 out of the 22 teachers that were interviewed (45.5%) said that they should have the responsibility to punish the students, but only 3 out of these 10 responded “me” without thinking, while the other 7 hesitated before giving an answer, or gave an answer such as, “Punishing? I think, I mean, I guess I am, personally like with my behavior… I guess calling parents is going to be punishment, but, I mean, I guess, I am,
we are, in a way, all of us” (B.L., 2007), or “Officially it’s only the dean who can suspend, but sometimes I have been able to write on referrals: Please, suspend this student from my class for a day” (M.W., 2007). Four teachers (18%) said that they should share responsibility with the deans (teachers for the non-serious infractions and deans for the serious ones), and two (9%) said that they share this responsibility with the parents. Nine teachers (36%) abdicated responsibility for punishing undisciplined students completely. Six teachers (27%) passed all responsibility onto the administrators, and two teachers (9%) preferred to give it to the parents (see table 4.12). Three teachers gave alternative scenarios on how they could share this responsibility with a student’s parents, and one teacher added that ideally no one should punish the students.

Interestingly, no one mentioned that according to the Discipline Code only the teachers were supposed to remove (suspend from their classes) undisciplined students and the deans were not supposed to suspend at all. The deans’ role was to act in lieu of the Principal by preparing suspensions for the Principal to sign. The current structures, even though they differ from the guidelines, were so ingrained in people’s minds and everyday routines that no one bothered to question them.

### Table 4.12

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<th>Answer</th>
<th># of interviewees</th>
<th>% of interviewees</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>45.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrators (deans)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deans for serious and teachers for non-serious infractions</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
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In order to examine whether the existing divisions of responsibility and available services are appropriate for the school’s population, I asked deans and teachers what issues, in their opinion, should be handled by specialists (with specialists meaning counselors, psychologists,
social workers, even psychiatrists). Twenty-nine interviewees (72.5%) said that all behaviors with psychological roots such as: violence, verbal abuse, harassment, anger, hatred toward the opposite gender, racism, and suicidal tendencies; all behaviors that are considered abnormal; or all students that exhibit behavior that is emotionally disturbed or hyperactive, are suffering by any kind of disorder, have developmental issues, are anti-social, or hurt themselves should be handled by specialists. Fifteen interviewees (37.5%) stressed personal issues and home-life scenarios, which definitely need support from a social worker or a psychologist. In this category, interviewees overwhelmingly included all issues of a sexual nature, including children that had been sexually abused by relatives, other physical abuse, parental neglect, and cases of death in the family. Nine interviewees (22.5%) said that chronic, or extreme behaviors and behavioral patterns in general that have a psychological base should also be issues that are dealt with by specialists. One person mentioned drugs, and three respondents said that maybe all behaviors need a psychologist’s intervention.

The participants agreed on the categories that should be referred to specialists, but had varying reactions regarding their support. 14 out of 40 participants (35%) said that they receive support from psychologists and social workers, but only for Special Education students. Eight interviewees (20%) said that they receive support for their General Education students, but only from deans and counselors. One dean explained that they do not refer students to the psychologist because they leave this task for the counselors: “I have referred people to counselors many times. As far as to the school psychologists, this is something that I left to the counselors to do.” (Z.G., 2007) Few General Education teachers and deans mentioned success stories:

I had a student in my classroom who never talked… and her friend came and she wanted to tell me something, tell ME something, but she didn’t tell me. And I
didn’t know what to do. I’m not a counselor, you know, and so what ended up coming out from that was that she told me that she had been raped the year before and had never gotten help and had never told anyone, but this friend of hers who came with her into my room. And she told me and I referred her to the counselor in the school and … Anyway, the counselor set up regular appointments, meetings, sessions with the girl and helped this girl because I saw that the girl really did come out of her shell and she started talking in class and smiling and participating in a way that she never had before. (Dean G.J., 2007)

Eighteen participants (45%), mostly people who are not involved with Special Education, were very critical regarding the support they receive from specialists. When asked the question, are you getting any support from specialists, they responded, “No! Honestly, I think it is pretty hard to” (F.K., 2007), or “No!” starting to answer before I had even finished my question and continuing, “No, no!” with great emphasis (I.L., 2007), or “Discipline wise? No! No!” (F.P., 2007). One of the deans described the reality regarding specialists and the help they provide very precisely:

When you are a Regular Ed dean I feel like…the assumption is that most of the regular students have no problems and don’t need those resources. So it seems that the social workers and the psychologists are available especially for the Special Ed group, but not really for the regular students. (Dean C.G., 2007)

Another dean expressed great frustration and was very dramatic in her description:

Where is this psychologist? Is there a psychologist here? (We burst into laughter) Where…where? ‘Joe Black!’ You remember him! OK? I mean… on the floor, foaming at the mouth, you know, eight security hold him at the ground. Any BP (Behavioral Plan)? I don’t think so. He was at school the next day. You ask your AP, you know, “Oh, that’s it, it is what it is!” What? This kid needs to be in another facility! OK? Back the next day because of his rights, No child left behind! Alright? This is what I am talking about. Psychologist? You need some serious medication! I don’t know, I mean, you need a psychiatrist here. Right? (I.L., 2007)

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<th>Table 4.13 SUPPORT FROM SPECIALISTS (Sample size: 40)</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Answer</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Yes (from social workers and psychologists but mostly)</td>
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Another category of professionals involved with student discipline and safety are the School Safety Agents (SSAs). The SSAs have a role that is very controversial; some educators describe them as being vital, and others as the complete opposite. Teachers and deans describe their job as being, mainly about safety, patrolling and clearing the hallways, “ushers, they usher kids along” (J.M., 2007), or “they are there as preventative measure” (B.F., 2007). Most deans described the SSAs’ job as being a support for their job; they remove a student from their room, “they are supposed to break up the fights; we are not supposed to jump in their fights” (L.O., 2007). One dean provided a clear differentiation between disciplining students and policing a school:

When there’s a situation where the student’s got to get arrested, very violent and you know you’re not allowed to touch them, the SSAs are allowed to do that. When a student refuses to come with a dean somewhere else, then, or sometimes a student is like, “no, I am not leaving the classroom”, even if the dean is there. So, then I’m going to call for the SSAs and they can move them from there. They can definitely take him out and if he refuses he can get arrested. (Dean D.H., 2007)

Certain behaviors are not supposed to be handled by educators. If touching is involved, if a student has to be physically removed and he is not persuaded to do so by himself, then the police get involved. The assumption seems to be that it is better for the student to get arrested than to be handled by school personnel.

Teachers and deans that were critical of the SSAs’ role responded to my question, what are the SSAs doing in the school by saying, “I would rather not comment on that” (S.D., 2007),

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes (from guidance counselors and deans for General Education students)</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>I do not need it</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td></td>
<td>I do not need it</td>
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or “Nothing! They are supposed to be the authority figures but they are just standing there” (L.V., 2007). One dean when the word SSA was simply mentioned got a little upset:

(With loud, angry voice) I don’t know what their job is. Their job…to be honest, I don’t know. I really don’t know. What is their job? They are not allowed to take any cell phones or anything like that. They are supposed to tell the kids to get to the class but most of the kids are in the hallway. I don’t know, they are supposed to keep up a code of behavior in the school. I guess it is so… I don’t know. I don’t see this. (Dean Y.B., 2007)

In evaluating how much the SSAs’ presence in the building helps them in disciplining the students, 13 interviewees (32.5%) said that it is very important to have them, 9 participants (22.5%) recognized that it is good to have them because they give some help, 2 interviewees (5%) said that SSAs help only with fights, 2 interviewees (5%) said that SSAs only remove students, 5 interviewees answered with a tone of disapproval that they do not help much, and 9 participants (22.5%) insisted that SSAs do not help at all. In general, more than half of the educators believe that the SSAs do have a role to play in the school even when this role is very small. A 22.5% of teachers and deans were completely negative about the support from SSAs.

**Main points regarding teachers’ and deans’ beliefs and perceptions.**

In summary, all findings for each of the indicators I presented above, answer the analytic question, what are school officials’ definitions and perceptions of student transgressions and of the disciplinary procedures followed in the school, as follows:

- Teachers consider behaviors to be undisciplined mainly if these behaviors are disrupting their lesson, challenging them as figures of authority, or if they believe that the students are being disrespectful and rude. Safety is viewed as an important issue.
- Regarding seriousness, most teachers (about two thirds of the interviewees) placed verbal assaults and physical assaults first and did not mention cutting or attendance at all among the serious behaviors. Almost half of the interviewees placed mild disturbances, such as
punctuality, attendance, and building requirements (the wearing of hats, use of cell phone, etc.) under the non-serious category. It seems that the most important differentiating factor between serious and non-serious was how much the behavior could harm students and teachers.

- The majority of the interviewees agree with the school rules. They see student behaviors as disciplined or undisciplined according to the rules. Among the five behaviors I asked about specifically, only the hat rule had a high (55%) percentage of clear dissenters.
- Half of the interviewees were under the impression that the student population is very unruly and the other half stressed that the percentage of students who break the school rules is small.
- Regarding the need for specialists, teachers and deans are divided. More than half of the interviewees thought that only a small percentage of their students (less than 10%) need specialist intervention, while about 40% declared that many of their students would benefit from specialist support.
- The majority of interviewees consider the rules of discipline to be adequate, and 22.5% would prefer even more rules.
- The overwhelming majority of teachers and deans suggest that the system of punishment, particularly the inconsistencies in its implementation, is ineffective for students.
- With reference to the division of responsibility, five points need to be stressed:
  a) Teachers and deans understood the majority of questions based on their structural position and most suggested that responsibility for disciplining the students needs to be dispersed (i.e., deans would prefer the teachers to assume more responsibility in their classrooms, and teachers want the deans to deal with even more classroom
discipline), whereas 35% suggested that this responsibility needs to stay in the hands of the administrators.

b) With regard to punishing students for behavioral problems, the overwhelming majority of the deans said that only the deans should have the power to punish. Less than half of the teachers suggested that they should be responsible for administer punishment, while one-third wanted teachers to be completely freed from punishing the students.

c) Regarding specialists, the majority of interviewees agreed that they are needed to address psychological and violence-related issues, while about one-third said that home life scenarios should also be the responsibility of specialists. Some made the point that chronic problems such as cutting have a psychological root and need support from mental health professionals.

d) The participants’ experience regarding the kind of support they get from specialists was not very positive. A little less than half of the interviewees said that they do not get any support, and were very critical of the quality of support given by specialists. Some suggested that the deans and counselors help with the General Education students, and 35% suggested that psychologists and social workers help only with the Special Education students. Very few said that they do not need help at all.

e) In general, more than half of the interviewees believe that SSAs play an important role in the school, while the majority suggested that SSAs have a role to play in the school even when this role is very small. Few teachers and deans were completely negative about the SSAs.

Administration of Student Discipline
The second independent variable of the study is the administration of student discipline. With administration I refer to (a) the legal framework, which consists of Federal laws, State laws, and Department of Education (DOE) policy, which directs and shapes school policy and (b) the individual school policy. This answers the third research question, what regulations, rules, and practices are supposed to be in place for student discipline? With administration, I also refer to the enforcement of school policy and the actual procedures and practices used (methods and structures such as formality or differentiation and specialization of school personnel). This addresses the last research question, how is policy implemented? Under this question I examine a) how responsibility for disciplining / sanctioning the students is divided among school personnel, b) the formality of disciplinary procedures, and c) the discrepancies between policy, institutional procedures, and actual practices.

No individual school controls the legal framework of its operation. This comes to schools either as mandatory directives or as optional mandates, with compliance encouraged through financial or other incentives. It is impossible to examine all laws and regulations that are related to discipline in the school environment and therefore I focus only on those I find to be of central importance.

**Legal mandates and provisions**

Starting at a Federal level, I see the *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) law of 2002 as the first massive governmental effort to significantly intervene in its school population, (students and professionals), as a benevolent oppressor. Even though it is not directly related to student discipline, NCLB forces the development of priorities and categories of institutional behavior, inside which discipline must be regulated. By claiming “To close the achievement gap with accountability, flexibility, and choice, so that no child is left behind,” (NCLB Act of 2001, 115
STA.1425) it clearly sets a new divider between the normal and the pathological; it creates new
definitions of adequate and inadequate performance, of good and bad students, practices, and
professionals in public education. It is methodical, allowing enough time for new categories to
become part of the institutional memory, conscience, shame or pride, and self-justification.
NCLB was the start of a process requiring constant need for evaluation and data generation for
the state in order to better serve its citizens.

The NCLB Act of 2001, signed into Law in January 2002, offered substantial grants to
States that chose to participate in its enforcement. The key words used were “accountability”
and “data driven.” The aim was that all students of elementary and secondary schools would be
helped to improve their academic performance through schools becoming more accountable.
However, the population groups that the Act was most concerned with were “the economically
disadvantaged,” “students with disabilities,” “students of major ethnic and racial groups,” and
students lacking proficiency in English, mostly children of immigrants. After measuring student
achievement it was found that students in these categories were most likely to be “left behind”
and it was determined that institutional practices needed to change around the issues of
accountability, quality of teaching, student assessment, curricula, resource distribution, and
parental participation. Regarding student performance, participating states had to adopt high
standards, the same for all public school students, work toward making Adequate Yearly
Progress (AYP), and ensure a closing of the achievement gap for all students in a period no longer
than twelve years. Schools were to be sanctioned or rewarded based on their AYP. Participating
states accumulated student achievement data according to the NCLB categories, and put together
report cards for schools that needed improvement, which were, of course, schools with a high concentration of students in the above mentioned “left behind” categories.

In my research site, the early years of the enforcement of the NCLB Act enforcement were not marked by any worries or change of practices, and no one was concerned regarding school status, evaluations, or AYP. This seemed to educators just the latest government whim and they expected it to fade in few years. The principal was informing the staff once a year about the school accountability status, usually when the accountability reports were released by the state, but there were no strategies or practices in place to make use of this information. The school started off being rated as Requiring Academic Progress in the 2003-2004 academic year, became a School in Corrective Action in 2005-2006, a School Planning for Restructuring in 2006-2007 (the year of research), and a School Undergoing Restructuring (Year 1) in 2007-2008. Beginning in the 2006-2007 school year, the Department of Education of the City of New York, under the legacy of the NCLB Act, announced that it would start giving grades from A to F to its schools depending on AYP results. The plan was to close schools achieving D or F status. Only then did the administration express its worries and urge the teachers to do their part in order for the school not to be further downgraded. However, their suggestions were reactive measures designed to bring short-term progress, rather than interventions, which aimed to address the actual issues. The Principal in discussing the school’s attendance rating at a meeting with the teachers said:

31 The school was given grade B the first three years (but was placed below the 50th percentile). In 2009-2010 school year the school got a C and moved to the 25th percentile.
They measure, let’s say attendance, looking at the average daily attendance. Our school’s daily average attendance is 76.9%. This puts the school in the 30th percentile in the city and the 40th percentile in the peer group. What causes this? We have many L.T.A.s (Long Term Absentees). You know, if three teachers mark the kid present we mark the child present. But mistakes happen also (gives a list of probable mistakes). Every 33 kids is a 1% in attendance. Now if a kid is present for one period one day the kid has to be present for the day. Therefore, we will ask you to check students’ attendance retrospectively and maybe many mistakes can be corrected. Sign if you are sure that you saw the child. If you are not comfortable do not sign. We need to go back till September and in the future be more careful. (The Principal, 2007)

It is clear that efforts were directed toward making the school attendance record better without addressing the actual issue of high absenteeism. The constant pressure of the data analysis and the fear of being placed even lower were apparently not encouraging the administration to introduce meaningful interventions. A school needs to be ingenious in its policies to improve the attendance of students in high poverty areas where an academic education is not seen as being relevant or beneficial. In unofficial discussions I had with students or overheard in the deans’ office while students were “waiting to be dealt with,” comments such as, “I need to go to work,” “I am not a study person. Do I need to go to college to work at my uncle’s business?” or “I want to become a cop (policeman), fast, easy, and make good money!” were commonplace.

In general, the NCLB law and all school performance evaluations ensuing from this Act are extremely detailed and precise. They leave no doubt in the minds of those who read the statistics; the school environment, student performance, and professionalism of the educators are measured well now and whatever the resulting statistics portray is a reality worth focusing on. This is the most powerful consequence of the NCLB Act and its extension in New York City. Gradually, parents and the general public started making judgments based on these statistics and students, teachers, and administrators not only started acting based on the statistics, but also were
interpellated accordingly. Comments such as, “We are a B school,” or “He is responsible for becoming a C school” were common. In reality, under the NCLB Act the school was expected to maintain the same academic standards for the categories of those students who, traditionally, were not classified as “learners” as for motivated and academically able students.

In terms of student discipline, another relevant legal document is the Safe and Drug-Free School and Communities Act (SDFSCA). It promoted the implementation of a variety of programs to ensure that schools were safer, more disciplined, and drug-free so that student learning could thrive. Schools, which received funds under SDFSCA were required to implement the Act’s mandates, which stipulated that they have codes of conduct and “effective” disciplinary policies:

LEAs that receive SDFSCA funds are now required to have a plan for keeping their schools safe and drug-free that includes appropriate and effective discipline policies, security procedures, prevention activities, a student code of conduct, and a crisis management plan for responding to violent or traumatic incidents on school grounds. (State and Drug-Free School and Communities Act, 2002, p. 4-5)

The immediate legal authority that the New York City school system is obliged to answer to, is that of the New York State. The NY State, like all modern bureaucratic states, relies heavily on regulation. Therefore, there are legal provisions for all educational matters (under Part 100 Regulations), including student discipline. Based on this, by July 1st 2001 the New York City Department of Education had to adopt a uniform code of conduct for all its schools without this precluding the community school districts from also adopting their own codes of conduct

32 Interpellation is a concept introduced by Althusser (1971). It refers to the process through which our ideological existence leads us to (mis)recognize ourselves as a particular identity, as the addressee of a call or utterance.
33 That’s why the option for Special Education students to graduate with a local diploma passing one or more RCTs (Regents Competence Test) was suspended. The option of local diploma remains available for students with disabilities, but they are required to pass the required for all students Regents examinations with a score of 55 and above (See document, Local Diploma Safety Net Options for Students with Disabilities who Enter Grade 9 in September 2011 and Thereafter,” May 2011.
(always with the approval of the Chancellor). That is how the *Citywide Standards of Discipline and Intervention Measures*, (the *Discipline Code*, also known as the *Blue Book*), came into being. The Chancellor, in turn, had responsibility for updating the *Discipline Code* in accordance with new conditions, needs, and legal mandates. The New York State Legislature passed the *Safe Schools Against Violence in Education Act* (SAVE), which was signed into law in July 2000 and mandated schools to submit through a uniform reporting system Violent and Disruptive Incidents (VADIR). In general, the New York City school system follows its Chancellor’s Regulations, which may address the particular conditions of the New York City schools, but must be also in accordance with the State regulations. For this reason I refer only to the NYC Department of Education Chancellor’s Regulations.

The regulations mostly relevant to the study are *A–210 Minimum Standards for Attendance Programs*, and the ten regulations of the 400 series, with the most relevant being: *A–412 Security in the Schools; A–420 Pupil Behavior and Discipline – Corporal Punishment; A–421 Verbal Abuse; A–432 Search & Seizure; and A–443 Student Discipline Procedures*. In the 400 series there are also regulations for safety transfers, involuntary student transfers, and notification procedures for emergencies and for sex offenders who move in to the school district. All regulations are extremely detailed and painstakingly go over issues of notification protocols, the order of actions to be taken, and due process rights of students. These regulations have provisions for every conceivable possibility and are very easily reached at the DOE website. The NYC Chancellor’s Regulations give the impression of a legal rather than an educational document. As the Assistant Principal of Security said, “I think we are too litigious, you know, there are too many lawsuits…” and he continued:

> They expect us to run by the rules, and, you know, as most bureaucracies tend to be, they don’t, they really don’t care. They just, they all come up with some
nonsensical answer or just the court will make a decision, someone who…yes! (AP1, 2007)

In response to my question regarding how the school is affected in its efforts to discipline the students by forces beyond the school, the Principal mentioned the Chancellor’s Regulations and State Laws. He gave as examples regulation A – 443, which demanded that students serve the Principal’s Suspension at school, and the NY State SAVE regulation, according to which a student could be removed by a teacher from her classes. He explained that the school had to create an In-House Suspension Room and divert resources toward student discipline in order to comply with these regulations:

For example there was a time when the Principal’s Suspension was that a student had to stay home for five days. And I believe it was Chancellor Levy who felt that students were losing an education while they were home and therefore the Principal’s Suspension should be served in the building under the supervision of a teacher; so that was a major change for us. We created a room, we created positions, and we put all of that into place to follow that regulation. As part of the SAVE Regulation of NY State we had to develop a procedure, we abide by. We will respond to a particular teacher who had issues with a student and they had got through the entire ladder of discipline and referrals defined by the City and the State, the final combination of which would be my decision to remove the child from the room for whatever period of days fell within the regulations. We had that system in place, it’s not something that people use very much at the highest level because the deans are so supportive and the Assistant Principals are reasonably supportive and classroom management is very good here, so as a result the issues get dealt with way before they reach me. But we had a couple of cases where we have done SAVE removals, but that necessitated an entire change… (The Principal, 2007)

School policy

As stated before, all teachers and deans, before disciplining a student in the NYC school system need to consult the Citywide Standards of Discipline and Intervention Measures (the Discipline Code)\(^{34}\), which is a 27 page long but relatively concise document. It explicitly states:

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\(^{34}\) While this research was taking place the Citywide Standards of Discipline and Intervention Measures (the Discipline Code) published in 2005 was in effect. However, the NYCDOE, effective September 2010, issued a new version of this document, which is titled Citywide Standards of Intervention and
“School officials have to consult the Discipline Code in determining what disciplinary measure to impose” (The Discipline Code, 1995, p. 2). This document (see more details at the beginning of this chapter, p.101) provides a list of all possible student infractions classified into five different levels of seriousness, a range of disciplinary responses, the parameters between which school officials must place these disciplinary responses, and the students’ rights and responsibilities. It is hard to think of a behavior that is not included in the Discipline Code. A great deal of legislative work and expert knowledge was utilized to ensure that processes have uniformity across all schools, and that punishment is consistent and fair.

In addition, the schools have been given the right to intervene in those parts of students’ lives that are played outside of schools in order to secure their physical and psychological wellbeing. One such example is clearly demonstrated in the Chancellor’s Regulation A – 750 Child Abuse, according to which the school is mandated to report physical, sexual, emotional, or educational abuse and cases of parental neglect. Schools are also obliged to develop internal standards of behavior. The first thing that a visitor sees upon entering the school where I undertook my research, is a huge sign upon which are written in large, bold letters, the words: “No hats, No cells, No electronic devices, No revealing outfits.”

At the beginning of each school year educators and students are given a copy of the Discipline Code and are expected to abide by it. Teachers need to maintain good classroom management in order to teach effectively and if students disturb their classes, they are supposed to call the deans, or SSAs for assistance. Calling a student’s parents is always recommended as a first step before referring a student to the dean. Particular student infractions, which are academic

Discipline Measures in order to be in alignment with the Safe and Drug Free School and Community Act of 2010. From the title the effort can be recognized of the NYCDOE to align its disciplinary approaches with the broader governmentality philosophy: the population needs to conform to the acceptable/appropriate categories of behavior through counseling rather than confrontational and coercive approaches.
in nature, have to be referred to the assistant principals of academic subjects. Punishment can be either removal of a disruptive student from a class by the classroom teacher, suspension of the student from all his classes by the Principal, or suspension from school by the Superintendent, which is for very serious offenses.

**Main points on the legal framework**

In summary, the answer to the third question, *what regulations, rules, and practices are supposed to be in place for student discipline* is not comprehensive. I focus on the federal law of No Child Left Behind, which supplies the framework for today’s public education systems in participating states by imposing criteria against which standards of education can be crudely measured and categorized, i.e., the categories of thinking and action in education. Student discipline in NYC is directly affected by the Chancellor’s Regulations, which have to be in accordance with the NYS Laws. Each school is required to follow the *Discipline Code* of the City Department of Education, but is also at liberty, with Chancellor’s approval, to have its own code. The Chancellor’s Regulations recommend some school practices, while insisting that other practices are mandatory. The requirements of the law are specific and accountability is expected on all levels. Additionally, the law places an obligation on schools to intervene into the students’ lives beyond the school, in cases where the well being of these students is considered to be at risk.

**Policy enforcement**

It is assumed that everyone has the knowledge and ability to act professionally and do “the right thing.” “I want them (deans and SSAs) to be a professional” the AP Security said in his interview. “They know what their responsibilities are” (AP Security, 2007). However, having
rules, knowing these rules, and applying them are three different things. Therefore, I explored people’s knowledge of and willingness to enforce the school rules.

Knowledge of rules by school personnel. In response to my question what rules of conduct does the school follow, 19 interviewees (47.5%) answered with specific examples; they seemed to know the rules well and mentioned a good number of them. However, the other half of the participants either said, “don’t know”, “don’t remember”, or they mentioned one or two rules, mostly things that are common sense and not rules per se, such as, “Being respectful,” or “Not cursing.” Surprisingly, out of 40 interviewees, only four (10%) mentioned the Discipline Code. After I probed for further elaboration, most participants mentioned the building requirements. These are rules they see as they enter the building, written on the large sign placed at the center of the Main Lobby, and also hear the deans repeating as orders to the students everyday in the halls, “Take off your hats, you are late,” or “Phones are not allowed in the building.” Only few mentioned other behaviors.

Persistence in enforcing the rules. To my question of whether they always address an infraction if they see it, 17 interviewees (42%) answered, “Yes”, 13 (32%) said, “No”, 9 (23%) said, “Most times” and one person avoided answering. I posed the same question to the Assistant Principal of Security one day as I was observing his deans conducting a sweep of the 4th floor. He said, “In a school this size no one believes that. There comes a certain point when you get tired and you let some things go.” In my observations I also found this to be true. The deans who answered, “No” (and I can talk only about deans, because I did not observe teachers in their classrooms) were the staff who were most likely to ignore some times student transgressions.
**Following official policies.** The majority of the teachers and deans said that they do not follow the school’s official policy and they justified it by adding, “You need to pick and choose” (A.E., 2007), “Because several times the rules…they don’t fit every situation” (Y.C., 2007), “Sometimes the possibilities don’t really handle the situation” (W.A., 2007), “You will be overburdened with paper work” (C.G., 2007), “I don’t agree! I just don’t agree” (D.H., 2007), “Because I don’t have the support” (G.J., 2007), “Because it is very difficult” (N.Q., 2007), “There is no way you gonna do everything by the book” (V.F., 2007), or they answered with the question, “What is the school’s official policy?” (M.W., 2007) Six interviewees (15%) said that most of the times they try to implement official policy and another 15% said that they always do. One dean, though added, “I follow the rules, because I have a large discretion. So that’s easy to do” (J.M., 2007).
A few deans talked about ambiguities around the following of the rules. Even if the deans are willing to follow the rules, they may be discouraged from doing so by the administration because levels and rates of punishment affect the rating of the school. You are not supposed to take the rules literally and be very strict:

I am a book follower; I follow the book. I must have had five Principal Suspensions in like the first month. And everyone says, “Why?” Because that’s what it says! Right? You curse, you do this, you suspend them. And then everyone is like, “You can’t principal suspend all the time!” But this is what it says! *(Looong laughter!)* So I did! And then I learned. I mean, just by example. I can’t, you know, it’s a lengthy process, people don’t want you principal suspending. When you see on the card ‘next time is Principal’s Suspension’ you become more lenient, because you feel, not that you wanna be a follower of other people, but, you know, the administration frowns upon it, they don’t want you doing that. *(Dean I.L., 2007)*

Therefore, it is the administration of the school that discourages a full and consistent implementation of the rules and the adoption of a by-the-book approach to disciplining the
students. Many teachers mentioned the In-House Suspension policy and described the school’s implementation to be, at the very least, inadequate:

Oh! The one that I love, I just became aware of. We developed this whole In-House program with students that have…broken a rule, are investigated, found out to be true, and they are given one or two or three days, whatever it is, in a time-out room where they are supposed to get work and guidance services etc., and it just does not happen. It seems that if the child does not serve the time and they stay home it is the same as serving the time. So what was the point of the In-House? What was the point? So the child knows that here she can stay home, and do nothing. They get the day off, they don’t do work and there is no punishment for the action. There is no punishment. (Teacher O.Y., 2007)

**Formality of procedures in disciplining the students**

In assessing the formality of the procedures, I concentrated on teachers referring the students to the deans and deans handling the referrals and deciding on the punishment of the referred students, because it is through this process that the official school disciplinary record is generated. I had to rely heavily on observations, but interviews were also vital. I compared findings from both with official procedures and policy. I asked the deans (a) how they handle the referrals and (b) what factors affect their decision regarding punishment, and I asked the teachers under what conditions they write referrals.

**Conditions under which teachers refer a student to the deans.** In previous sections I reported that the teachers refer some infractions to the deans, prefer to address others themselves, and refuse to deal with certain other categories. The teachers gave a variety of circumstances under which they would refer a student. Seven out of the 22 teachers I interviewed (32%) said that they refer students who are rude and insubordinate, “If somebody tells me to shut up” (L.V., 2007), and in cases such as the following:

I write referrals if students are inappropriate…I had a student…the character name in the book was Lucius so he started calling me luscious in the middle of class, “How are you luscious? How are you? O.K.?” And then everyone is
laughing but it gets to a point where they are really going overboard. That’s when they are referred. (Teacher A.K., 2007)

Six teachers (27.5%) said after many warnings and six teachers as well said when the situation is out of control and they cannot continue with their lesson:

I write referrals when… I ask a student to be escorted out of the classroom because I cannot contact my class, because all my attention has to be focused on this one person and not on the rest of that class. That’s why I write a referral. It could be something that has escalated out of control, it could be something very serious, but the moment I have to stop and I cannot go on because of a student in the class they get written up. (Teacher O.Y., 2007)

Five teachers (22.5%) said almost never, specifying that it may be once a year or every two or three years, and one teacher said never. A different teacher explained when there is a “physical threat”:

If, if students are like hurt if there would be a fight, if it was a fight, that would be it, if it was a physical threat, I would do it, or some kind of intimidation, which I have not had really, but if something physical is happening, I would. (Teacher B.L., 2007)

Only one teacher said, “After I have called home and got no satisfaction.”

The above findings concur with what the deans reported, that many teachers do not follow the official school guidelines on what has to take place before teachers refer a student to the deans. More than half of the teachers did not mention calling the student’s home at all. It seems that for rude behavior and for situations where the undisciplined student requires a lot of the teacher’s attention, referring the child comes after the teacher has unsuccessfully attempted to take control of the situation or, in some cases, almost automatically. Referrals result from incidents that build up tension in the class on a specific day or over the course of some time. The teachers, being overwhelmed with work, most times are unable to handle each incident according to procedures. There are many students in each class with a variety of problems. “If we call parents for all matters, the only thing we would be able to do is to call parents” (F.P., 2007).
Also, some teachers instinctively do not believe that this is their job. To my question of whether she calls home in case of a student misbehaving, a teacher responded:

No! Nooo! Nooo! Sometimes I do think I should have, but I don’t! I don’t have time! Yea, I don’t, yea, like sometimes is tough, like yesterday. I went to the counselor and I said, “I am giving this kid a 45 because this child pretty much I did not see him since December”, like… “Why?” And I said look, “He is being absent 43 times.” And they said, “What?” I said, “Yea!” “Did you make a phone call home?” “NO! That is not my business. I don’t wanna make a phone call home to say, O.K, your kid is not coming to my class.” I don’t care! I don’t care! If the kid does not come that should be the parent’s problem. That’s why I take attendance. That’s why once in a while they sent home attendance. That’s why I sent twice a letter saying that the kid did not have this or that ready. I don’t know. I mean the parents should know that where their kid is every single day. Not me! Not me! So I don’t know. But I do feel kind of guilty. Maybe I should have called home and said, “Where is ‘Nicholas’, why is he not coming to my class?”

(Teacher T.C., 2007)

**Disciplinary procedures.** After a child is referred the deans then take responsibility for following the official procedures. The deans gave me examples of the series of steps they take after receiving a referral from a teacher. All said that they call for the student and interview him/her. The majority (83%) insisted that they definitely call the house or make an effort to establish contact with the parents and a little more than half (55%) said that they definitely punish the student. Only two deans mention that they consult the *Discipline Code* and check the student’s program and grades; one said that they also adjust their action based on the referring teacher and attempt to scare the student by adopting a serious manner and tone of voice.

With regard to talking with the student, the deans’ answers did not stray very far from the school’s records, but my findings from observations gave a slightly different picture. The interviewing of a student was always noted in the student’s disciplinary card, the only exception being when the deans could not find the student because he was cutting. In my observations, though, I witnessed how the deans (depending on their mood or their ability to act) were often
“dealing” with an infraction without actually dealing with it. The following passage is from my observation notes at one of the deans’ offices:

SSA ‘Steinem’ comes to the office and gives the deans a referral. “We have to do something about it. He is constantly in the hallway”. The dean takes the referral, reads it and then hands it to me. The referral says: *Walks around all day with no pass. He likes to play games and wants people to chase him*. The dean says, “You are right! This kid is a mess,” and after a moment of silence she continues obviously annoyed: “But what do you want me to do? We gave him suspension after suspension. His mother does not want to know him. Give him a summons!” “Steinem pick up!” Someone is calling the SSA on the radio and she leaves. The dean takes the referral and says, “Just check, check, and good bye. That’s how I deal with this student. There is nothing that I have not tried already.” I take the referral and see that he had checked the categories ‘Conference with the student’ and ‘Referral to Guidance’. (Observation, April 2007)

In these cases, the infraction is not registered in the card, does not become part of the student’s disciplinary record, yet the referring person (who receives the pink slip of his referral as a record of the deans’ actions) gets the impression that his referral was properly dealt with.

In calling home there was a discrepancy between the deans’ report and the actual record, but not between the records and the requirements posted in the *Discipline Code*. As the data in the section ‘Punishment and additional responses and supports,’ indicates, 45% of cases there was no record that the deans had called the student’s house. Of the 55% of cases that the house was called 36.5% simply had the comment ‘called home’. This may be untrue because in 20% of cases it was stated whether the parent or guardian was spoken to, or whether, despite attempts to do so, contact was unable to be established. This brings the percentage of cases where the house was not called roughly to 65%, which is too high if we accept that 15 out of 18 deans say that they always call students’ homes.
However, the *Discipline Code* states that reporting to parents is mandatory only for infractions of Level 3 and up, although the guidelines recommend that the parents should be notified for any violation of the *Discipline Code* or breaking of school rules:

It is the responsibility of schools to notify the parents whenever students violate the Discipline Code or school rules. However, Level 3 Infractions or higher must be reported to parents. When a student is believed to have committed a crime, the police must be summoned and parents must be contacted. (The Discipline Code, 2005, p.3)

As I reported earlier in this chapter (see chart 4.2), 38% out of all infractions were Level 3 or higher and, according to the *Discipline Code*, the school must call the student’s parent or guardian. For Level 1 and 2 infractions the school has a “responsibility” to notify the parent, but the Code does not state that it is mandatory. Apparently, many deans try to minimize the burden of work, “cut some corners” when possible, and stick to the formal rules only if they are mandated to do so.

Additionally, teachers and deans express disappointment in the ability or motivation of some parents to constructively help the school in the process of disciplining their children. Some justified the fact that they do not call the house by giving examples of such parents:

But if you call up and the parent tells you, like I have heard, “The kid is in your school right now! You deal with it!” and they hang up the phone on me or they tell me “I don’t know what to do, you tell me what to do” and I am thinking, you are the parent, I am the teacher or I am the dean dealing with this issue. This is what your child is doing. So many times I have called and the parent does not care. How am I supposed to care if the person that gave birth to you does not? (Dean F.K., 2007)

**Criteria for punishment.** In punishing the student there is some discrepancy. Ten out of 18 deans (55%) say that they punish the student, and by punishment the deans mean all disciplinary responses except having a conference with the student and admonishing him. According to student files the percentage of infractions punished with detention, exclusion from extracurricular activities, Principal’s Suspensions, or Superintendent’s Suspensions was only
27%. In observing the deans’ offices, I got the sense that almost half of the deans preferred to talk with the referred students in order to help them understand what they did and the implications of their actions. Some believe that this method is more effective whilst others want to avoid the extra work involved it terms of documenting the misbehavior and resulting punishment. The remaining half of deans felt that punishment was more effective. One day at a dean’s office the Assistant Principal of Security (referred to on the radio as AP1) alluded to this in a humorous manner (not to be perceived as criticism by the deans). The following is a passage from my observation notes:

A.P.1 comes in the office to give dates for the in-house that the deans had ready on the desk.  
A.P.1 to me: “How many days F.K. wants? Pick from one to three.” I say three.  
A.P.1: “Right! Bingo! F.K. and Z.G. Z.G.: Kid coughs in class, three days.”  
A.P.1 needs a form from F.K.: “If I had a form here…”  
F.K.: “Yes, I am a mess, I needed to give this…”  
A.P.1: “Yes, but you are quick to give three days. Kid talks, “cut his head, three days.” F.K. laughs and the discussion goes on in an amusing manner.  
(Observation, March, 2007)

I also asked the deans to tell me what factors affect their decisions in the choice or extent of punishment. Surprisingly, only 8 out of 18 deans (44.5%) put the severity of the infraction first (as the guidelines state in the Discipline Code). “What the infraction is, is it the same thing over and over again? Has it increased? Was the last time the child got in trouble last year?” (G.J., 2007), and only three deans (16.5%) mention the fact that they have to follow the rules: “First of all the suspensions, the way they are now, it has to be a clear-cut suspension like a fight. The only suspensions now are Principal’s and Superintendent’s. That’s it! So, right there you are limited” (Y.B., 2007). Many deans (55.5%) mentioned the student’s disciplinary record and particular situation: “The prior record”(W.A., 2007), or “If the kid is having a horrible day and someone just died in the family or something just happened that’s horrific and they are
traumatized” (W.A., 2007). Eight deans (44.5%) stated that what affects their decisions is their own personal values and style:

The cursing thing, like I said, I feel strongly about that, so I don’t even bother to assess the child. I may say, “What were you thinking?” but I am really not that interested. It does not matter to me. You have been suspended. (Dean E.I., 2007)

Five deans (28%) indicated as key factor in their decision the referring school official:

You certainly judge on the teacher. (She laughs) You do! The teacher who is sending the referral maybe is someone who does not like germs. Or the teacher who thinks people are throwing things at him and he is 85 years old, or the teacher who never writes a referral, has fairly decent classroom management and you deal with that child. (Dean Y.C., 2007)

Four deans mentioned the child’s character and general demeanor: “Some kids if they are coming here really, really disrespectful, ‘FU, I don’t care what you said to me. I am gonna fight her again’, hey, look! Then you have to bang them right away” (L.O., 2007). Three deans (16.5%) said that timing was a factor, “What point of the year it is” (W.A., 2007), or “If it is Friday and I am in a good mood” (I.L., 2007), and one dean for each category mentioned the administration and the parents as important factors. The Discipline Code states with bold letters:

In addition to consulting the Discipline Code, prior to determining the appropriate disciplinary and/or intervention measures, the following must be considered: the student’s age, maturity, and previous disciplinary record (including the nature of prior misconduct, the number of prior instances of misconduct, and the disciplinary measure imposed for each); the circumstances surrounding the incident leading to the discipline; and the student’s IEP, BIP and 504 Accommodation Plan, if applicable (p. 2)

I interpret “In addition to consulting” as meaning that firstly school officials need to determine the seriousness of the infraction and then take into account other factors, which do not include timing, personal values, student character, the referring teacher, administration, or parents. The deans, therefore, lack formality when it comes to punishing the students; and allow other factors to affect their decisions, despite clear guidelines in the Discipline Code.

Discrepancies between policy, procedures, and practices
The fact that many teachers, deans, and the administration (as shown above) do not respect the rules and rely instead on their personal attitudes, preferences, styles, and feelings for guidance, regarding student discipline is significant. The Principal is not convinced that disciplining the students deserves special effort and begrudges the use of resources that, instead, could be channeled toward the arts and academic programs. My main findings refer to how a lack of resources (resources that are not diverted) adversely affects the administration of student discipline and defines its character. The undisciplined students are generally not a promising category with respect to the potential of academic success. The school cannot rely on them to show AYP. The fact that they are constantly in the hallways, going from year to year without accumulating credits, is not by itself an incentive for the school to implement innovative measures in order to help these students improve their own lives. The provision of deans, SSAs, and a room for the In-School Suspension program has proven to be ineffective. However, there is little determination to improve the current provisions of disciplinary measures, or innovation to “think outside the box” in terms of improving standards of student behavior.

**Administration of punishment.** According to the Discipline Code, in dealing with student indiscipline the school personnel are expected to utilize intervention strategies before resorting to punishment. My observations, interviews, and school document analysis showed that the school rarely used either intervention strategies or its specialists before resorting to punishment. In short, the administration of student discipline in this school is inclined towards punishment rather than following the Department of Education guidelines and mandatory Chancellor’s Regulations.

Regarding the role and availability of specialists, as I described previously, teachers and deans of General Education students rarely receive help. Psychologists and social workers are
reserved for Special Education students. There is a scarcity of resources (half of the interviewees referred to it more than once during their interviews) and many feel overwhelmed by the quantity of work. On paper, counselors, psychologists, and social workers should be intervening, but in reality this is not the case:

> I never found, you know, I never found really a counselor yet that has really made a difference… They are overwhelmed. And the psychologist that is in the school I think there is only one. One psychologist for so many kids! How much can she do? So I don’t…you know, some of these students need to go to sessions where they need to talk about their feelings. … I never saw, you know, this difference in behavior, because of this guidance counselor. Maybe they meet with them once and that’s it! And… if they meet with them…” (F.P., 2007)

Indicatively, as I mention in the section ‘Punishment and additional responses and supports’, only 11% of the cases in the student disciplinary files were referred to guidance, and all other kinds of interventions (referral to a psychologist, referral for counseling, being given a behavioral management plan, etc.) were in the percentage below 2% and in most cases below even 1%). During my observations at the deans’ office I observed some specialist interventions predominatly in cases of excessive cutting or truancy where the dean on duty had called the parent and the child’s counselor to discuss the problem and find solutions. I also witnessed a dean referring a child to ACS for being excessively absent, and cases of parents, counselors, and deans together dealing with students’ gang activity.

However, I did not see an organized school plan to target and support those students who exhibit a tendency to undisciplined behavior in the class before these tendencies become punishable actions. I did not see an innovative educational plan to address the academic needs of the permanent “hallway hangers” and “cutters.” And I did not also see any interventions at a community level. Preventive measures were not realized, possibly due to the lack of, or unwillingness to divert, resources explicitly for discipline. The Principal in his interview brilliantly described a program of virtually eliminating discipline issues through the arts, the
humanities, and involvement with athletic programs (areas very well developed indeed) and he
indirectly expressed his preference to invest in these areas rather than specifically in student
disciplinary measures:

You do need a disciplinary structure in place. But when you make a powerful
investment in certain academic and extra and co-curricula things you very
positively and forcefully affect the discipline and the tone in your building. So
it’s not just I am going to hire, let’s hire five more deans. I mean, that’s nice
because adult presence is always, always important. But now, you know, when
you hire another chorus teacher and you expand your concert choir it very
interestingly attracts many students who were often lost and then they found a
home and they are no longer the deans’ best friends, the deans’ regular customers,
because they have something that they have grabbed under. When you get
somebody who can inspire kids to sculpt or to paint, you know, suddenly the kid
who might being gotten in trouble because his mind is elsewhere, suddenly finds a
purpose and a focus in coming to school. So, when you run after school
supplementary athletic programs or theater programs and you really open them up
to everybody and you pull those kids in, you provide the support, the money is not
directly going to the deans’ office, or the guidance office, but it very, very clearly
affects the overall discipline and tone of the building. So the two are so really
intimately related that it’s not really possible to say this or that, you know, …
But I think the key thing that’s important to remember is that for every
disciplinary tone sort of thing that you are building in to your structure is a
curricula piece that can work beautifully also to help it along so you are not
pursuing a military institution. (The Principal, 2007)

**Differentiation.** According to the Discipline Code, if punishment is recommended there
are only three players that can intervene: (a) The teacher, who has the right to remove the student
from his classroom; (b) the Principal, who can suspend a student from one to five days; and (c)
the Regional Superintendent, who may suspend the student more than five days or expel him
from the New York City Public School system (this can be the case only for General Education
students who are at least 17 years old). There are four different categories of Superintendent’s
Suspensions, which have to do with the length of the suspension and the possibility and
conditions of reinstatement of the student to his original school after the end of the suspension.

With regards to teachers removing students from their classes, the administration prefers
to maintain the system whereby the teachers refer all misbehaving students to the deans who, in
turn: (1) would give them a Principal’s Suspension if the offense justifies it; (2) would suspend them from all their classes, i.e. would issue a dean’s suspension, for offenses that do not justify Principal’s Suspension\(^{35}\) (even though in most cases students were misbehaving only in a specific class and it was illogical to suspend them from all classes); or (3) alternatively, they wouldn’t punish them at all. In the 2004-2005 school year the administration presented the teachers with a document named the Ladder of Referral, in which they explained all the steps a teacher should take in order to have a student removed from his/her class. However, this was not officially sanctioned as the preferred method for dealing with disruptions and was never implemented.

To the contrary, the administration, by emphasizing the paper work involved, which they know teachers try to avoid, presented the removal of a disruptive student from a class by a teacher as being almost “impossible” and, thus, discouraged teachers from doing it. The teachers needed training (requiring resources), encouragement, and incentives in order to break away from the old send-them-to-the-dean mentality. The Principal said in his interview that class removals were unnecessary because, “the class management in the school is very strong and the deans are very supportive”. However, not implementing class removals goes against the Chancellor’s Regulations. As a result, the DOE directed the administration to abandon the practice of having the deans suspending the students from all classes. Instead, the teachers had to remove disruptive students only from classes in which they were misbehaving.

Despite the DOE directives the school did not adjust its practices. Teachers and deans failed to use the Ladder of Referral, did not realize the importance of the Chancellor’s mandates

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\(^{35}\) This is a category of suspension that the school had in place but was not in accordance with the Chancellor’s Regulations where only the Principal’s and the Superintendent’s Suspensions are recognized. The deans could give a one to three-day suspension to a student without the signature of the Principal.
for disciplinary procedures, and never became aware of the fact that the dean’s suspension was not supposed to be in place altogether. The administration, however, did instruct the deans not to suspend students for infractions of low severity—Level 1 and most of Level 2—(because this had to be dealt by removals from the class, which the school did not implement). As a result, deans and teachers perceived the new mandates as making the students less accountable; they couldn’t be dean-suspended from all their classes for something that they were doing only in one class and from that, they deduced, “the DOE wants the students not to be punished at all” (J.M., 2007).

**Accountability.** A 75% of the interviewees commented on specialists as not playing a meaningful role in the school and as being generally ineffective as they operate inside the school bureaucracy. They are viewed incompetent, irresponsible, or overloaded, and more concerned with defining or abdicating responsibility than helping vulnerable children. The following quotation makes these points clearly:

Honestly, I think, is pretty hard to. You have to go through all this red tape, and one person will refer you to someone else, and then someone will refer you to someone else, and then someone will say that person is not on my caseload, and blah, blah, and then, you know, it’s like pass the buck. It’s not really as though anybody is taking any type of action or accountability for anything that seems to be going on. There is one girl, she was pregnant, it is actually… this is a perfect example because I ended up going to three different people that day and nothing ended up happening. … I go to her guidance counselor, guidance counselor says pretty much, “I can not deal with it right now, and really this is not something that I can actually deal with, please take her to the school psychologist.” Not the social worker. I go up to the school psychologist. She is on her lunch and she is pretty much, not really wanting to open the door. Finally she does when I say just a minute, and she says, “make her wait outside until I finish my lunch”, which ok, I don’t know if I would have done it that way, but she decided to do it that way, and was kind…and I tried to give her as much information as possible. And she is like, “What you really want me to do with her?” and I am not really in the position to tell her what to do with this girl. So that was really…and, then, what ended up happening was the girl was waiting, waiting, waiting, she never came out and the girl left. And she had the girl’s program, because I gave her the girl’s program, and I said, “just in case she does, this is her program”. And she never really bothered to follow up on her. (Dean F.K., 2007)
At different points during the interview almost all interviewees commented more than once on the lack of accountability not only of specialists, but also of teachers and SSAs: many SSAs seem to be “afraid of the kids” (R.B., 2007) and unable to get students to class; deans are not strict with the students; and teachers fail to make their lessons interesting for the students:

Some teachers will do the same lesson even though they know that it did not work they just do it again and suffer the same punishment. I do not want to suffer either, you know. If I make them suffer I will suffer. (Teacher C.M., 2007)

**Consistency.** Lack of consistency in policy implementation was a point that 70% of interviewees referred to as being a significant problem and they were very vocal about it. Teachers and deans felt that priorities and therefore the implementation of practices and rules, change frequently due to different pressures from DOE:

I feel there is no consistency. If we follow rules it is for couple of days, maybe a couple of weeks. And then those rules, you know, are falling in to the side. Like what rules? I do the hat, cell phone example. Last year at the end of the year, the last two weeks of school, *(Imitating authority)* “Take the hats, take the cell phones, OK. We go there, we will take it.” We are mad hard. I say if we did this from September, everyday all day, by October we would not have to worry about this. You don’t do this in June because all of a sudden you panicked because people came in and said that there is too many kids in the school with hats! But then we do it for two weeks and then that’s it *(makes the sound pss, as if something is going down the drain)*! *(Very loud)* Sweeps, blah, blah! Sweep them all out! We sweep like mad. Ok? We sweep, then, pss. And then one day we are not. There is no consistency. *(Dean I.L., 2007)*

**Administration of student discipline in a snapshot.**

For the final research question, *how is policy implemented, how is responsibility for disciplining / sanctioning the students divided among school personnel, is there formality of disciplinary procedures, and are there discrepancies between policy, institutional procedures, and actual practices* findings were not particularly encouraging.
• Knowledge of disciplinary rules is patchy. Little less than half of the interviewees were able to easily recall some of the rules that the school is supposed to follow and very few mentioned the Discipline Code.

• Even though 43% of the participants stated that they always address an infraction if they see it, observations proved that this was not completely true. Some were more consistent than others in practice.

• The majority of the participants also stated that they do not follow the official school policy consistently.

• Regarding the formality of procedures, the majority of teachers do not call home before referring a student to the deans. The deans do not attempt communication with the parents in 65% of cases. Also, only in a very few cases do the deans report that they have consulted the Discipline Code. In the criteria for deciding upon the type and severity of punishment, the deans reported that they allow personal values, the character of the child, the administration, the referring teacher, or the parents to affect their decision.

• There are discrepancies between policy, procedures and practices. Firstly, the school fails almost completely to consult and involve the appropriate specialists before suspending a student. Secondly, it discourages teachers from removing students from their class altogether. This leaves Level 1 and 2 infractions largely unaddressed, since these are offenses that do not justify Principal’s Suspension, and therefore teacher authority is further eroded.

• The majority of interviewees complained about the lack of accountability and consistency in enforcing the school rules.

Conclusion
The disciplining of the students is a very differentiated task in New York City. Teachers, deans, SSAs, administrators, counselors, social workers, psychologists, all have under their purview only a fraction of what is considered “student behavior.” I found that 1.8 infractions correspond to each student per year, but most registered disciplinary infractions take place outside the classrooms, mostly in the hallways. There is a high degree of surveillance in the school; deans and SSAs invest a lot of effort toward making students leave the hallway. Yet, there is a core of 300 to 350 students who are in the hallways for almost every period. Most infractions are of low severity level, some are Level 3, and very few are serious.

Teachers feel a lack of authority in the process of disciplining students. A sizable minority does not even want to discipline and/or punish. The deans who are primarily responsible for punishing the students, do feel in control and they would prefer not to share this responsibility (and power) with the teachers. Most suspensions vary from one to five days and there is a tendency to suspend the same students over and over. Supporting services are very under-utilized for General Education student; they are predominantly available to Special Education students.

Most teachers agree with school classifications regarding undisciplined behavior and they generally concur with the school’s rules; however, without consulting the Discipline Code, the majority knows only the building rules. Most are frustrated by rule implementations that are inconsistent, and student punishment, which is ineffective. The majority of teachers also declare that they often do not follow official policies and practices, and that they are not particularly formal in the implementation of school policy.

The NYC public education system is a bureaucracy that regulates all aspects of its function. It has adopted a neo-liberal approach that puts at the core of its policies accountability,
effectiveness, and competitiveness. Students’ and schools’ performance is constantly measured. In addition, schools are given report cards and funds are distributed based on performance. In terms of student discipline there are detailed regulations that encompass most aspects of students’ lives. Specific provisions are in place with guidance on actions to be taken for most problems that may occur and most matters are not left to be decided upon on school level.
CHAPTER V
FINDINGS IN GREECE

In this chapter I report the findings from the Greek school. As in the case of New York City, I initially present some general information about the Greek educational system and also describe my research site: the school building itself, its immediate environment, and the type of education it offers to its students. In order to help the reader to compare differences and similarities between the two sites, I follow the structure of the previous chapter.

The Greek School System

The Greek educational system is very centralized. The Ministry of National Education, for Life Learning, and Religion (YPEPTH) has overall responsibility for all educational affairs. It submits draft laws for the parliament to vote on, formulates educational policy, and enforces law implementation through directives and circulars. YPEPTH handles all issues: curricula development and instruction, books, school operation, personnel appointment, transfer, training, budgets, and so on. Even though many attempts have taken place since 1985 to decentralize the school system, Yfanti & Vozaitis (2005) conclude that these efforts have remained predominately at the level of discourse and have never materialized.

Administration of the Greek Schools

In examining the administration of primary and secondary education, the structure is as follows. Within the Ministry of Education (a chaotic bureaucracy with many directories and sections), headed by the Minister of Education and the National Council of Education, is the Central Council of Secondary Education (KYSDE) and the Central Council of Primary Education (KYSPE). Also at the national level, controlled by, but also independent from the Ministry, is the Pedagogical Institute (P.I.), responsible for research related to primary and
secondary education issues, proposals regarding the direction of educational policy and planning, the study of the implementation of technology, and in-service teacher training. Additionally, there are legal entities such as the Organization of Publication of School Textbooks (OEDB), the Organization of School Buildings (OSK), and the Organization for Vocational Training (OEEK). Finally, also at a national level, is the General Secretariat of Youth, responsible for issues that are not directly related to school life, but that affect young people, such as leisure, social participation, ecology, and so on (YPEPTH, Nov. 2009).

At a regional level (the country is divided into 13 regions) there are Regional Educational Directories, which report directly to the Ministry of education and oversee the administration of primary and secondary education; giving also guidance on scientific-pedagogic issues. The governing bodies of these Directories are the APYSDE for secondary education, and the APYSPE for primary education.

Greece is administratively divided into prefectures. At the Prefectural level there are 54 Directories of Primary Education and 54 of Secondary Education and are responsible for managing Pre-School to Secondary Education in their jurisdiction. The Directories of Primary and Secondary Education are further divided into Bureaus. Along with the directories there are Educational Offices that deal with specific sections of education, such as technical-vocational or physical education. The governing bodies on this level, set by the Prefect, are the PYSPE for primary education, and the PYSDE for secondary education. Directories are led by Senior Education Officials and different Prefectural Educational Committees, which are created by the Prefect to plan the construction of new and check on the operation of existing school buildings. PYSPE and PYSDE are predominately responsible for the service status (allocation to schools, transfers, leaves, etc.) of the teachers in their jurisdiction (Eurydice, 2007/08, p. 1)
For every municipality there is also a Municipal Education Committee (Law 1566/85). This consists of representatives from the local community, the parents’ union, the teachers’ union, the local business, one primary school principal, and one secondary school principal. They are responsible for submitting proposals to the Prefecture Council on how the municipal school system could operate more efficiently. They are also in charge of the maintenance of school buildings. Illustration 5.1 is a very simple diagram, which attempts to better explain the complex structure of the Greek Educational System. Only the main levels and central governing bodies are represented.

Overall, in the Greek system there are two lines of administration. The first, strictly controlled by the Ministry, is concerned with educational matters. The line of responsibility proceeds from the Ministry, to Regional Directories, to Prefectual Directories, to Bureaus, to the School Principal. In some cases the hierarchy omits the Regional Directory level and goes straight to the Prefecture level. The second line of administration, controlled by local authorities, invites the involvement of teachers, parents, students, and community and business representatives, but is mostly concerned with financial affairs and building maintenance. In the first line of administration, for those levels below that of the Ministry, individual leaders and committees have minimal power in making important decisions with regard to financial matters, curriculum development, and the appointment and evaluation of teachers (Yfanti & Vozaitis, 2005). All decisions made at the Ministry of Education are cascaded down to the individual schools through the chain of bureaucracy. Similarly, all requests that individual schools may have are communicated to the Ministry of Education through that same chain. Additionally, all decisions made by local administrators are fully overseen/controlled by the state.
Illustration 5.1: The Greek Educational System

There is a principal in each school, but when it comes to educational matters his/her role is mainly clerical; the principal carries out day-to-day responsibilities, completes the paperwork required for the school to operate, speaks on behalf of the teachers, communicates with the
parents, and in general, acts as a coordinator within the school and liaison between the school and other levels of bureaucracy. A principal is not responsible for curriculum development and implementation, or the appointment of teachers. With regard to teacher evaluation, the principal does write a report for each teacher, but this only relates to the formal requisites of the position (punctuality, collegiality, etc.) and not to the effectiveness of their teaching, performance, methodology, or communication with the students. This latter task is left to Counselors appointed by the Ministry. Counselors only consult and evaluate the teachers. There are no other administrators to assist the principal in administrative tasks. Some large schools have assistant principals of school organization who assume some of the principal’s responsibilities, but academic department assistant principals do not have an administrative role to play even in the largest of schools (Φ.353.1./324/105657/Δ1).

According to the educational law 1566/86, in the Greek school, the superior decisive body is the Teacher Assembly (T.A.). The teachers as a body are responsible for ensuring the smooth and lawful functioning of the school. For important decisions, the principal calls a Teacher Assembly, and issues are discussed and voted on.

**Administration of Discipline**

Student discipline is one of the teacher’s responsibilities in Greece. There is no formal support system for those who lack the will or capacity to discipline their students successfully. Deans of discipline and school safety agents are unknown. The principal, as the top in rank disciplinarian, assumes responsibility for those cases that teachers give up on or find difficult. Teachers, when a student disrupts their class, have the right to suspend them for the period the misconduct takes place; “place the student out of their class,” as the teachers say, or according to students, “throw them out.” If they feel that the student deserves further punishment, they send
him/her to the principal’s office and the principal decides on a course of action appropriate to each case; s/he can suspend the student for up to three days. If there is a serious infraction, which justifies a four- or five-day suspension, or if a teacher wants a case to be brought to the Teacher Assembly, a meeting of all teachers of the school is called (participation is mandatory) and a discussion of the case takes place. The teachers vote on a course of action and both discussion and decision, are recorded in the minutes. Student representatives take part in the discussion, but not in the vote. The Teacher Assembly has the power to suspend or expel a student (ΥΠΕΠΘ, Γ2/4094/23-9-86; Π.Δ. 104/1979).

The Rules of Discipline

In Greece, the system of rules is huge and nonexistent at the same time. In an informal interview with a high school teacher, I asked, “What rules do you follow in disciplining the students?” She responded, “As far as I know, there are no specific written rules that everybody follows. There is common sense, everybody knows what is not allowed, and the teacher tries to find the pulse of the class in order to be able to teach.” This teacher’s response shows that in Greece there is nothing formal such as the Discipline Code that is used in New York. However, we are not dealing with a system of norms; there are written rules and certain behaviors are clearly classified as transgressive, but these rules are formally known only if the Teacher Assembly of a given school decides to develop a system of rules that is concrete and specific.

In 2002, the Ministry of National Religion and Education issued a Regulation that had the title Basic Principles of Regulating the Operation of Schools, which emphasized the democratic organization of the school community. The nature of this document is suggestive, presenting general guidelines on how a school might operate and how the students are expected to behave. The school should be a non-authoritarian entity, which respects each student as an
individual, but also focuses on his/her development as a member of the community. It has to promote a positive climate where each student feels secure, respected, not discriminated against, empowered, and invited to democratically participate in the life of the school. The part of the Regulation that addresses student behavior concentrates on the responsibility of students in: keeping the school clean; maintaining order, calmness, and quietness in the class; being in class on time; and not cheating, cutting classes, using cellular phones, smoking, or being excessively absent or late to school. It also states that students should respect school property and the textbooks that are given to them by the state, be present in the morning school assembly, dress appropriately, and maintain administrative and pedagogical order in all activities (beyond teaching) that take place in school. The Regulation does not specify punishment, not even in the form of a range of punishments, for any of the above infractions. In a few cases it mentions student behaviors that may be punished, but leaves the punishment decisions to individual schools. The Regulation only suggests that all student deviation from what is considered democratic behavior and from the rules that each school has in place should be viewed as a transgression; that the school has to handle transgressions according to the law, but always based on the principle that punishment with the purpose of stopping a transgression should be the last resort; and that if a student is suspended, that s/he has to remain in school (YPEPTH, 2002).

Surprisingly, given the very centralized education system in Greece, all responsibility for discipline is given to the individual schools. The general assembly of all pedagogues, the governing body of the parent/guardian association, and student representatives are supposed to create what is known as Guidelines of School Operation, (Kanonismos Leitourgias). In deciding on these guidelines, local social and cultural conditions are supposed to be taken into account (ΥΠΕΠΘ, 2002). The expectation is that schools develop a code of discipline for their students,
have in place processes of dealing with infractions, and decide on their own system of punishment.

The *Kanonismos Leitourgias* does not necessarily exist in every school, but my research site did have one. It was a one-and-a-half page document that very generally delineated the expectations that the school had of its students. These were:

(a) Come to school and to class on time
(b) Be where you are assigned to be and do not run around the school building
(c) Be prepared for class
(d) Do not bring food to class
(e) Do not have a cell phone in school
(f) Do not smoke in places other than the assigned ones
(g) Do not destroy school property
(h) Do not bring in intruders and do not talk to non-students (through the fence for example)
(i) Do follow the instructions of all school personnel (not just the teachers)
(j) Do not alter school documents (like the attendance book)
(k) Do not dress eccentrically
(l) Show respect to everyone
(m) Avoid violence (physical or verbal)

That was all, almost as short as the Ten Commandments. The school authorities would punish as they found to be appropriate at the moment and for that particular student. There is nothing as specific as, for example, when a student smokes he/she will be suspended. Only in a few cases it states, “This behavior makes the student subject to disciplinary intervention.”

The School Setting

The school is located in one of the most impoverished areas of greater Athens, Greece. The first day I took the bus to get there, I observed the people around me: working class, mostly immigrants; suffering portrayed in their eyes; poverty in the quality of their clothing.
Abandonment by the State was clear in the sights allowed to us as the bus was passing through different neighborhoods. I alighted after a signal from the bus driver that the building to my left was the school I was looking for. I would have known that anyway, because many high-school-age children were getting off at the same stop. I stood for a while to observe the area. The street in front of the school was a steeply sloping busy main road with a lot of heavy, commercial traffic (the cars going upwards were making very loud noises of distress) and was indeed very difficult to cross. The school had assigned one school building security employee (not to be confused with the SSAs of the American school) to regulate traffic in order for the students to cross safely. Looking around, I realized that the street I was standing on cut sideways into a hill. To the right of the hill, almost above me were low, old, run down houses together with a mix of industrial and residential buildings. To the left was the school, and in the distance the port of Piraeus.

**The School Building**

From the outside, the school building appeared to be very small, only two floors. However, this was deceptive because at the opposite, northern end toward the base of the hill the school expanded to four floors. In order to get into the front schoolyard (no more than 50 square meters in size and, basically, a bridge connecting the building with the road), the building guard has to come and open a gate that remains locked for security reasons. Underneath the bridge and going west, along the front of the building, there is a narrow strip, which functions as a yard for the second floor, but looks like a ditch from the street level.

The street-level main entrance of the school takes the visitor to the 3rd floor, which hosts the office of the principal, the main teachers’ lounge (a large room where the teachers have their desks and where all TA meetings take place), some small offices (where teachers can work on
administrative or educational projects such as payroll, record keeping, student advisement on career choices etc.), and a few classrooms. The other floors have only classrooms and laboratories, with the exception of the ground floor where there is also the student cantina. There is no cafeteria where the students can sit and eat, because Greek schools have a shorter day and do not provide lunches. In front of the cantina is an empty space where students can socialize while standing and eating the pies or sandwiches that they’ve bought. Toward the East end of this space is the school gym (which also functions as a space for student assemblies, or theatrical performances) and an exit to a relatively small main schoolyard on the North side. The 2nd floor has a South-facing exit toward the front strip that resembles a ditch. All, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th floors have large verandas and exit doors toward the North-facing side that overlooks the port. The view from there is very picturesque, but the doors are locked. The hallways inside have an L shape, which made observations easier. There is only one central staircase that runs from the 1st to the 4th floor and one small elevator that I rarely saw in service.

**The Students’ Program**

In Greek high schools, there are unified centralized curricula, and all students have to follow the same course of study if they want to graduate from high school. Of course students differ in terms of academic ability, but this is something the school system does not make concessions for. My research site, as I mentioned in the methodology chapter, is an EPAL, which is a lyceum that offers General Education but also allows students to specialize in certain professional areas. This school provides vocational classes for students training to be electricians, mechanics, health professionals, beauty-services providers, computer specialists, and electronics professionals. Students do not have individualized programs. Programs are posted outside the Principal’s office per grade and per specialty; all 2nd year electronics students,
for example, will follow the same schedule. The students throughout their school life are organized in grades: six grades in elementary school, three grades in junior high, and three grades in high school. There are many students in each grade and, therefore, grades are broken up into groups of 30 people alphabetically. Each group of students is organized as a political body; they elect officers who represent them in the general assembly of the student body, and they, collectively, with the help of a teacher/advisor, decide on issues that affect them, discipline being one of those issues (ΥΠΕΠΘ, Γ2/4094/23-9-86).

**The Students’ School Day**

Students in most schools in Greece arrive at the same time in the morning and are supposed to attend the morning assembly with which each school day starts. The school day ends at roughly the same time for everybody as well. For most lessons the students remain in the same classroom and move, as a group, only for Physical Education, or to work in a laboratory. In this school, however, the TA had decided to have the students moving from class to class, rather than the teachers. When the bell rings, students are encouraged to go out to the yard(s) or to the cantina area and return to their classroom at the second bell. Not every break between periods is the same length. The longest break, of fifteen minutes, occurs in the middle of the day. During that time students may choose to eat something that they have bought at the school’s cantina, but they do not have a specific time set aside for lunch. They do not have a scheduled free period to spend in the auditorium, or to go to the school library. If there is a free period, because a teacher is absent, it is free for one or more groups of students who belong in the same class, and these students usually prefer to go to the schoolyard to socialize, or play. The students are not required to show any form of ID to enter the school building. If students want to go to the bathroom, or to leave the class for any reason, they notify the teacher by raising their hand, or establishing eye
contact; they ask for the teacher’s permission but are not required to have a teacher pass. In general, students move around the hallways without passes.

Research Findings

For the Greek case, I examine the same variables as for NY (student discipline, school personnel beliefs and perceptions, and the administration of student discipline) with similar indicators for each variable. Therefore, I follow the previous chapter’s approach in reporting findings. First, I report findings per indicator and then, I analyze these synthesize findings to answer the research question(s), which correspond to each variable. In the next chapter (Chapter VI) I compare and contrast the findings from this and the previous chapter.

Anatomy of the Disciplinary Occurrences

Patterns of discipline, and the magnitude and severity of infractions are also explored in the Greek case in order to answer the research question, what are the patterns, magnitude, and severity of student transgressions. Again, indicators for this variable are: (a) registered disciplinary encounters; (b) the location of the infraction; (c) the pattern of transgressions inside the classrooms (according to records); (d) the pattern of transgressions outside the classrooms (according to records); (e) the degree of severity of all registered transgressions (based on the BOE classification); (f) the pattern of transgressions inside the classrooms (according to teachers); (g) the patterns of transgressions outside the classrooms (based on observations); and (h) punishments and/or additional supports. In the sections that follow I report findings for each of the indicators.

Registered disciplinary encounters

In Greece, disciplinary record keeping takes on a different form all together. As I explained in the methodology chapter, each school has a book, the Poinologio, where school
personnel register all infractions as they happen. There are no individual student disciplinary files, and all infractions remain in the *Poinologio* even after students have left the school. The total number of disciplinary encounters for the 2008-2009 (year of research), 2007-2008, and 2006-2007 school years was 965 and student enrollment reached 509, 586, and about 750 students each year respectively. Thus, on average there were 0.5 encounters per student per year (965/1845).

Again, there is a difference between encounters and transgressions. From the 965 registered disciplinary encounters, 803 (83%) resulted in one infraction, 149 (15%) in two, and 13 (1.5%) in three infractions, which totals 1138 infractions. On average, the number of infractions per student per year would be 0.6 (1138/1845).

**Place of disciplinary encounters**

Most of the encounters took place in the classroom. Specifically, 896 encounters (93%) occurred inside the classroom, 55 (5.5%) outside the classroom, and for 14 encounters (1.5%) there was no record. In the Greek school the referring person is almost always the teacher. In 94.5% of cases either in the classroom or while patrolling the hallways, he/she will confront the transgressing students and take responsibility for any further action.
Pattern of transgressions inside the classrooms (according to records)

896 classroom disciplinary encounters were recorded, which correspond to 1062 infractions. I classified them in the same general categories I selected for the New York school and progressing from most frequent to least frequent they are: (1) disruptive and insubordinate behavior, more than half of the infractions, 58%; (2) verbally abusive and disrespectful behavior, 13%; (3) work related, 10%; (4) having or using forbidden items, 10%; (5) physically aggressive and / or dangerous behavior, 4.5%; (6) other, 4%; and (7) last, with the tiny percentage of 0.5%, the category attendance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General categories</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
<th>Specific infractions</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Mildly* and/ or seriously)</td>
<td>621</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>-Talking</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-Laughing</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Frequency (n)</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disruptive and insubordinate behavior</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Making noises</td>
<td>92</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Yelling</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Stupidity in class</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Being disruptive</td>
<td>282</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Being a bad influence</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Insubordination</td>
<td>37</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Being unruly</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Refusal to…</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Took w/out permission</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Left w/our permission</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Inappropriate behavior</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Throwing paper</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Intruder</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbally abusive and disrespectful</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Being confrontational</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Using bad language</td>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Cursing</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Being disrespectful</td>
<td>59</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Being rude</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Threatening behavior</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Harassring</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School work related</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Does not do work</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Is playing</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Being unprepared</td>
<td>64</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Cheating</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having or using forbidden items</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Cell</td>
<td>94</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- MP3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Food**</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Coffee</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Radio</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- DVD</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physically aggressive and / or dangerous</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Wrestling</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Hitting a student</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Fighting</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Attacking a student</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Safety risk</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Throwing an object</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Kicking objects</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Destroying desks</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Spitting at student</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Lying</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Smoking</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Graffitti</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Setting fire</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Using a lighter/matches</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Ridiculing drawing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Littering</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Attendance

<p>| | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>-Being late</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1062</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
<td>1062</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The distinction between mildly and seriously disruptive and insubordinate behavior is unclear. The five categories in italics (230 cases) were classified by all interviewees as mild, but again, as in NY, it is difficult to judge objectively what behavior teachers when writing in the Poinologio disruptive, bad influence in class, insubordinate or inappropriate behavior were referring to and how serious, or mild these behaviors were.

**All categories in bold were not included in the NY disciplinary records.

**Pattern of transgressions outside the classroom (according to records).**

In Athens, only 55 disciplinary encounters took place outside the classroom and these correspond to 61 transgressions with smoking and use of cell phone being most common (16 cases of cell phone use and 10 of smoking). The first category, having or using a forbidden item amounts to 18 infractions (30% of all out-of-class infractions); followed by the category other, which predominantly relates to smoking, with 14 infractions (23%); verbally abusive and disrespectful behavior that corresponds to 11 infractions (18%); disruptive and insubordinate behaviors to 9 infractions (14.5%); physically aggressive and /or dangerous behavior to 7 infractions (11.5%); and school document related comprising only 2 infractions (3%).

### Table 5.2 FREQUENCY OF OUT-OF-CLASS TRANSGRESSIONS: BASED ON RECORD (Whole record = 61 infractions (6% of all infractions)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General categories</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
<th>Specific categories</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disruptive and insubordinate behavior</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>-Refused to…</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-Disruptive behavior</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-Yelling</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbally abusive and disrespectful behavior</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>-Being disrespectful</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-Verbal altercation</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physically aggressive and / or dangerous behavior</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>-Throwing an object</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-Safety related</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School document related</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-Altering records</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having or using a forbidden item</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>-Cell</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-Explosives</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>-Smoking</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-Setting fire</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Seriousness of all registered transgressions (Based on the DOE classification)

I classified all transgressions according to the NYC Discipline Code. Most infractions, 768 (68%), were Level 1. In terms of distribution, Level 3 infractions followed with a steep drop of 140 cases (12%), Level 2 with 83 cases (7%), and Level 4 with 51 cases (4%). Level 5 has a very low occurrence of 11 infractions (1%). I could not classify 76 infractions (6%) following the NYC Discipline Code because they referred to the categories does not participate and did not have the book. In 9 cases (1%) the category infraction was blank.

The interviewees’ and the observer’s gaze on indiscipline

Both in informal meetings and social gatherings, teachers frequently expressed their concern regarding student behavior in the school. Most of the complaints were to do with student
indifference in terms of academic work, a lack of respect for authority, or a lack of social skills. Simply by walking in the hallways, I noticed high levels of indiscipline; however, I was looking at student behavior with my American trained eye and through the categories I had observed in N.Y.

Patterns of transgressions inside the classrooms (according to teachers). The Greek teachers mentioned transgressions that were very common in their classes and that naturally fell into the same categories as those that concerned the NY teachers. They mentioned and I cite, going from the most to the least common: (1) mildly disturbing behaviors such as turning their back to the teacher, talking, or making noises (20 interviewees, or 83%); (2) failure to do sufficient academic work such as, being unprepared, or indifferent (7 interviewees, or 29%); (3) insubordination / seriously disturbing behavior (6 interviewees, or 25%); (4) failure to respect building requirements such as the cell phone policy (4 interviewees, or 16.5%); (5) punctuality / attendance issues (4 interviewees, or 16.5%); (6) character related behavior / verbal abuse (3 interviewees, or 12.5%); (7) smoking (2 interviewees, or 8%); (8) littering (2 interviewees, or 8%); and (9) physically aggressive behavior (1 interviewee, or 4%).

If we compare findings from records with the categories of the most common classroom transgressions as reported by teachers (see table 5.3 below) we can deduce that behavior falling into the category of mildly disturbing is the most likely not to be addressed formally by Greek teachers (i.e., by writing it in the Poinologio and punishing the student). In the other categories such as physically aggressive behaviors, smoking, littering or attendance, the percentages of teachers who mention that these behaviors are common is small.

| Table 5.3 FREQUENCY OF CLASSROOM INFRACTIONS: COMPARISON BETWEEN RECORDS AND TEACHER OVERALL PERCEPTIONS |
General categories | Per cent of recorded classroom infractions | Per cent of teachers reporting this to be among the most common transgressions in their classes
--- | --- | ---
*Mildly and / or seriously disruptive and insubordinate behavior* | 25 * at least | 83 *Mildly disruptive* 25 Insubordinate and seriously disruptive behavior
Verbally abusive and disrespectful | 13 | 12
Work related | 10 | 29
Having or using forbidden items (cell phone, electronics) | 10 | 16
Physically aggressive and / or dangerous behavior | 4.5 | 4
Other (smoking, littering) | 4 | 16
Attendance | 0.5 | 16

* From all infractions reported under the category *Mildly or seriously disruptive behavior* (see table 5.1, p. 188-190) 230 infractions (25%) were definitely *mild*, but more infractions, up to maybe 20 percent, could be classified under *mildly* if it was possible to know more precisely the actual behaviors the teacher was referring to with the definitions *disruptive* and *unruly*.

**Patterns of transgressions outside the classroom (according to observations).** In observing hallways and yards in Greece my aim was to count all observable undisciplined behaviors, as I had done in New York, and to discern patterns of behavior that may be unique in the Greek school. Therefore, I collected information on: (1) *the wearing of hats and hoods*; (2) *the use of cell phones and electronic devices*; (3) *students being in the hallway during the teaching periods*; (4) *insubordination*; and (5) *smoking*. From the first day, I realized that smoking was one of the main issues at the school and, by default, required its own separate category. As already mentioned, the hallways were L-shaped and it was easy to count students and behaviors; I could see much of the floor. Of course, all numbers are in approximation because I may have missed a few cases during the process of counting, although the task was made easier because the students were not moving; in Greece, SSAs or other school officials are
not in the hallways to push students to go to class. I completed three observations on each of the four floors standing at the L’s edge point, from which I could see the whole floor. I was standing at my observation post for the whole day, which was from 8:15 in the morning to 2:00 in the afternoon (a similar time period to that in NY).

The school day average for students wearing hats and hoods is 62. Students told me that hats and hoods are a “must” during “bad-hair” days. Regarding the use of phones and electronics the school average is higher, about 92, while for insubordination it drops as low as 3 (see table 5.4 below for findings per location per day).

### Table 5.4 FREQUENCY OF SELECTED OUT-OF-CLASS INFRACTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Main (3rd fl.)</th>
<th>Ground/yard</th>
<th>2nd Floor/yard</th>
<th>4th Floor</th>
<th>School Day Averag</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hats / hoods</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phones / electronics</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insubordin.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out during periods</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smoking</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The 3rd observation of the 4th floor was only for few periods because that was half day.
The weather during the 3rd observation in the yard was very bad.

A very controversial category is smoking. The school day average is 120 incidents, and the TA had voted in the beginning of the year to strictly enforce a no-smoking policy. Since there was not a circular from the Ministry of Education to ban smoking in schools, the TA decided to enforce the Ministerial Decision of the Minister of Health, which was prohibiting smoking in public buildings, schools being included (Y1/Γ.Π. /76017/2002). According to this, public buildings have to have assigned spaces with good ventilation for smoking employees. The TA
decided that students who were 18 years or older and younger ones, whose parents had given written permission for their child to smoke, had to have the right to smoke and the school had to assign a smoking room for them, which they did. The Ministerial Decision did not make clear whether students of secondary schools were supposed to be provided with smoking rooms; it was giving that right only to employees and university students but, because many teachers in the school were smokers, they were very sympathetic to smoking students and agreed to give them the smoking-room privilege. However, they also decided not to permit smoking in all other areas of the school, including the terraces and the yards, in order to not facilitate students in exercising “their right to smoke.” The smoking room was located on the second floor and had a lovely view of the port, but the students did not like going in there. They enjoyed their cigarettes outside and that is why the number of smoking infractions is high on all floors, except the 3rd; there were yards on the ground and first floors and a big verandah, which the students were allowed to use on the 4th floor. An additional reason not to smoke on the 3rd floor was the fact that teachers and administrators were stationed there. During observations, I saw that the hallway-and-yard-supervising teachers (oi e fimerevontes) were not enforcing the smoking ban. As one teacher told me in the interview, “How am I supposed to correct the students when they see me smoking? That is, to say the least, stupid” (X.Y, 2009). In table 5.5 below the total number of registered infractions for three years and those I observed in the hallways and yards in a day, which I estimated for three years in order to facilitate comparison, are given side-by-side.

In the Greek school, the most difficult category to observe and to understand is students being out of class during periods. The students are not required to carry a class pass if they are out of the room for a legitimate reason; there are many circumstances for which students are allowed to be out of the class, and there are many cases in which students are instructed, indeed,
to stay out of the class. Also, latecomers are waiting together with all the other categories of students for their next class. The students gave me the following reasons for being in the yard or in the cantina area, which teachers and administrators also verified during their interviews, and/or were also discussed in the TAs:

- (1) The teacher is absent. In general, we have many free periods in this school.
- (2) The teacher told us to stay out because they need to prepare the Lab; he has things to do.
- (3) We had a test and we finished.
- (4) We will go a little later.
- (5) We cut; we do not feel like going to this class.
- (6) We were not behaving well and the teacher threw us out.
- (7) We do not have books and notebooks and the teacher threw us out.
- (8) We were late.
- (9) We were not prepared for Lab.
- (10) The teacher does not register absences.
- (11) We are not allowed in Gym because we did not provide Verification of Good Health.
- (12) We are waiting for our friends to leave together.
- (13) This teacher dismisses us earlier.
- (14) We lied to the teacher; told her that we go to the bathroom and came to the cantina instead.
- (15) We had a class meeting and we finished early. (Observation notes, 2009)

From this, we can see that in the case of categories 1, 2, 3, 13, and 15 the students are legitimately out of class, categories 4, 5, 8, and 10, are related to attendance (the students are late or cutting inside the building), and categories 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, and 14 are related to disciplinary infractions and interventions. In the Greek school the teachers are allowed to remove undisciplined students from their classes without any special procedure (Π.Δ. 104 /1979), but the law does not specify what these students are supposed to do after being removed. In my research site I did not see any provision for this, even though there was a decision in the TA minutes that all students should be occupied in the library. An average of about 427 students per day were out of class, mostly in the yards and few in the hallways, socializing. In some cases, I could see whole classes of students coming down because their teacher(s) were absent. I could also discern
the students who had just finished a test because they were discussing it. But I could not separate those who were late from those who were just cutting and from those who were out because of disciplinary reasons. Even my efforts to count the students who were delaying going to their next class failed because the yards and the cantina area were almost never completely empty, and it was impossible to know if the students were left there from the previous break, or came down after the new period had started. During all my observations I did not see a single school official checking why the students were out of their classes, who was legitimately out, and who was not. In the Kanonismo Leitourgias it is mentioned that all students have to be in areas designated for each occasion by the school (for example, when students finish a test they have to go to the cantina area and not wander around the hallways), but there is no mechanism to enforce this rule.

The huge number of 427 students (the whole school population was 509 students that year) being out of class daily is mostly telling with regard to how the organization of the school shapes student behavior. The fact, for example, that there is no provision for teachers to cover for absence and no capacity to cover all the classes with the regular teachers is one factor that contributes to having so many students out in the yard. It can demonstrate what one teacher mentioned: “Each time the system develops a new power or need to control some behaviors (not necessarily students’ but mostly teachers’), or it decides that does not want to control some behaviors any more, then, it calls us to act and informs the students accordingly” (Teacher B.A., 2009).

If we compare findings from the records with the observations is interesting how much they also differ in the Greek school (see table 5.5 below) and how much the teachers under-discipline. In the column Observed per day / per 3 years I project the daily observations to the three year period to make it comparable. The school year in Greece also has 180 days:
Table 5.5  FREQUENCY OF OUT-OF-CLASS INFRACTIONS: PER THREE YEARS
COMPARISON BETWEEN RECORDED AND OBSERVED INFRACTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infraction</th>
<th>Recorded in three years</th>
<th>Observed per day / per 3 years (x 540)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Insubordination</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of electronic devices/cell</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wearing of hats/hoods</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being out of class</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>427</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smoking</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The category wearing of hats/hoods is not disciplined at all because the overwhelming majority of teachers, 96%, believe that it is not an undisciplined behavior and there is no rule about it. In terms of under-disciplining it is useful to focus on the categories of cell phone use and smoking, which the TA did agree to ban. Most teachers separate in-class and out-of-class behaviors. They would not allow smoking in their classes, but they would permit it in the yard, or on the verandah, if the TA hadn’t decided to ban it. Failure to correct undisciplined behavior, at least when colleagues are watching, puts their reputation as disciplinarians, their collegiality (all teachers should be together in this), and their role as enforcers of the rules into question. This is an excerpt from the observation notes:

Two teachers first see two girls in one corner who smoke: “Come on! You know that it is not allowed up here! Go to the smoking room,” says the first teacher. “Miss, the smoking room is locked!” “Well, you have to tell your governing body to keep it open in order to go and smoke there. Here, it is not allowed!” The other teacher approaches the girl and talks to her in a friendly manner. He gives her a knowing look, “Come on! Get serious, you know what’s right!” He turns his face away and the student makes a disapproving face. The first teacher goes down the staircase that leads to the entrance of the school. There are 8 students there, and two of them are smoking. She repeats that in order to smoke they have to go to the smoking room. One student says, “But why Miss, we like it outside!” “Because that’s the rule! And you sit here! Everybody can see you here! If someone sees you, then, you put ME in trouble. Why do you do that?” The student who still has her cigarette lit says, “I’m sorry, I’ll be more careful!” (Observation notes, Feb. 1st, 2009)
This could be interpreted that the student will simply be more careful in future not to expose the teacher. She does not promise not to smoke. Regarding the use of cell phones, in reality, teachers fail to enforce the ban altogether. This is demonstrated in the following passage from my observation notes:

The bell rings and all the students come outside at the narrow area in front of the laboratories because the weather is good. There are about 90 students all together. I stand at the door from where I can see all students. I see 3 hats and 20 to 25 students smoking. About 20 students are with cell phones; they read their messages, play games, and some talk. The teachers, three at the South side and three at the North, are chatting and they do not correct any undisciplined behavior. The students are socializing in small groups. In regards to cell phones the students are using them very openly. (Observation notes, April 1st, 2009)

As the assistant principal mentioned in the interview, the teachers feel that certain rules are very authoritarian, and they avoid enforcing them:

There are teachers who do not even bother to enforce certain rules. To the contrary, they express their opinion in the Teacher Assembly saying that these are authoritarian measures. Yes, but all of you voted for these measures and not a single teacher expressed a different opinion the day we voted. Yes! They disagree! And they see the students smoking and talking on the phone and the teachers are doing the same (and we see them!), and this is...teacher who is teaching but... (R.A., 2009)

**Punishment and additional supports**

In Greece, the educational law is such that it allows a teacher to suspend a disruptive student, but only from his class and only for the period during which the incident takes place. Of course, before resorting to the hourly suspension, the teacher is supposed to exhaust all other pedagogical methods. Punishments also include admonishment, suspensions from one to five days, and a change of school environment. For the three years I collected data, I found that the most commonly used sanction was the hourly suspension, which prevailed in 771 cases (80%). Suspensions, the second most common sanction, were used in 136 cases (14%). 98 of the 136 suspensions were one-day and 20 were half-day suspensions. There were five changes of school
environment: a student who threw a computer out of the window, a student who set the Christmas tree on fire, a student who threw bricks at a passing car, a student who pulled a knife, and a student who threw a bottle with water and hit a teacher). In 30 cases the punishment line was blank. Under the category other I included seven cases where the suspension was suspended and would only be enforced if the student failed to correct his behavior and three cases in which the teacher preferred to talk to the whole class instead of punishing the individual student.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5.6</th>
<th>INTERVENTIONS / PUNISHMENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No record of punishment</td>
<td>Conference with student and / or admonishment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 cases (3%)</td>
<td>17 cases (1.7%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regarding additional supports, the Greek system is very limited. The students follow a unified program, and there are no guidance counselors to program and advise them in terms of academic or personal development. Also, there are no psychologists or social workers on staff; students can find such support, but not in school. Teachers may recommend that it would be appropriate for a student to see a psychologist, or be helped by a social worker. These professionals can be found in the Education or Municipal offices and, as I was told in the interviews, the services they provide are not satisfactory due to a lack of resources. Students needing psychological support must go to a hospital, or the private healthcare system. Regarding mediation, nothing was on record.

There were some additional responses, though. In some cases, the student apologized for his behavior. For incidents regarded as serious, the principal had a conference with the student(s); for more serious transgressions, the principal held a disciplinary meeting (in Greek,
with the classroom teacher, a second teacher, and the student, where the student’s behavior, options, and punishment were analytically discussed; for the extremely serious cases, the whole issue was referred to the Teacher Assembly (TA). The TA is a mandatory meeting of all members of the faculty, and they make decisions about the most serious issues, because this is the only body that can punish with a suspension of four or five days, lower the student’s conduct on her permanent record, or recommend a change of school environment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5.7</th>
<th>ADDITIONAL RESPONSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conference with the principal</td>
<td>6 cases (0.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disciplinary meeting</td>
<td>2 cases (0.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referred to the Teacher Assembly</td>
<td>20 cases (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lowering of conduct</td>
<td>8 cases (0.8%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most distinct colors in the picture of discipline

Here it is a summary of the findings for each of the indicators reported in the above sections, which answer the first research question, what are the patterns, magnitude, and severity of student transgressions in the Greek school:

- There is an average of 0.5 disciplinary encounters per student per school year.
- Almost all disciplinary encounters (93%) take place inside the classrooms.
- The majority of behaviors that are formally punished by the teachers are in the category disruptive and insubordinate behavior (58%). All the other categories register incidents of indiscipline around or far below 10%.
- The majority of teachers (83%) reported mildly disturbing behaviors as being the most common in their classes. Significantly less common are the categories does not do work

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Excellent student behavior is considered to be very important and is recorded on the high school diploma. It does not look good for a student to have a high school diploma that under the category behavior states “Kosmia,” (good), when it is supposed to state “Kosmiotati,” (excellent).
and *insubordination and serious disturbances* that were mentioned by 29% and 25% of the interviewees respectively. Very few teachers mentioned the other categories and only one teacher referred to *attendance*.

- After comparing records and teachers’ reporting we can deduce that the incidents related to the categories of *attendance/punctuality, mildly disturbing behaviors, and does not do academic work* are infrequently punished.

- Incidents that took place outside the classrooms accounted for 5.5% of all transgressions and were mostly to do with *having or using forbidden items*, mainly a cell phone (30%), *smoking or setting fires* (23%), or *verbally abusive or disrespectful behavior* (18%). The remaining behaviors each have a frequency of less than 15%.

- Each day I observed about 62 students wearing *hats around the school*, 92 students having /using visible *electronic devices*, 427 students *being out of class and possibly cutting inside the school*, and three incidents of *insubordination per day*.

If we compare data from records, observations, and interviews, we can deduce that *the wearing of hats, use of electronic devices, smoking, and students being out of class* are infrequently punished. Obviously, with regard to the wearing of hats, it is not perceived as undisciplined behavior as there is no rule about it, and is therefore not punished. When students use electronic devices or smoke, the teachers disagree with correcting their behavior, at least in the hallways. They only correct those behaviors in situations where their professionalism might be called into question. The category of *being in the hallway, or the yard while classes are in session* cannot be directly linked with cutting. It is more indicative of the administrative inadequacies of the Greek system (i.e., they do not have substitute teachers).
• Most infractions (68%) are Level 1, 7% at Level 2, 12% at Level 3, 4% at Level 4, and only 1% at Level 5. I was unable to classify a 6% of all transgressions.

• Punishment was predominantly an hourly suspension by the teacher (80%) followed by suspension from all classes (14%). All other punishment was of very low occurrence: admonishment was used for 1.7% of the cases; change of school environment was decided only in four cases throughout the three years I studied the TA minutes; and in 3% of the cases there was no record of any action.

• The Greek system does not provide specialist-supporting services in school.

Personnel Perceptions and Beliefs Regarding Student Discipline

I also examined school personnel perceptions and beliefs regarding discipline in the areas of (1) student behavior, (2) the administration of student discipline by the school, and (3) preferred methods for handling student discipline in Greece, using the same indicators that I had in New York. These are: (a) educators’ definitions of undisciplined behavior; (b) their (dis)agreement with classifications enforced by the school; (c) their impressions regarding the magnitude and seriousness of student transgressions in the school; (d) their opinions regarding the sufficiency of the system of rules; (e) their impressions regarding the effectiveness of the system of punishments; and (f) their opinions regarding the effectiveness of the existing division of responsibility in the area of student discipline. Findings from the interviews can then be analyzed in order to answer the research question, what are school officials’ definitions and perceptions of student transgressions and of the disciplinary procedures followed in the school? In the sections that follow I report the findings for each of the six indicators.

Defining the undisciplined behavior.
The Greek teachers were very analytical in describing the undisciplined student. They predominately mentioned specific classroom behaviors and very few referred to out-of-class infractions:

They are undisciplined when I tell them to be quiet and they do not stop talking, when they throw objects, when they talk with their classmates while I am delivering the lesson, when they interrupt me for things that are not related to the lesson, when I told them to do thing A and they do thing B, when they get up… they usually do that also, they get up and they leave the class, they tell me that they are going for a cigarette. More? (B.A., 2009)

Twelve interviewees (46%) said that a student is undisciplined when he/she is not responding well to authority, “…the student who always says no, he never says yes, he is negative toward whatever I request” (V.E., 2009). Ten interviewees (38.5%) stressed talking and disrupting the class and eight respondents (30.7%) mentioned the student who gets physical. However, in Greece, it was predominately physical aggression toward inanimate objects (kicking desks, doors, school bags etc.) rather than fighting with other students. Five interviewees (19%) pointed out rude and disrespectful behaviors, which are symptomatic of student character. Finally only one interviewee (3.8%) mentioned one of the categories failing to do academic work, failing to be punctual or have good attendance, and breaking rules in general.

| Table 5.8 | STUDENTS CONSIDERED TO BE UNDISCIPLINED |
| Sample size: 26 interviewees |
| Behavior | Number of interviewees | Per cent of interviewees |
| Do not respond well to authority (insubordination) | 12 | 46 |
| Talking and disrupting the class | 10 | 38.5 |
| Physical aggression | 8 | 30.7 |
| Having a bad character (being rude & disrespectful) | 5 | 19 |
| Failing to have an academic interest | 1 | 3.8 |
| Lacking punctuality/poor attendance | 1 | 3.8 |
| Breaking rules in general | 1 | 3.8 |

Teachers differentiated between serious and less serious behaviors almost automatically:
I believe that hitting each other is serious. Also behaviors such as setting fires, or throwing objects out of the window, something that happened in this school in the past, are acts of violence and are very serious. While smoking, or cell phones are not really… also coming to class late or writing on the walls are not serious. Anyway, for this we are to blame not the students. (M.A., 2009)

Half of the teachers named as most serious physical assaults and some stressed verbal assaults. Drugs were a category by itself, mentioned as very serious by one fifth of the teachers while five respondents referred to criminal behaviors and acts of violence. With this, they meant setting fires, throwing objects from the balcony, or doing things with the intention of harming others. Many teachers classified mildly disturbing behaviors, the use of cell phones, being academically indifferent or unprepared, smoking, doing graffiti, and punctuality and attendance, as being less serious infractions. As criteria for that differentiation, the majority of the teachers mentioned safety. All teachers mentioned, “respect” and “being allowed to teach” as being vital. Some even said that they care more about having good children in their classes than good students.

Only one teacher included punctuality and attendance in the list of undisciplined behaviors (see table 5.8 above), very few reported them as common problems (see table 5.3), and most classified them under the category of non-serious infractions. Not respecting building requirements such as cell phone use, or smoking was also considered to be less important and few mentioned them as being common. My observations testify to the opposite, however, and this alludes to a very important finding: Not only do the teachers not discipline these behaviors, but they also fail to register them as even happening as much as they do.

(Dis)agreement with the classifications enforced by the school

The school’s internal disciplinary rules (which the TA votes for at the beginning of every school year) among other things explicitly state that the students (a) are not supposed to bring cell phones to school; (b) need to come to school and get to class on time; (c) be where they are
assigned to be, not to cut classes being one part of this; and (d) follow the directions of the school authorities at all times, (leaving the class without permission comes under this category). The only behavior not considered in the rules, but that was corrected by a few teachers anyway, was the wearing of a hat. In order to examine the extent to which teachers agree with the school’s classifications I asked specifically about these behaviors, as I had also done in New York.

The category where there is almost unanimous agreement with the rules is *leaving class without permission*. Twenty-four teachers (92%) were very adamant about this. They answered using words such as, “No way” (M.O., 2009), “Impossible! Impossible, that’s completely undisciplined” (K.A., 2009), or “It is one of the worst things a student can do” (K.A.B., 2009). Even the two teachers who expressed a different opinion said that theoretically this behavior should be seen as undisciplined, but that it doesn’t bother them and therefore they do not correct it.

*The use of cell phones* was the second category of undisciplined behavior many teachers were in agreement. Specifically, seventeen teachers (65%) define it as undisciplined behavior, while five teachers (19%) differentiated between cell phone use inside and outside the class. In the hallway, these five suggested, it would not matter, or, maybe, it should be allowed:

Well, during class it does bother me, but out of class, no! The child may have a family problem. Inside the class I do not want them to use the phone, because I do not really know how they use it. They may take a video… But if they ask me for permission to communicate with their family, or their boss, because many students are working, in this case I give them permission to go in the hallway and talk. In short, I break the school rules but I think in a civilized environment this should not be an issue. If a child feels the need to communicate with his family, we should not exercise power and force him to do texting under the table. (S.T., 2009)
Four teachers (15%) said that the issue of students using cell phones is not a problem for them because if they ask students not to use their phones, they usually obey.

With regard to the rest of the categories, most interviewees classified the behaviors as not unruly. For cutting, 14 teachers (54%) said that it is not an issue that they have concerns about. As Ms. Markatou\textsuperscript{37} said, “If he does not come to my class, I will mark him absent and it is not going to bother me.” (Interview, 2009) Ms Spoliou presented it almost as if the students were exercising their legal right to be absent for certain days:

Well, he will be marked absent! That has a punishment! The law gives him the right to be absent for a certain amount of hours throughout the year. If he chooses my class to be absent from that’s fine with me. I will inform him and he can make an informed decision. If he has more absences than the law allows then… (Spoliou, 2009)

Then, basically, the student fails this class and has to take it again the following year. Responsibility for complying with the attendance law is placed upon the students. If they are not interested in completing their schooling, it is their decision to make and they will suffer the consequences. Eight teachers (31%) said that they would consider poor attendance undisciplined if it was systematic.

Four teachers (15%) found cutting to be very unruly:

Undisciplined! Completely undisciplined! Supposedly you (meaning the student) come here to get a diploma. Right? Don’t you have to do something for it compared with somebody else who is not going to have the same diploma? If you have the diploma, you will have some expectations tomorrow from the society, you may get a job because you have this diploma. Well, you have to do something! You cannot just look forward to the benefits that this diploma may give you. Being here is one of the things that you have to do. How are you going to learn if you are not here? (X.Y., 2009)

\textsuperscript{37} All names are pseudonyms.
For *lateness*, most teachers (61.5%) answered, “It depends” and differentiated between how much and how systematic it is; if it is their first period of the day, and if the student is provocative:

> It would be 50% undisciplined and 50% giving them the benefit of the doubt.
> After all, we live in Greece. Some buses are always late. What can we say to a student who is waiting for 45 minutes at the bus stop? Is the student undisciplined because he did not go to the bus stop from 7:30 in order to be at school at 8:30? (S.T., 2009)

> When a child does it consistently, comes extremely late and with an attitude, or he sees me getting in to the room and he remains in the hallway talking with his friends and gets in much later than me, opens the door and does not even say sorry, well, there, I do not accept it. (M.O., 2009)

The only behavior that almost all teachers (92%) said, without hesitation, that they do not believe to be unruly was *the wearing of a hat*. The school had no rule regarding hats and only one teacher said that a student wearing a hat would bother him in class. One teacher gave cultural and situational reasons (cold weather) to justify why a student might wear a hat even though he perceived that the wearing of a hat shows a lack of respect.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Wears a hat</th>
<th>Uses a cell phone</th>
<th>Leaves class w/out a pass</th>
<th>Cuts classes</th>
<th>Comes late</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>#</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>#</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>#</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undisciplined</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Undisciplined</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It depends</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interestingly, only the categories of *leaving class without a pass* and *using a cell phone* found the majority of teachers in agreement: that this was undisciplined behavior. The cutting of classes,
even though it was stressed by the Principal as being undisciplined and became part of the Internal Regulation of the school, was not really considered to be undisciplined behavior, mostly, I think, because according to the Greek educational law (Π.Δ. 104/76), but also traditionally, attendance is seen as being the responsibility of the parents.

**Impressions about the magnitude and seriousness of student transgressions**

The teachers gave me an estimate of how many students they think break the school rules every day. Their majority (77%) believes that half or more of the student population commit at least one infraction each day. Some differentiated between how many students break the rules and how many get caught. Two teachers did not give me an answer.

Regarding the nature of the disciplinary incidents they encounter, I asked teachers how many students in their classes they thought needed the intervention of psychologists or social workers. Ten teachers (38%) answered *very few or none*, which is below 5% of the student population, and 11.5% said 5% to 10%. Seven teachers (27%) gave an estimate of 10% to 30% and five teachers (19%) said that more than 30% of the students needed psychological support. One teacher refused to give me an estimate. In short, the teachers are divided in two categories. Half of them have the conviction that few or very few students (less than 10%) would benefit from specialists’ intervention while the other half believes this percentage to be significantly higher.

**The disciplinary rules**

Regarding specific written rules, the Greek school has only the *Internal Regulation (Esoterikos Kanonismos)*, which is, as I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, a document of one-and-a-half pages. The teachers meet at the beginning of the year and decide what to put and what not to put in this kanonismo, and whether to make it stricter, or less strict. I expected
most teachers, given that they voted in the TA for this esoteriko kanonismo, to be very positive with regard to school rules. Instead, my first interviewee used the word “stupid” to describe them, expressed his aversion to the rules of the school, and refused to discuss any further the adequacy, or inadequacy of the rules. 50% of the teachers, as many as you need to pass a decision in the TA, said that the school has the right number of rules and that these rules target the right behaviors. Six teachers (23%) said that the rules are inadequate because they are not specific enough with regard to punishment:

There is nothing like, if you do this we will punish you like that. I would like to see a system of rules more…developed. A better organized system because in a school of this size you cannot function without rules; we need to have a framework, which the teacher can utilize. (V.E., 2009)

In contrast, six teachers (23%) said that the school overstates the rules; it should not control certain behaviors:

If you ask me, in the TA many of us do not agree with the cigarette rule. Well, we cannot make them quit smoking when the child smokes at home and his father gives him the money to buy cigarettes. The cell phone is another one that we do not agree with. In this era… I believe these things have to be permitted at a certain level, O.K.? (M.I., 2009)

**The system of punishment**

Punishment in the Greek school system can be a suspension, change of school environment, or lowering the student’s conduct on his permanent record. Given that the second is rarely invoked and the third almost never, the word punishment is usually connected with a suspension. The majority of teachers (73%) characterized the system of punishment as ineffective. They gave the following arguments:

1. The students repeat the infractions, which they get punished for. If the aim of the suspension is to correct poor behavior, suspending the students doesn’t work:
Many times I see that punishment does not have the desired result, which is to make the student better, and this is very intriguing to me, meaning… O.K., since the punishment is in place to make the student stop what he/she is doing and the student, despite the punishment does not stop… this makes me think. What should we do? Go even stricter? (F.I., 2009)

(2) The punishment is not fair. The school doesn’t separate between intentional and unintentional transgressions, doesn’t take into account whether or not a behavior is repeated, and doesn’t examine the particular circumstances of the behavior.

(3) The punishment doesn’t increase gradually. Punishment is symbolic and pedagogues are not supposed to punish their students harshly. When a situation warrants punishment, teachers should apply a scale and change the level of severity (go to the next, more serious punishment) very consciously. This, they say, does not happen in this school. Students get suspended for one day just because they were smoking, or because they were talking on their cell phone.

(4) The individual and his circumstances are ignored in this process. The school punishes the behavior, but the cause remains unaddressed:

For our children punishment does not work. Psychologists have to decide, they have to see each child separately in order to understand what is the problem. If a child breaks windows and we suspend him, he is going to keep breaking windows. With the punishment we do not find the cause of the action. This is what we need. (G.I., 2009)

(5) The implementation of punishment is set up to have no effect. By allowing a suspended student to stay home, the school separates the students from the teachers who are able to show them what the problem was with their behavior and help them to correct it:

It is not an issue of being strict. It has to do with how punishment is implemented. If you suspend a student and he stays home, or is out drinking coffee in the cafes with his friends, you are not going to teach this student anything. However, if you keep the student with you and you tell him to help you with something because he was late, or he broke a chair and you keep him after school to fix the chair with you, then, I think, he will respect his labor and will be more careful next time. (K.U., 2009)
Seven teachers (27%) said that the punishment system works. Four out of the seven, though, added that it might not work for the students who get punished (because they do it again), but it serves as an example for the other students. In short, it is not clear for whom punishment works; it is not only the individual student who can learn a lesson in this process.

**Division of responsibility for student discipline**

One of the reasons that I chose Greece as a comparison with NY was the fact that there is no functional differentiation in the area of discipline. The teachers are responsible for disciplining their students, for patrolling the hallways, and for supporting them if they have personal, or other issues that may interfere with their education. Therefore, when I asked them who should take responsibility for punishing the students, they hesitated, regarded me with a puzzled, what-kind-of-question-is-this look, and gave me answers such as, “The teacher, of course!” or “Me, who else?” or “Why? Can it be someone other than the teacher?” Specifically, 22 teachers (85%) answered, “Me” without even thinking of justifying why. They felt it was obvious. Only two teachers (7%) said that in cases where they needed to suspend a student from all his classes, the administration must intervene (as is suggested by the law), and one teacher (4%) explained that the class has to also agree with the way that a student, who interrupts their learning, or does something that is not considered acceptable, gets punished. Lastly, one teacher said, “No one.”

The teachers frequently, in informal conversations, expressed their frustration regarding student behavior, and I wanted to see if, indeed, they would like to have administrative personnel to take responsibility for misbehaving students. All teachers looked at me in astonishment, and most of them said things such as, “To do what? Take my students and discipline them? No!” or
“Don’t even think about it!” The following is an excerpt from the interview I had with a young teacher who was so expressive that I kept notes describing her reactions:

Me: Would it make sense to you to have people other than the teachers, administrative personnel, handling disciplinary issues in your school?
Teacher: Somebody other than me? To do what?
Me: To discipline the students who misbehave in your class. And thus, you are not going to waste time over discipline.
Teacher (laughing hysterically!): No! Because… first, I will feel inadequate as a teacher.
Me: Why are you going to feel inadequate? Isn’t it your job to teach?
Teacher: Because an educator does not have… The purpose of teaching is not just to… transmit knowledge.
Me: What else should a teacher do? (She starts laughing again, because she believes that the answer is obvious, she hesitates, moves her head back, says, “aha” with a voice full of suspicion, she thinks I am playing a joke on her in a way, that I am asking questions that underestimate her intelligence).
Teacher: To affect behavior. I also teach this. Maybe because the students finish high school it’s not so obvious, but if it was junior high, or elementary? What would you say there? (Interview with B.A., 2009)

All teachers expressed a similar opinion. For them, handling disciplinary issues in class and analyzing behavior with the students shouldn’t be perceived as wasting time. That is one of the many lessons a teacher must teach:

That (meaning discipline) is the first lesson. Let me say it differently. The most important issue in a school is the socialization of the children. The students have to learn behavior. I don’t care as much if a student isn’t the best in the subject I teach. I don’t care as much if he comes unprepared. I don’t consider it to be a disaster if he doesn’t pay attention sometimes. I do care if he has problems yes, if he works, I will help as much as I can, that’s not the issue. I care about my students. But regarding the lesson, first I care about the behavior, if he is a decent human being, and then comes my subject. If the behavior is good, if the student is disciplined, knowledge follows by itself. (K.A., 2009)

Most Greek teachers stressed how having people other than teachers to handle discipline affects the disciplinary process and education in general; it turns it into a judicial operation because the disciplinarian outside the class has to rely mostly on rules. The school is not a court, they exclaim. The teachers who teach the students are best placed to do this job. As one teacher put it:

No, and I am absolute when it comes to this. They will see the child without any emotions, based on the rules. They do not know what happened before the
incident. It is difficult! It is as if I send the child to the court. I do not know how somebody else will handle my student, who I tolerated, or pushed his buttons. I do not want something like that. To discipline my students is part of my role as educator. (M.A., 2009)

The teachers do not want administrators to handle discipline, but would welcome help by specialists, psychologists or social workers. Six teachers (23%) stressed how necessary this is and that this is where the State needs to invest:

We must refer to Socrates here. Do you remember when they asked him which was the best way to train an athlete? He said, “I may be a philosopher, but I do not know everything!” He, then, if you recall, suggested asking a gymnast who has specialized knowledge on the matter. From this we should learn something. That teachers, like Socrates, do not know everything. Therefore, the Ministry of Education, according to my humble opinion, has to take care of this problem and appoint a school psychologist and a social worker in every school. Both will help the teachers to address the maladjusted student. (D.A., 2009)

In classifying the categories that most need specialists’ support, the majority of teachers (65%) mentioned psychological and violence related issues. Some (27%) stressed that support is mostly needed when there are home issues, or when the students encounter personal (friendship or love related) problems. Six teachers (23%) focused on chronic behaviors and another six referred exclusively to drugs. One teacher made the argument that all behaviors can be better understood by psychologists and that if we are serious about the well being of children, we should talk about psychological interventions, not punishments.

Receiving help from specialists is not an option in Greece, and almost all teachers (92%) verified this. Two teachers said that the Office of Education has school psychologists and the Municipal Office employs a support team, but they stressed that it is very difficult to find them and even more difficult to make the parents go and ask for help:

We can refer students with serious problems to the school psychologists… But there are only two school psychologists for all the schools of this area. It’s almost impossible to get them on the phone. I leave them phone messages, I also go personally downtown where their offices are located and leave notes under their
door. It is difficult! There’s also a support team in the Municipality Office, I have some phones here, some names, and if there is a need we can send the kids. I must say though, lately the parents don’t want to cooperate. Or they tell us that their child is under the care of a private psychologist. (M.O., 2009)

A month ago, when we had this incident with the knife, I called the office of Education to ask for help. The child needed psychological support. They gave me some phone numbers of the “Paidon” hospital and of the psychologist at the Municipal office. The municipal psychologist called me in order to support me. … Then she gave me three numbers to call and we spent the whole day trying to find out the best place to refer the child. Unfortunately the mother had her own psychological issues and she didn’t agree to take her child to the psychologist. And the issue was left there. What happened to this child, I do not know. (R.A., 2009)

As we can see, interventions by specialists do not take place even in those cases where school authorities are working hard to get support for very serious incidents. In addition, as Lambropoulou and Pandeliadou (2005) assert, Greece does not have a well-constructed legal framework for special education. The “politics of care” are not as advanced as in the United States. There are mostly separate schools to serve this population of students and separate classes in the general education settings, which are not well designed and managed. In general, only about 10% of the special education population is classified as such. The rest are educated in the regular education settings.

Lately, after the Ministry of Education announced that special testing must be provided for dyslexic students, many students went to get evaluated. This new category of dyslexic students appeared in schools and their numbers keep multiplying, but there are not teachers with special education training in all schools. Many Greek teachers assert that students who simply never learned how to read and write wish to be classified as dyslexic in order to have easier testing conditions:

Many weak students, who are culturally deprived rather than dyslexic, rush to get diagnosed as being dyslexic in order to be given special, testing arrangements. The few diagnostic centers in the cities have a good team of specialists and are accurate in their assessments. However, there are many smaller centers where
everyone who goes for an evaluation, receives the desired paper. I can easily say that some of my dyslexic students don’t have dyslexia. They are just bad students. A few years ago we didn’t have any of those dyslexic students. Now there are many. (Teacher, N.X. 2008)

The Police do not get involved in Greek schools unless something very serious happens and the principal calls for help. Throughout their careers as teachers, only 10 out of 26 teachers remember the principal having to call the Police once, or twice. Most teachers expressed their aversion for the Police:

Out of here! Good that they are not supposed to be involved. Out! Bed bugs and fleas! They are horrible mother-fuckers … Apart from the fact that the Police are a veeeery big ‘family’. It is better if they don’t know you or have a “file” for you. They can make you pay for things that you cannot even imagine! We all know what they were doing during the dictatorship years! (X.Y., 2009)

Needless to say, in Greece there are no SSAs. Instead, each school building has school guards who are employed by the Municipality. Their main duty is to guard the building and they are not supposed to get involved with the students at all. However, in informal discussions I had with three of the guards, they confessed that the principal told them to also keep an eye on the students and report anything that looked suspicious. As I found out during my observations, they were indeed keeping an eye on the students and were intervening when the students attempted to damage school property. They had a very paternal/maternal style and were very politely trying to advise the students to do the right thing. According to a teacher, it was actually one of the guards who first saw the child with the knife (an incident that many teachers mentioned in their interviews) and intervened:

Do you remember that case with the knife? I witnessed the incident. It happened outside the school, at the front door. I was on my bike, ready to go, and thank God, the guard was there! If he was not there… He acted immediately…! He approached the child when he saw the knife. He didn’t let him use the knife. He pulled the child aside in a very nice, almost paternal way, “My child,” he said, “What are you doing?” And he pulled him in the office… (S.D., 2009)
More than half of the teachers (61%) rated the guards’ role positively, saying that they help in the hallway, recognize intruders, patrol hallways and yards with the teachers, supervise the hallways when classes are in session, and can help with fights and fires. Some said that even opening and closing the doors is a big help. The remaining 39% said that the guards do not help much and described their job as just being to watch the building. One teacher said that the guards are not able to help because they do not have any power and the students know it.

Surveillance is generally not one of the strong points of Greek schools. Not only do they not have SSAs but they are also very much against cameras. As one of the principals said, “They are allergic to cameras. Under no circumstances would they allow themselves to be monitored.” He shared the story of one of his colleagues who decided to put a camera at the entrance of the school building. “The media came, he had a demonstration outside the school, and the camera came down.” (Principal II, 2009)

Main points regarding teachers’ beliefs and perceptions

The indicators I presented in the above sections answer the research question, what are school officials’ definitions and perceptions of student transgressions and of the disciplinary procedures followed in the Greek school, as follows:

- Greek educators predominantly focused on three categories of behaviors as being undisciplined: Not responding well to authority (46% of interviewees), talking and disrupting the class (38.5%), and physically aggressive behavior with other students, staff, or things (30.7%). Being rude and disrespectful was mentioned by 19% of the interviewees.

- Regarding the classification of behavior as serious, half of the teachers stressed physical assaults, about one third verbal assaults, and some teachers mentioned drugs, or criminal
behavior (that may harm others). Many teachers referred to mildly disturbing behaviors, the use of a cell phone, smoking, being unprepared for class, and punctuality and attendance as being less serious infractions. Their criterion in distinguishing between serious and non-serious behavior was how much the behavior was affecting safety in general.

- With regard to the categories of punctuality and attendance, cell phone use, and smoking, only a few teachers mentioned them as being undisciplined behaviors. Very few teachers considered these to be serious infractions, and few reported them as being common occurrences, despite observations indicating exactly the opposite.

- The overwhelming majority of teachers classified leaving class without permission as undisciplined, and a sizeable majority also consider the use of cell phones in the classroom as undisciplined. The Greek teachers found lateness, cutting, and wearing a hat not to be undisciplined behavior except in certain circumstances.

- The majority of the interviewees were under the impression that half or more of the student population breaks the school rules everyday.

- Regarding the need for specialists, the Greek teachers are divided. Half of them believe that there is a low percentage of students (less than 10% of the population) in need for specialist support, while the other half estimate this percentage to be higher than 10%.

- Exactly half of the interviewees believe that the rules are just right, while 23% would prefer even more rules. 23% of interviewees think that the rules target behaviors unnecessarily.

- The overwhelming majority of teachers suggest that the current system of punishment is ineffective for undisciplined students.
• Regarding the division of responsibility in Greek schools there are five main findings:
  a) All teachers disapprove of having personnel other than themselves handling their disciplinary issues. 23% added that the only exception should be the specialists, psychologists and social workers.
  b) In terms of punishment again, the overwhelming majority of interviewees declared that the teacher should have this responsibility. Only two mentioned intervention by the principal (but only for those cases where the teacher believes that the student needs to be suspended from all classes).
  c) The majority of the interviewees agreed that psychologists must handle psychological and violence-related incidents. One third of the interviewees suggested that specialists should also take responsibility for home and personal life issues. Some insisted that psychologists should also become involved in cases dealing with chronic problems and drug related issues.
  d) The overwhelming majority of the Greek teachers said that they do not have any support from specialists.
  e) The Greek schools have guards to protect the school buildings but not to intervene with students. Even within this limited capacity the majority of the interviewees suggested that guards help significantly with student discipline, while the rest said that they do not help at all.

**Administration of Student Discipline**

In this section, I present the key State Laws, Ministerial Decisions, Presidential Decrees, and Circulars related to student discipline either directly, or indirectly (by defining the parameters inside which each individual teacher and administrative body is supposed to move
when performing their duties and roles). These will answer the third research question, *what regulations, rules, and practices are supposed to be in place for student discipline?* The final research question, *how is policy implemented,* focuses on issues of administration, school policy, procedures, and practices. I examine a) how responsibility for disciplining / sanctioning the students is divided among school personnel, b) the formality of disciplinary procedures, and c) discrepancies between policy, institutional procedures, and actual practices.

**Legal mandates and provisions.**

The Law that provides the framework of the whole Greek educational system is N 1566 of 1985, known as “Nomos Plessio.” It passed when PASOK, the Socialist Party of Greece, came into power for the first time, is progressive and democratic, and describes the structure and function of the primary and secondary educational system of the country. It defines the purpose of education as being to promote a full, harmonious, and balanced development of the mental, emotional, and physical capacities of the students who, despite gender or origin, should have the possibility to fully develop their personalities and live productively.

N 1566/85 (very generally because details are arranged by Ministerial Decisions and Circulars), sets out the ethos and limits for the organization and operation of schools, presents the selection processes and duties of all school personnel, and describes the way that student life is supposed to be organized. It requires that there are democratically composed and operating educational bodies / committees (named in the law “Instruments of People’s Participation”) on national, prefectoral, provincial, municipal, and community levels. It also requires that each school have a school council and a committee in which teachers, parents, students, the principal, and local authorities can participate.
For secondary education, N.1566/85 establishes the need to help students understand the nature of social cooperation, prepare them for participation in a democracy, and provide support and encouragement in developing students’ characters and personalities in a way that allows them to advance the country’s economic, social, and cultural development. Regarding the role of Education, the Greek law stresses qualities such as, “essential knowledge that promotes the development of critical thinking,” “knowledge of the self,” “development of an aesthetic criterion,” or of “athletic capacities.” It states that the students should be able to make a positive contribution to their country if they are properly educated, but nowhere can the words ‘measurements,’ ‘statistics,’ ‘markets,’ or ‘competitiveness’ be found. The Ministry of Education never collects nation-wide data on student performance in a systematic way. In each school, teachers grade their students and decide whether to promote them or not and that is considered to be sufficient. There is also no system for teacher evaluation. Only recently (Vima, April 1, 2011) has the Ministry started working toward the development of a system to assess the performance and effectiveness of teachers. The Greek state in general does not focus on data; just in July 2010 it enumerated its public employees for the first time. Until then, it was not known exactly how many people were working for the public sector and what skills or qualifications they had (Vima, July 31, 2010).

Ministerial Decision Φ.353.1./324/105657/Δ1 of 2002 was issued to specify the duties and responsibilities of teachers, assistant principals, principals and all other above-school-level administrators and bureaucrats. According to this Decision, the principal, among other things, is responsible for the coordination of the school life, must follow all laws, Ministerial Decisions, Presidential Decrees, and bureaucratic decisions, and is supposed to ensure that the Teacher Assembly is able to democratically make and carry out decisions and that all the teachers, as
individuals, act according to the law. He has the responsibility to maintain a positive and productive environment in the school and to create a climate conducive to the democratic behavior of both, teachers and students. In cooperation with his teachers, the principal is also responsible for disciplining the students. In cases where teachers are absent, he has to rework the schedule so that students do not have free periods. He is also expected to cooperate with students in the organization of the school life.

Regarding teachers’ duties, I will focus predominantly on those connected with student behavior. Teachers as individuals have to (a) follow all laws and regulations; (b) cooperate with parents and inform them about students’ absences, behavior, and academic progress; (c) stay informed about their students’ home and social life in order to make the appropriate pedagogic decisions; (d) arrive at school before the students and ensure their lessons’ starting and finishing time; (e) cooperate with the principal, parents, and counselors to ensure the best possible pedagogic solutions for disciplinary issues that arise; (f) refrain from suspending students from their classes without having a serious reason. If this does happen they must follow the regulations (inform the principal and write it in the disciplinary book); (g) undertake responsibility for patrolling the hallways; (h) be responsible for their students’ well being in the class; (i) inform the principal with enough advance notice, if they plan to be absent, so he can rework the schedule; (j) stand it for educators who are absent and either cover or give work to the class according to the principal’s suggestions; and (k) register all student absences.

According to this Ministerial Decision, the Teacher Assembly (T.A.) is a collective body that has responsibility for formulating educational policy for the school, but always inside the parameters of the state law. It is mandatory for all educators, regardless of their work in relation to the school, to participate in all T.A. meetings. All T.A. decisions have to be in accordance
with all educational laws and regulations, are binding for all members of the school community, and the principal needs to ensure their enforcement. The T.A. must set goals for their students, organize and evaluate the results of their work, and take appropriate steps in cases where they notice low academic performance or students dropping out of school.

Information specifically related to student discipline can be found in the Presidential Decree Π.Δ.104 that was issued in 1979. It delineates all bureaucratic matters that the schools are supposed to deal with (official records the schools are required to keep, what information should be included and how this should be recorded, student registration, the organization of students in classes, student transfers, student attendance, and so on). One of these matters is student discipline. The Π.Δ.104 sets forth the kinds of punishments that are allowed by the law and who should take responsibility for their implementation, but it does not refer to specific behaviors and the corresponding punishment. In 1983 and in 1986 other Presidential Decrees (Π.Δ.485/83 and Π.Δ.157/86 respectively) were issued to advise on the number of absences (one absence is equal to missing one teaching period) that the students were allowed to have per year, but no changes were made regarding discipline and punishments. The Greek Ministry of Education heavily regulates the issue of student attendance; students are allowed 64 absences per year (approximately 10 days) without a valid reason. If they have medical excuse, this number can rise to 114 (about 20 days). If the student reaches 164 without providing medical documentation, his attendance is characterized by the T.A. as insufficient and he/she has to repeat the year. As we saw in the section punishments and additional supports (see p. 199), almost 80% of the punishments are hourly suspensions from classes by the teachers. It seems that the teachers use attendance as a deterrent to discipline the students.
In 2006, after many complaints, because students and teachers had been recorded in school and published on YouTube to be ridiculed, the Minister of Education issued a decision to ban cell phones from schools. Both students and teachers were not supposed to have their cell phones turned on in school, and violation of this decision would be subject to discipline. This gave schools the opportunity to include a “no cell phones allowed in school” rule in their internal regulations.

In general, as the principal clearly explained, the legal framework upon which today’s schools are supposed to address issues such as educational neglect, child abuse, or even smoking, was not drawn up taking into account the schools’ reality; there is no educational law about many issues and the administrators’ and teachers’ hands are tied. Also there are cases where a law exists, but the unions repudiate it and, as a result, the principals rarely follow these laws because they do not want to get into conflict with the unions:

For example, the legal act that exists, but doesn’t get enforced, the one that refers to the occupation of schools by students and talks about intervention of the public prosecutor, finds all the trade-union bodies in disagreement. That’s why the principals don’t enforce it. But even if you try to enforce it, the law says that you have to have something, an incident, either an accident or a rape, in order for the public prosecutor to intervene. Otherwise he doesn’t. Therefore you have a big… Even smoking, as I told you, doesn’t constitute a pedagogic infraction. We have a huge void in the institutional/legal framework that leaves us exposed (Principal I, 2009)

**School policy**

Since the State only gives general guidelines and all direct responsibility is transferred to local schools, it is useful to see what disciplinary policies and procedures the teachers at my Greek research site put in place. At the beginning of the 2008-2009 academic year, a very dynamic woman undertook the role of the principal and came with a plan to “shape up” the school discipline-wise. The first day that I went to see her and secure approval to conduct my research in the school, I got an insight as to what she was up against. The bell had rung, and
some students were still loitering in the hallways, a few were smoking, others using their cell phones. Being 10 minutes late to class seemed to be business as usual. The walls were full of graffiti such as, “Maria + George = Love,” “Alex was here,” “I love you,” or obscene messages such as, “Screw the Principal,” or rhymes, “Pay attention to the stash so you don’t ruin the hash.”

One of the employees who guards the building saw me looking at the graffiti and described how school life was like the previous year:

This is nothing! Last year the students were setting fires all over the building, breaking the water pipes, and throwing heavy objects from the balcony to the cars that were passing in the street. It seemed like an endless student revolution against the school. At the end of each day our boss was saying, “Thank God! We survived one more day in hell.” (School guard, 2009)

That is what the principal came in determined to “shape up”. She expressed her philosophy to me very clearly:

First of all a school has to establish its rules, which must be accepted by the entire faculty, which means voting for an Internal Regulation at the beginning of each school year, because new teachers are coming in who may disagree with some rules or have something new to suggest. However, from the moment it passes, and it has to be unanimous (I try to make it unanimous, so it is accepted and enforced by everyone, not that if it passes with a majority vote it means less), all have to enforce it. … My philosophy is this: First, the school disciplines itself, then, comes a love for what is going on in school, you trust the school, and finally comes the knowledge. Knowledge in an undisciplined school will never come. (Principal I, 2009)

She put the following issues for discussion in the Teacher Assembly:

1. Absenteeism / Cutting / Many students in the hallway / Days of attendance
2. Cell phones / Taking videos with them
3. Smoking
4. Sufficient informing of the student population regarding the Internal Regulation
5. Use of illegal substances
6. The conditions of re-registration for students who were very undisciplined in the previous year

7. Student academic performance. It is very low and something has to be done.

She passed an *Internal Regulation* that addressed all of the above concerns, gated the schoolyard to keep out intruders, and started an SMS system of communication with parents in order to better address students’ absenteeism and cutting.

The new controls surprised the students. They translated it as an effort orchestrated by the principal to exert unnecessary authority over them. One said:

> What is she trying to accomplish? *(Talking about the principal who had intensified the security measures.)* We need some air to breathe in here *(meaning some freedom of movement)*. If she continues like that she is going to find all of us against her. We support some control, but she cannot control everything. I know there are some students who overdo it. O.K.! Go get them if you are soooo good! *(Informal discussion with a student)*

**Teacher Assembly dynamics.**

The Teacher Assembly is an extremely interesting administrative process with regard to student discipline in Greek schools. I studied all the minutes for three years of assemblies and the teachers kindly allowed me to observe two assemblies, for which they had disciplinary matters on the agenda. The most discussed issues in relation to student discipline were:

1. **The teachers patrolling the hallways.** During the three years of minutes I studied, four different principals had served at the school. All, at different points, stressed the importance of patrolling the hallways and the yards. The teachers have to fulfil this duty, be on time, and leave after the students. The principals reminded the teachers of the circular Γ1/776/28-9-2000, which specifies duties and responsibilities during hallway supervision.

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38 This principal turnover was most likely due to the fact that the regular principal was given assignments in the Ministry of Education and replacements were taking her place.
(2) **Teachers’ attendance and punctuality.** The principals reminded the teachers that effective management of student behavior requires them to start classes on time and to only be absent if completely unavoidable. In the Greek educational system there is no provision for covering teachers. If somebody is absent, the principal may send teachers who have free periods to cover his classes (which is very unpopular among the teachers and some principals do not enforce it). However, if many teachers are absent, it is impossible to cover all classes. The students end up hanging out in the yard(s) and sometimes create disciplinary problems, or disturb the classes that are in session.

(3) **Consistency regarding law and rule enforcement.** Teachers and administrators alike complained about the lack of consistency and fair enforcement of the rules. Some undisciplined students manage to avoid punishment. Other students rarely attend classes, but have few absences. This implies that some teachers do not enforce the rules and do not perform their legal duty to register absences. Of course, students take advantage of this. Some teachers stressed that the Assembly itself does not enforce its own decisions. For example, they had decided to lower the conduct of some students, but at the end of the year did not enforce it.

(4) **Excessive suspension of students from classes.** The principals stressed that some teachers over-suspend students from their classes. The law gives the educators the right to remove students, but the need to over-enforce this law shows “the teacher’s personal defeat.” The teacher has failed to develop an effective way to stimulate the students and keep them in the class. He has also failed to find a way to exercise moral authority over his students.

(5) **Student responsibility and role in protecting the building and monitoring their own behavior.** The students, through their government and Class Councils, must assume responsibility for protecting their classrooms and pay all expenses if damages occur. That is why there is a
provision for “epimelites,” students who remain in their classrooms between periods (when the rest of the students are instructed to be outside) to keep an eye on school and student property. Also, if there are disciplinary issues in a given class the students have to hold a class meeting, discuss their behavior, and find solutions.

(6) The Assembly’s role and responsibilities in ensuring the secure operation of the school. The teachers discuss and decide on the Internal Regulations with regard to student behavior. There were serious incidents, such as students setting fires in the building, or throwing computers and chairs out of the window. On one occasion a chair had landed on a passing car and it was fortunate that the driver did not have a heart attack. These events called for a stricter enforcement of the rules. Many teachers blamed the Assembly for indifference. Many of the disciplinary issues that the school has, the teachers explained, are due to their own behavior as a whole and their failure to act. The principal of that meeting agreed, but said that they need to be proactive and not to blame each other.

(7) Debating the disciplinary approach that would be most effective for the school. Throughout the minutes of the Assembly meetings, from the beginning of 2006-2007 to the end of the 2008-2009 school year, a struggle among the administration, those members favoring more discipline, and those favoring less, the most discipline oriented, and the less discipline oriented members of the Assembly (with the aim of finding a compromise, consensus on action, and developing a common ground to negotiate policies that would better serve the school and its students) can be easily detected. From the beginning of the 2006-2007 school year the teachers, recognizing that the school had a crisis in terms of student behavior, discussed their own approaches, and agreed to introduce new methods in the hope of achieving better results. Some of the ideas they put forward were: to make the rules and their enforcement stricter; to approach the difficult students
individually and/or through their classmates; to “bombard the students with culture;” to adapt the curriculum to better match student ability; and to become more vigilant with regard to cases of bullying, which has a devastating impact on particular students. Later the same year, when the students set fires in the building, putting the lives of everyone in danger, the Assembly concentrated its discussions on the stricter enforcement of the rules. Teachers were blaming other teachers for not doing their work, the principal was calling for better coordination and responsible behavior, and the students decided to protest by occupying the school and not allowing classes to take place. This fueled another round of discussions about the lack of effectiveness on the part of the Assembly. After negotiations with the students, the issue was resolved, and the students themselves requested rules. The principal reminded the teachers of the importance of their responsibilities as professionals, but some teachers pointed out that the Assembly breaks its own rules, is inconsistent, and that the principal fails to enforce adequate measures to uphold decisions. Therefore, it was not surprising that the problems remained unsolved.

At the end of the 2007-2008 school year, the principal who was in post during my research year assumed her responsibilities. She came with an agenda, called the teachers to vote for an Internal Regulation for student behavior, demanded that all rules be enforced, and promised that students brought to her for punishment would be punished. When things began to work as planned in the Assembly and students violating the Internal Regulation were punished, some teachers started complaining. One teacher said, “The Assembly has started acting as an interrogating body and punishing the students. This is not in accordance with our pedagogical responsibilities.” The principal accepted the criticism, and asked the teachers to find a solution. Another problem was that, due to high levels of absenteeism among teachers, many students
were loitering in the hallways creating a disturbance, which affected the classes in session. She also brought to the Assembly’s attention the fact that many teachers do not enforce the *Internal Regulation* and, even worse, they do not perform their educational duties as they should. Student behavior is contingent on all these factors.

**Main points on the legal framework**

The answer to the third research question, *what regulations, rules, and practices are supposed to be in place for student discipline* is not all-inclusive. I focused on the most important laws and regulations, those that shape the everyday practices in schools and give the Greek educational system the character it has. Student discipline is very much affected by Π.Δ.104/1979, Π.Δ.485/83, Π.Δ.157/86, which regulate the disciplinary process and student attendance, Φ.353.1./324/105657/Δ1 that delineates the duties of all educators and bureaucrats involved in the disciplinary processes, and Ν 1566/1985 that constitutes the legal framework for the Greek educational system. The TA and the principal, who presides over the TA, set each school’s internal disciplinary policy according to the State Law. The Law sets the general parameters within which schools are able to act; it is not all-inclusive, is not specific regarding behaviors and disciplinary responses, and its accountable enforcement is left to the willingness of the “dutiful public employees.” Educational Law is generally not very well developed. Schools are not given any rights to intervene in the lives of their students beyond the school.

**Policy enforcement**

Laws, Ministerial Decisions, Circulars, and Decrees stress the need for all teachers and administrators to act lawfully. However, the law is written as if following the law is voluntary. The Ministerial Decision Φ.353.1./324/105657/Δ1 of 2002, which delineates the duties of all educators, repeatedly stresses the need that all educators act within the law. Yet in almost every
TA meeting where student discipline is discussed the principals and teachers themselves plead for rule enforcement. There is not provision for direct consequences in case where teachers or administrators do not act within the law.

**Knowledge of rules by school personnel.** In the minds of the Greek teachers, the rules regulating student discipline are those in the *Internal Regulation*, which all interviewees know because they voted for them, and the provisions of Π.Δ.104/1979, which, among other educational concerns, addresses issues of attendance and the punishment of students. Being responsible for student attendance, teachers follow this Presidential Decree almost mechanically because they have discussed it so many times in the TAs; few had read the actual law. However, as the principal mentioned, the Greek legal system is “Aiolo” (meaning too convoluted) and the teachers do not actually know how to handle issues beyond everyday occurrences, or formulate “fresh” (meaning innovative) school policy in accordance with the law. In an informal discussion we had after a T.A. meeting that I observed she said:

Did you hear what Mr. Makris suggested? Clearly against the law! I wanted you to see that. Most of them have no clue. They never open up a book, or check the Internet to read the laws. Everything is spelled out by the lawmakers, but we, the law followers, have to do our homework as well. (Principal I, 2009)

**Persistence in enforcing the rules.** Regarding the school rules, both the principal and the assistant principal said that they are not enforced. “From what I see, the *Internal Regulation* isn’t always enforced by everyone, not even by me,” (R.A., 2009) stressed the assistant principal, while the principal said:

No! No, no! A very high percentage of teachers don’t follow the rules. They voted for this *Internal Regulation*. They desire the school to be disciplined, but when it comes to their own effort in their classroom, to translate in to action what was agreed within their microcosm, there, the whole discipline enterprise falls apart. It falls apart for many reasons. (Principal I, 2009)
This becomes apparent in the minutes of the TA meetings where, repeatedly, the principal reminds the teachers to follow the rules that everyone voted for. Also, the teachers themselves, during the interviews, acknowledged the fact that they do not really enforce the school rules, even though they are supposed to. 20 out of 26 teachers (77%) said that they don’t address all misbehavior that they see. If they can continue their lesson or if the infraction is “slight” they most probably let it go. Some disagree with constantly correcting behaviors, because they feel like policemen. The teachers are pedagogues; they need to discuss student behavior and punish only if necessary:

Not always! No! I told you… many times I think that I did not come here to play the role of the policeman and give punishments to the students. O.K.? I see it clearly from a humanistic and educational perspective. And I am the one who takes a step back exactly because I have to deal with children. These are children! If I had to deal with people my age I would be more aggressive. But with children, I put myself in their position, I try to find where their sensitivity lies and take advantage of it. (F.I., 2009)

Some mentioned that particularly incidents that they encounter in the hallways, usually smoking or cell phone use, they pretend not to see it because they disagree with the harsh punishment the students would receive if taken to the principal. Three teachers (11.5%), who said that they always address infractions that they see, explained that often they do not always deal with the problematic behavior immediately because they do not want to interrupt their lesson, but that they would attend to it later. The three teachers who answered, “Most times” have been categorized as replying “No.” By answering “Most times,” they wanted to stress their effort to follow the rules, which “… is impossible, if you think about it! You can’t follow all the rules all the time. There is always something to adjust. You pick and choose based on the effect the behavior has.” (X. Y., 2009)
Following official policies. In discussing policy enforcement with the teachers, I found that the overwhelming majority (88.5%), without any hesitation, insisted that rules and policies are not supposed to be fully followed because they are not up-to-date (the reality of life is always ahead of the legal system) and are not designed to address every situation:

I believe that the rules are to be violated especially in a school like this that is arteriosclerotic (meaning it follows rules and procedures that don’t reflect the needs of today’s students and of the society in general). Because some jerks set some things some time ago… O.K. and so what? Does it work for us? I told you again! If we are not uptight about it, if we set these policies just to exist, we talk about them so that they simply can exist, without… Yes, I accept it! But… (X.Y. 2009)

Teachers justified their position saying, “I will do what I feel is right for the situation” (A.T., 2009), “We are not the court, we are educators. We (she was co-teaching) will evaluate the specific conditions” (O.I., 2009), or “I follow the rules and procedures when they coincide with
my views” (K. A. 2009). Only three teachers (11.5%) said, “Most times,” but as mentioned previously, in this context *most times* is closer to *no* because it does not mean *always*.

It is interesting that in Greece no one answered, “Yes.” Even though the school’s *Internal Regulation* is only one and a half page long, it is still not enforced. Teachers are mandated by state laws, which are the policies of every school, to supervise the hallways, to begin lessons on time, not to leave their students before the bell, and so on. I found that most teachers violate all of the above. A teacher had an interesting comment:

I am under the impression that there are two kinds of rules: rules in quotation marks, the ones that come down from the Ministry of Education, and express the society in general, and the ones that every administration puts in place due to its own culture. O.K. Now, each teacher has the final say; he will decide where he can cut corners, which rules need to be followed without deviation, and which rules he is going to reject altogether. It is not standardized. There are situations where a rule, which I do not agree with, may pass in the TA. In these cases, I am formally obliged to follow them, but in reality… I adapt them. (K.R., 2009)

Other duties of the principal include rearranging the program if teachers are absent, ensuring that students are not dismissed early, or allowed to stay out of class. These requirements were also heavily violated.

**Formality of procedures in disciplining the students**

Based on previous findings we would not expect procedures to be formal in Greece. Teachers accepted that they pick and choose with regard to rule enforcement. During my observations I witnessed the rules that the school mostly concentrates on, smoking, cell-use, and lateness /attendance being heavily violated; the failure of the teachers to correct these behaviors, and the attempts by administrators to formally request in TA meetings that teachers follow the rules and procedures and bring students to the office for punishment. In order to understand this aversion to abiding by the rules and being formal, I asked the teachers to explain a) under which conditions they would send students to the principal; b) how they were handling common
disciplinary infractions; and c) how they would handle difficult cases. The Presidential Decree 104/79, which regulates student discipline, does not specify when an infraction is supposed to be sent to the principal, or brought to the TA. It only says that if the teacher considers the infraction to be serious and wants the student to be suspended from all his classes for one to three days then the incident has to go to the principal. If the teacher, or the principal believe that the infraction deserves more than three days of suspension, then it is referred to the TA. The law does not separate infractions based on the degree of severity, whereby an incident, which can be classified within a particular category of infractions warrants, let’s say, two or more days of suspension and therefore, must go to the principal regardless of what the teacher believes. It depends entirely on the teacher.

Conditions under which teachers send students to the principal, or criteria for punishment. When I asked the teachers to explain the conditions under which they would send a student to the principal instead of handling the incident themselves, most teachers understood the question as being which infractions would they punish with a suspension from all classes (not only from theirs, because according to the Decree 104/79 these are the infractions that are serious enough to warrant being dealt with by the principal. Since the law does not specify categories for the teachers, the teachers have to set their own criteria.)

In general, the Greek teachers have four main groups of infractions that they prefer to refer: a) serious incidents (69%); b) incidents that the teacher feels lie beyond the remit of his responsibility, or thinks another party is needed (30%); c) incidents showing that the student has a bad character (8%); and d) when the teacher feels that their professionalism may be called into question (4%). Overwhelmingly, the teachers stress seriousness and given that the decision is
their students, only if they personally believe that smoking, or any other undisciplined behavior, is serious, do they choose to punish it and follow the official school policy.

A sizeable minority, however, said that they never, or almost never send students to the principal. When they do, it is only after they have exhausted all other possibilities. By this, the teachers mean discuss the problem/work with the student, talk to other colleagues, look at themselves as a potential source of the problem, work with the class, change their pedagogical approach, develop a closer relationship with the student, or help the student academically by tutoring. These teachers either do not punish the students, or alternatively, prefer to suspend them from their class only rather than expose themselves as professionals.

Regarding referral to the Teacher Assembly, 11 teachers (42%) said that they would never refer a student to the TA:

The Teacher Assembly is ineffective and the principal is ineffective as well. I am in the class; I know what happened. The principal will give a punishment; I can punish him as well. The TA will disparage him. I don’t want to disparage him. If I was his age I might have done the same. I understand that he is 17 years old. I tell the students, “I know you are 17 years old and you can’t sit down and read.” That’s how I was behaving. Send them to the TA? Send … myself to the T.A.? That’s how I was behaving. But in the end I made it. Not because I was punished, but because some people, some good teachers took me aside and told me, “You have to do this, and this, and you have to go there.” And this is what I do now; I talk to the students. (K.U., 2009)

Ten teachers, (38%), said that criminal behaviors need to be referred to the Assembly. The teachers defined as criminal transgressions that are not pedagogical in character and that are also illegal in society such as theft, physical attacks, or the possession of weapons. In these cases some teachers explain that if the perpetrators were not students the police would get involved.

As I mentioned before, the teachers, by referring a student to the principal or the Assembly, make an inherent decision about the punishment that the infraction at hand deserves. 34% of the teachers would never send any student to be suspended from one to three days and
42% would never send a student to the Assembly to be suspended for four or five days. There is no classification of infractions that warrants a particular punishment regardless of the teachers’ beliefs about what might be appropriate. The principal indirectly expressed a preference for the teachers to not refer students to her, but to deal with the infractions themselves. She said:

They don’t want to be the bad guy. Not at all! They don’t enter into this process, but when things reach a point where they don’t know what to do, then, they look for somebody above them, somebody who is going to save them and they run to the principal when they shouldn’t. My position is this: problems should be solved at the level where they were created. When you refer them to a higher level you made them more difficult to solve and you show your personal weakness.
(Principal I, 2009)

**Disciplinary procedures.** Of course, teachers do handle undisciplined students every day in their classrooms, and I asked them to describe the process they prefer to follow.

Decree104/79 clearly states that educators have to follow a particular procedure: *remark, admonishment, hourly suspension, suspension (one, two, three, four, and five days), and change of school environment*. Half of them do not follow procedures and reported a personal style, for example: raising their voice, making the students fear them, being very strict from the start, being lenient to those who cooperate, agreeing on a contract, addressing the whole class, and so on. Eight teachers (30%) said that they just follow procedures while five (20%) prefer to follow a counseling style: talking to the students and trying to make them understand why the behavior is wrong rather than punishing them.

In short, the majority of teachers do not choose to be formal. Most of them go up to the level of admonishment, they prefer not to punish the students, and manage their classes with techniques they find effective. A few teachers stressed that if it is an infraction that takes place in the hallway, they do not have any choice but to send the student(s) to the principal because “they
are exposed as professionals”. Only 30% said, without any reservations, that they prefer to be formal in following school’s practices.

Regarding difficult cases, (the teachers generally categorize these as psychologically unfit students, indiscipline that is a manifestation of problems outside the school, and violent and drug related incidents) the majority of the teachers (70%) said that they just keep trying to do their best for the student, hoping eventually to have some results. Some (30%) stressed the need to have psychologists and social workers in school. Since teachers do not have specialized knowledge or the resources for successful family outreach, they end up doing nothing. The teachers tend to fall into two categories, those who keep trying to support and direct their students, no matter how difficult the case, by utilizing any means known to them, and those who do not get involved because they feel inadequate.

This finding reflects the inadequacies of that the Greek educational system with regard to support and alternative interventions. There is nothing in the law other than punishment. The teachers know that for certain infractions punishment is not effective, and that’s why they choose to ignore or bend the disciplinary rules. Even though the undisciplined students disturb their classes, the teachers refrain from punishment and become trapped into an endless cycle of talking to the students, trying to reach the families, bringing the issue to the Assembly, involving the students’ classmates, calling for meetings, or giving them hourly suspensions in order to be able to teach for the period. However, by the end, despite the interventions, their efforts are in vain and the feeling of failure is diffused among the whole educational community.

The TAs’ discussions regarding student discipline were marked by three elements that were of particular interest to me (and also because of the automatic comparison with procedures I knew from the American school). First, the undisciplined student had to present his side of the
story in front of the teachers, who were able to ask a variety of questions. This resembled a court, not a comfortable position for a student to be in. Second, the teachers would very carefully discuss the context of the student’s behavior (nature of the action, incentive, home/personal/situation and psychological state of being, previous behavior, student ability and character, legal ramifications, possible effects of punishment) before deciding on the punishment. Third, the teachers would spend a lot of time debating over whether four or five days of suspension, or a change of school environment was more appropriate. Suspending for so long was viewed as a very serious decision. For example, the student who pulled a knife was not treated as a criminal despite him having committed a criminal act. The teachers took into account the fact that the student was being harassed by other students who literally “put the knife in his hands” and they referred him to a psychologist. After the student’s mother failed to prove that she had indeed taken her son to the psychologist, and because the student was isolated, the TA decided to give him a change of school environment. Not to punish, but rather to protect him.

**Discrepancies between policy, procedures, and practices**

The attitude that the rules are there to be violated and a deep belief that bureaucracy and formality are not the best recipes for education were entrenched in the Greek school:

The teachers I remember are those who had... who were putting their personality above the laws and regulations... And this is what we like in all people, to see them putting their personality, their feelings, above... to be sentimental rather than...how to say it...rather than to be followers...OK? I follow the law. What does the law say? It says that! That is what I do! And we come into direct conflict with bureaucracy: “I cannot do anything for you because the law... But I am right...Well, the law... No! I don’t want to refuse service because of the law. I want to see people use their sentiments and logic. And this is what I think I should do as a teacher. (S.D., 2009)

The teachers, even though they participate in voting for an Internal Regulation, greatly exercise their discretion. Everyone, directly or indirectly, when they were asked if they follow policies
referred to disagreements regarding the policing of all student behavior and with severe punishments.

Administration of punishment. According to the law all teachers have to implement the TA decisions. The TA had voted that students who exhibit punishable transgressive behaviors have to be referred to the principal for punishment. The teachers, despite their complaining about the students not being disciplined, did not want them to be punished because they were smoking, or talking on the phone. They wanted the school to better control the students, but accused the principal of making the school resemble a court rather than a pedagogical institution. It seemed that the teachers felt that punishing students with suspensions was too severe and that their role as educators was being compromised. In short, they decided to go against their own (the TA’s) decisions and refrain from punishing the students.

Referring students to the principal for punishment is a very sensitive issue. The Greek teachers are caught in an institutional contradiction according to which in the eyes of the law a teacher must act as a pedagogue, and his ability to successfully discipline the students without resorting to harsh punishments is an indicator of his pedagogic competence. The more a teacher sends students to the principal, the more they are seen as ineffective pedagogues. In 2002, the Ministry of Education circulated some guidelines under the title, “Basic Principles of the Operation of Schools,” in which it was stated that one of the things showing the pedagogic capacity of teachers is, “How often they ask the principal to resolve issues that were created in their classrooms and which they could have resolved themselves” (YPEPTH, 2002). The principal herself in a TA meeting suggested that handling issues in the classroom shows the ability of a teacher as a pedagogue. The teachers believe that this is actually true, but at the same time do not have pedagogical training to successfully do so, and become tired with the incessant
correcting of behaviors. The fact that the overwhelming majority of teachers expressed a belief that disciplining the students is part of their job as pedagogues is a consequence of them being products of a culture that connects discipline and pedagogy. However, these same teachers, at different points of the interviews, contradicted themselves saying that they would prefer not to have responsibility for discipline, because they feel this is an extra burden, and requires knowledge that they do not have. In spite of their real feelings, they still refrain from referring incidents to the principal to be punished, in order to prove that they are, indeed, “good” pedagogues.

**Differentiation.** In Greece, discrepancies between policy and practice in the area of differentiation do not exist because there is no differentiation in general, and there isn’t even provision in the law for it. All teachers viewed the possibility of extra support for disciplining students negatively and with suspicion, for reasons I have outlined in previous sections. Only a few expressed a need for specialists.

Regarding psychologists or social workers, again, there is nothing in the educational law to say that schools need to provide support to students and have school psychologists on staff. The teachers are urged by the law Φ.353.1./324/105657/Δ1 to get to know their students’ home and family scenarios so they can make allowances if necessary. According to the statistics provided by ΚΕΔΔΥ,39 240,000 students have learning disabilities, 190,000 of which develop mild or serious psychological conditions. The general education teachers do not have the training to effectively educate these students, there are no psychologists in the schools, and the non-school based treatment system is virtually non existent (Ethnos on line, March 28, 2009).

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39 ΚΕΔΔΥ refers to Diagnostic Centers for learning disabilities and psychological conditions of students.
interview for the newspaper Kathimerini (April 12, 2009), Ms. Evi Mandali, supervisor of the 4th Secondary Educational Office of Pireus, said:

Every year, in the reports we send to the Ministry of Education we ask for school psychologists…. There is no legal framework to allow the supervisors of the educational offices to refer a case to a psychologist; only to the Advisory Youth Centers and always under the supervision of the parent. Without the signature of the parent nothing happens. Even in the case where a transgressive behavior occurs, if the parent does not wish to take his child to a specialist, they will do nothing about it. (Mandali, 2009)

In the same article, it emphasizes that these Advisory Youth Centers are indeed very well staffed with psychologists, social workers, and psychiatrists for children, but the whole country has only 15 of these centers, which is inadequate. Therefore, the only other device in the hands of educators, which may have a positive effect, is the most severe of punishments, change of school environment, but this does little to address the cause of the problem.

With respect to the role of the police and the possibility of them intervening in schools, in Greece there is a very strong belief that educational institutions are not supposed to be policed under any conditions. This is opposed to the democratic sentiments of the Greek people. In 2007, however, the law N 3549 was passed to make possible police interventions, but it was never enforced due the educational community’s disagreement. Having police inside the school in the form of the SSAs of NY seems very foreign to the Greek culture.

*Accountability*

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40 All discussions regarding police interventions stem from the very repressive role that police played during the years of the Military Junta in Greece. The events of November 17, 1974, in the University of Athens Polytechnie School (when military tanks entered the university area and killed students protesting against the Junta) are connected with the University Asylum that became officially protected by law N 1268/1982. According to this law, universities are supposed to be free from any police interventions so that they can cultivate learning, promote the sciences in a democratic environment, and protect the right to learning for all. Being protected under this law, secondary school students started occupying their schools and not allowing classes to take place in order to express their disagreement with governmental policies and decisions (Mantzoutsos, 2010).
According to the law and the TA decisions, teachers need to act in a manner that supports student learning and promotes disciplined behavior. They have to enforce the rules, come to school and go to their classes on time, be responsible for hallway supervision, keep absences to a minimum and if unavoidable, give the principal advance notice if possible, only give hourly suspensions for serious infractions, register all student absences and punishments that they give, and bring all students who have cell phones or who smoke to the principal’s office to be punished (in this list I include only teacher obligations that predominately affect student discipline). However, everywhere, in the TA minutes, teacher interviews, and my own observations, lack of accountability was very openly expressed, or easily observed. Ten interviewees referred to how the actions of their colleagues affect their relationship with the students and their ability to enforce the rules. Both principals described events where staff were indifferent and not doing their job properly. During my observations I noticed many teachers failing to correct student transgressions, skipping duties, being late, and allowing students out of their class for spurious reasons.

The administration, on the other hand, even though they are by law responsible for covering classes whose teachers are absent, and having announced in the TA that they would accommodate all students who were given hourly suspensions in the library, often did not manage to do either. The principal was trying very hard to enforce the law and show the students that there would be consequences, but other than reminding teachers to perform their duties lawfully, failed to correct teacher behavior because of restrictions in the Greek system. She explained, “I am not even allowed to enter a classroom if I don’t have a good reason, such as needing to talk with a student, or something like that. The teachers do whatever they want in their classrooms; the system trusts them.” (The principal, 2009)
**Consistency**

Consistency was something that the principal wanted to enforce, but the teachers were resistant. In her interview she said, “When they bring a student here for smoking I give one day. Everybody knows that, teachers and students. I don’t make it two or three.” The teachers, however, said that for exactly that reason, they didn’t want to take students to her office; it was certain that they would get a punishment. The teachers, of course, were enforcing a different inconsistency: some were attempting to enforce the rules and their students were getting punished, while others were ignoring the rules and their students were not suffering the consequences of having strict policies. The teachers who were trying to abide by the rules complained that their colleagues were not even trying.

**Administration of student discipline in a snapshot**

With the last research question, I addressed issues of *policy implementation, the division of responsibility for disciplining / sanctioning the students, the formality of disciplinary procedures, and discrepancies between policy, institutional procedures, and actual practices.* Findings for the Greek school indicate the following:

- The Greek teachers, due to the democratic processes of administration, know the discipline rules of their school very well.
- The majority of teachers reported that they do not always address infractions that they encounter.
- All teachers said that they do not always follow official policy.
- The majority of the teachers reported that they would only take very serious incidents to the principal for punishment. A sizeable minority said that they would never initiate the process whereby a student could get suspended.
• The majority of teachers lack formality in their approach to managing discipline in their classes; they prefer a more personal, less authoritarian modus operandi. However, some explained that they choose formal disciplinary methods if the infraction takes place in the hallway.

• There is very little support from specialists in Greece. The majority of teachers keep working with the undisciplined students to the best of their ability. Some reported that due to a lack of specialist knowledge they end up doing nothing.

• The Teacher Assembly is a democratic mechanism, which unfortunately, is only given the legal power to heavily punish the students.

• All Greek teachers express a propensity not to follow rules and regulations and there are significant discrepancies between policies and practices. Accountability and consistency suffer greatly.

Summary

The Greek school system does not have any differentiation and that was the reason I chose it for this comparison; teaches are fully responsible for disciplining the students and for supervising all student activities both, inside and outside the classrooms — the school does not employ constant surveillance in the form of police or cameras. The teachers focus their disciplinary efforts primarily in the classroom. As I had anticipated, teachers do have a sense of control of the disciplinary process, which they are not willing to give up. They connect their authority as educators and their professionalism to the process of discipline. Regarding punishment, findings indicate that most suspensions were single class removals and the teachers choose not to refer students for longer suspensions. Four or five-day suspensions are considered to be a very serious punishment.
Noteable is the total lack of supporting services. School-based personnel who are able to offer psychological support to students in need simply do not exist. Also, there is no provision for social services to intervene in cases of neglect or abuse. It seems that, psychological care does is not easily available in the public sector in general, as the existence of only fifteen diagnostic centers to serve the needs of the entire country indicates. Moreover, special education is not adequately provided for: the legal framework is lacking; there are not enough trained special education teachers to support students; and only a small percentage of students are officially classified as being in need of special services.

The Greek case stands out because of the democratic nature of its administrative procedures in general, but also in reference to student discipline. The Teacher Assembly is responsible for formulating school policy, rather than the principal with a cabinet of administrators. All serious disciplinary issues are discussed in the Assembly and teacher actions that induce indiscipline are also discussed. Students are organized as a school community and each class votes for their council. Each class is responsible as a group to take care of their classroom as a physical space and they are required to work with their teachers in order to solve disciplinary issues.

All Greek teachers report that they do not always follow official rules and procedures. They also disagree with most school classifications regarding undisciplined student behaviors. This is surprising given that it is the teachers who vote for rules and policies in the Assembly. Following or not following rules in general is also an institution. According to Tsoukalas (1995), the institution of not following rules has been very powerful in Greek society. This explains why Greek teachers do not automatically equate not following rules with being undisciplined and all
feel comfortable acknowledging in an interview that they do not always follow the rules. Many
of them do not perform their educational duties and lack accountability.

The Greek school administrative bureaucracy could be seen as overwhelming and
controlling, but distant. The Ministry bureaucracy directs all operations, however, the fact that it
is centralized gives local schools the space to control their own everyday affairs and the
impression that they have power. Since there are no mechanisms for the evaluation of teachers’
performance, they have a high level of autonomy in the working day. They formulate school
policy and they decide over their students’ progress without any pressures for data or
accountability.

Finally, the Greek legal system that regulates education deserves special attention. It has
a humanistic spirit that puts at its center the individual and the nation, rather than the markets. It
does not reflect the current climate of accountability, competitiveness, and efficiency at any
level. It gives detailed protocols regarding bureaucratic procedures, regulates all school curricula,
and is very precise regarding the selection and job description of teachers and administrators;
however, it does not regulate everyday practices in great depth. It trusts its teachers and allows
them to make decisions according to their schools’ and students’ needs.
CHAPTER VI

NEW YORK AND GREECE IN COMPARISON

In this chapter I set out to compare the most important findings from the New York and Greek cases. First, I present the few differences that are obvious from the schools’ settings and buildings. Even at first glance, a visitor could make very astute observations regarding each school’s general character and disciplinary approaches. Comparing the disciplinary records of the two schools, however, provides a wealth of interesting facts and figures that need further explanation. To this end I also comparatively present teacher perceptions, the legal frameworks within which each school operates, and the reality of policy implementation for each school. I close this chapter with the educational and disciplinary philosophy of the schools’ principals.

Anatomies in Contrast

Initial Impression

In both schools, students seemed to be very similar in both appearance and behavior. Many tried to convey a sense of their identity, personality and values through the way that they dressed; by wearing a particular type of hat or adopting a distinct hairstyle. Others were very fashion conscious, some demonstrating this by wearing rather revealing clothing. In interacting with each other the students were very much alike, clustering in groups, being noisy and playful. In both settings, school gates were locked until the official opening time, so that students arriving early had to wait outside even in bad weather.

In the NY school lobby I was impressed by the cleanliness of the walls and the neatly placed student artwork on large exhibition boards. However, the presence of SSAs at the entrance, parading with New York Police Department (NYPD) badges and armed with clubs, a radio, a huge summons and log pad, a flashlight, numerous keys, rubber gloves, a gas mask, and
handcuffs (much like the street patrolling police), evoked feelings of uneasiness and misplacement; others may have experienced a sense of security and authority. On a large standing board in the middle of the lobby and on the walls were the building rules and a chart with the times of the beginning and end of each teaching period, which emanated a sense of organization and order. Three paraprofessionals, one dean, and one assistant principal stood in front of the doors supervising the students as they lined up to scan their IDs in order to get inside (evoking images of factory workers ‘clocking in’). By contrast, in Greece, I was shocked by the bareness of the lobby and the walls full of graffiti. This did not meet any expectations for a school; it was unkempt and unattractive (even though some of the children’s graffiti messages on the walls were very inspiring). However, the atmosphere was very relaxed; there was no front line security, and the students had no ID to scan. They simply entered the building in a leisurely manner.

In walking around the building stark difference could be discerned between the two schools. In both settings many students were not in class, but in NY the hallways were constantly patrolled and students had to always be vigilant for SSAs or deans whose job was to get them out of the hallways, preferably to their classes. In Greece, no one was patrolling the hallways during teaching periods. Students were able to socialize (mostly in the yards) without interruption, and relax, drinking coffee, smoking, and chatting.

The Disciplinary Facts

My first research question pertained to the patterns, magnitude, and severity of student transgressions in the two research settings. Counting the recorded infractions indicated that there are 3 times more disciplinary infractions per student per year in New York than in Athens (presented in chart 6.1 as ratio 1.8 / 0.6). In Greece almost all infractions took place inside the
classroom, while in New York more than half of the disciplinary encounters occurred outside the classrooms, mostly in the hallways. The distribution of the infractions per level of severity is about the same for each category with the exception of Levels 1 and 3 (in Greece there are 20% more Level 1 infractions and in New York there are 20% more Level 3 infractions).

There are significant differences with regard to punishment. In New York almost one third of the infractions that were referred to the deans did not result in any punishment and another third resulted in a conference of the dean with the student. In Greece, the categories of *No punishment* and *Conference with the student* together comprised 5% of the infractions.

Hourly suspension by the teacher was frequently used in Greece (80% of the cases), but was never practiced in New York. The percentage of suspensions in the New York school was a little higher than in the Greek school (but only by 5%), but the suspensions were lengthier. Most suspensions were for three to five days long in NY, whereas in Greece the majority were only for a day. Differences and similarities are highlighted in charts 6.1 and 6.2 below.
The infractions that took place inside the classrooms were of a similar nature in both schools while those that took place outside, although similar had some stark differences. The most controversial out-of-class analytical category is that of attendance and punctuality, which comprised half of the cases in NY and was non-existent in Greece. Also of note are the categories smoking/setting fires, which accounted for almost 20% of the cases in Greece, but was
non-existent in NY, and *having or using forbidden items* such as cell phones and hats, which reached 30% in Greece and only 4% in NY (See chart 6.3 below).

**Inside the class:**
1) Disruptive and insubordinate behavior
2) Verbally abusive and disrespectful behavior
3) Physically aggressive and dangerous behavior
4) Students not doing their work
5) Attendance related incidents
6) Students having forbidden items (electronics, hats)

**Outside the class:**
8) Attendance (cutting, intruding)
9) Having forbidden items
10) Smoking or setting fires
11) Disruptive and insubordinate behavior
12) Verbally abusive and disrespectful behavior
13) Physically aggressive and dangerous behavior
Almost half of the teachers in NY reported that infractions related to attendance and punctuality, behaviors that violate the building requirements (wearing a hat or having a cell phone), and mildly disturbing behaviors (making noises, throwing paper, or talking in class) occur very often. About the same percentages also said that they consider these infractions not to be serious. In Greece, about 83% of the teachers reported that mildly disturbing behaviors are very common while all other categories were mentioned by less than 30% of the teachers. Only one teacher reported attendance related issues as being prevalent. Comparison of interviews and observations with disciplinary records revealed that these categories are underreported in NY and under punished in Greece.

During my observations I also recorded many infractions involving the wearing of a hat, using electronic devices, cutting classes, being late, and smoking (only in Greece), but the authorities disciplined only a relatively tiny percentage of these behaviors. Indicatively, for NY the ratios of insubordination, having/using an electronic device, wearing a hat, and cutting that were addressed compared with those that remained unaddressed for a year, and expressed as a ration, are: 1/5; 1/272; 1/765; and 1/51 respectively. In Greece the ratios of the same first three categories in the same order are: 1/540; 0/3,105; and 0/11,160. The category of cutting could not be measured in Greece, but the category of smoking had the ratio (recorded vs. observed for a year) 1/6,480. The school authorities had the capacity or willingness to deal only with a tiny fraction of the actual indiscipline. In NY, the fact that there were always disciplinarians in the hallways makes the ratio of unaddressed behaviors smaller; however, given the lack of surveillance in Greece, figures such as 1/6,479 show that in the course of a year, for every 6,480 students who were smoking, the authorities disciplined only one. The other 6,480 students did not have to suffer any penalty.
Teacher Perceptions

The second research question, *what are school officials’ perceptions or definitions of student transgression in schools of similar students, but with different institutional forms and procedural norms*, were proposed to illuminate and explain disciplinary statistics. The teachers had similar impressions about some parts of the disciplinary process and their role as disciplinarians, but differed significantly on certain aspects. Their opinions and practices will be discussed and explained. Their perceptions are filtered, I argue, by the institution and its administration and become, in turn, the bases for classifying student behavior.

**Similarities.** Overall, teachers had similar impressions regarding the extent of indiscipline in their schools: more than half of teachers thought that the number of students breaking rules was very high. Very few teachers said that students commit serious infractions (Level 3 and up), and about half suggested that a good number of students in their classes would benefit from the intervention of a specialist (psychologist, counselor, or social worker). The other half said that only a few cases would justify such an intervention. The New York and Athens teachers also think similarly about which problems warrant specialist intervention.

Teachers also had corresponding beliefs regarding the adequacy of the rules. Even though the two schools have different systems of regulation (NY’s is very lengthy and decided at a city level, whereas that of Greece is very short and developed at an individual school level), it is notable that the teachers who believed the rules to be *too many* (about one fifth of the teachers), *just right* (half of them), or *inadequate* (about one fourth) were much the same. Almost identical as well were the teachers’ beliefs regarding the effectiveness of punishment. The majority believed that punishment, as currently used by their school, is not effective, while one forth of the teachers suggested that it is effective, but not necessarily for the students who get punished.
The only category that the teachers in both schools reported equally (about half of the interviewees) as being undisciplined is “Not responding well to authorities.” This was also expressed in the strong (90% in NY and 93% in Greece) agreement with official school policy to classify the behavior of a student leaving class without permission as undisciplined (see also charts 6.4 and 6.5 below).

Areas of difference. Substantial differences were found in the areas of a) classifications (who the interviewees classify as undisciplined and how much they are in agreement with their school’s classifications) and b) functional differentiation in disciplining the students.

Even though in NY many interviewees said that they personally consider poor punctuality and attendance and breaking school rules in general as undisciplined only one person did so in Greece. Moreover, the majority of American teachers expressed agreement with their school’s classification of cutting and coming late under the undisciplined category, and the majority of Greeks disagreed with such categorization. The only category that the Greeks teachers showed more concern about compared with their NY counterparts was “Inappropriate physical aggression.” The official school’s classification of having or using a cell phone as undisciplined behavior found the majority of interviewees in both school settings in agreement (although not equally strong). For the category of wearing a hat, the percentage difference between the Greek and NY teachers who classify wearing a hat under the not undisciplined category is very high (only about half of the NY teachers compared with almost all of their Greek counterparts).
With regard to functional differentiation, all Greek teachers were adamant: the responsibility for disciplining and punishing students is and has to remain in their hands. Some teachers added that psychologists and social workers are necessary partners in this process and a small percentage said that for serious infractions, the teacher would probably need to involve the principal in punishing the student. Findings were not so unanimous in NY. Even though there is already high functional differentiation, the majority of the interviewees expressed a preference for responsibility to be further dispersed and that all parties, teachers, deans, and administrators need to become more involved. When it comes to punishment, however, deans and teachers answered differently. The overwhelming majority of New York deans, like the Greek teachers, suggested that currently, only they punish and it is advisable that they remain responsible for punishing the students. Nearly all New York teachers did not see themselves as currently having the authority to punish students, but a little less than half of them expressed a desire to have such authority. Some thought that they should manage punishment in cooperation with the administrators and about one third of teachers preferred responsibility for punishing the students to rest with the administrators (27%) and the parents (9%).

NY teachers and deans were very skeptical about the support that they could expect from psychologists, social workers, and counselors. Only 35% said that they receive help from specialists and the remainder gave examples of bureaucratic requirements and chain of command protocols, indicating how formidable the process of requesting specialist help is and how little support is available in reality. By contrast, all Greek teachers said that they do not receive any support from specialists because this service isn’t offered within the Greek school setting. In both schools, teachers would appreciate specialist support if it were to be offered.
The majority of NY teachers spoke positively about the School Safety Agents (SSAs), who are part of the New York Police Department. Large or small, there is a role for them to play, since teachers do not have the legal right to touch students. In contrast, having SSAs in schools was totally rejected by the Greek teachers, however, the majority of them were amenable to having guards (who are not police employees) to supervise the hallways with them and during breaks. Their presence deters the students from damaging school property.

**The Legal Framework and the Rules**

The third research question of the study, *what regulations, rules, and practices are in place in these settings to address student transgression*, was proposed to both examine internal school policy and to identify differences that exist beyond the school, which may affect internal institutional behavior. The main difference between the two legal systems can be found in: a) how much they emphasize student academic achievement, measurements, data, and effectiveness; b) the aspects of school life that they cover and in how much detail; and c) how much they stress the consequences of acting illegally.

In New York, attention is placed on cognitive achievement, which is measured by standardized tests. Policy focuses on raising the standards achieved by students in these tests. Federal and New York State laws and policies are detailed and precise; they emphasize the importance of measurements and data; target specific groups in the population that fall behind expectations; specify the targets that schools are expected to reach; specify specific practices, measurements, time frames, categories, and evaluations; penalize schools that fail to achieve the expected standards; and give incentives and rewards to those schools that reach or exceed the specific targets. Effectiveness is measured in terms of narrow, precise set of definitions, and disciplinary practices are also supposed to follow the letter of the law. The school is given the
legal power to intervene in children’s lives if there is suspicion of educational neglect or the existence of problems that affect their wellbeing. Rules: come from the top downwards and are mandatory; target almost all behaviors; specify a detailed range of possible interventions and punishments; resemble a legal document; and constitute a list long enough to justify publishing in the form of a book.

In Greece, the educational goal (promoted in practice) is student success in university entrance examinations. However, the laws and policies stress pedagogy and the development of the whole child. They do not go into specifics or emphasize only academic achievement. Some ministerial circulars and decisions may go into painstaking details with regard to bureaucratic protocol, correct ways of completing forms and official documents, responsibilities of teachers and administrators, or of what constitutes sufficient student attendance, but avoid prescribing the implementation of policy and practice at a school level. The performance and effectiveness of teachers are not evaluated, school performance is not measured, and there is also a lack of data on student achievement. There are guidelines about what is appropriate student behavior, but these are mostly advisory, and do not refer to specific infractions, interventions, or punishments. Rules and punishments have to be democratically negotiated at a school level. Additionally, the laws do not grant schools the right to intervene into students’ personal and family lives. Educational neglect and the wellbeing of the child have not yet become part of the wider responsibilities of educators. The law does not mandate their intervention. With this legal system and complete lack of data it seems that the state “does not care” about the welfare of its citizens.

Institutional Reality

The last research question, how is policy implemented, focuses on the application of policy and examines: discrepancies between policy and practice; formality in following rules and
procedures; and effectiveness through the existing functional differentiation of school personnel. If we suppose that a democratic choice of the rules of an institution or a group secures a higher tendency to follow and/or enforce them, this study does not testify to it. Given that the Greek teachers are required by law to decide by voting on their school’s discipline code, all Greek teachers knew all of the rules, compared with one half of their NY counterparts who exhibited little or no knowledge of their school’s discipline code. When it comes to enforcement, however, findings indicate that:

a) The overwhelming majority of Greek teachers profess that they do not always enforce the rules compared to half of the NY teachers.
b) All Greek teachers, compared to a majority of NY teachers, say that they do not always follow official procedures.
c) In both schools, the overwhelming majority of teachers complained about or mentioned a lack of accountability and consistency.
d) Specialists were underutilized in N.Y., while in Greece they were non-existent. Greek law does not recognize the need for school psychologists and does not allow the school to supersede the family under any circumstances.

In N.Y., disciplinary policy selectively deviates from the official DOE regulations. The Chancellor’s Regulation A-443 clearly states that teachers must remove undisciplined students from their classes, but in the school I studied, teachers and deans were not aware of this. The same regulation also states that students should be suspended only when their behavior “negatively affects the health, safety, and/or morals of other students” (A-443, p. 19). When a student cuts classes there is no way to justify a negative effect on others, but he is still suspended. In Greece, given the lack of detail in the law, it is difficult to evaluate school policy
deviation. Indeed, the law must be the policy of the school and the school either follows it or not. All decisions of the TA were lawful, but were not always followed through in practice.

**Chart 6.6  Policy enforcement overview**

Principals’ Philosophies

In both schools I interviewed the principal during the final week of research. The principal in New York initially presented his philosophy regarding punishment: it needs to be in place to demonstrate that there are consequences, but the five per cent of students who don’t meet disciplinary expectations should also be offered an appropriate level of support by counselors and psychologists. He, then, expressed his preferred approach to dealing with indiscipline: by investing in the performing arts, athletic programs, and other extra-curricular activities, it offers “the children a purpose and a focus in coming to school …something to grab onto” rather than direct investment in punitive measures. Finally, the principal expressed his
belief with regard to security operation in the building that has to be seamless, “people should not notice.” In short, he described Bentham’s Panopticon.

The Greek principal stated her philosophy in two lines: “A school first disciplines itself, then trust and love for learning flourish, and only then, does learning take place…. Punishment has the objective of educating the student, of making him think, and repent.” Based on this philosophy she justifies her administrative style, which reflects the spirit of the law. It is important that the school votes for its internal regulation at the beginning of every school year and informs all parents and students accordingly. It is also important that all teachers enforce this regulation and are consistent and fair. Finally, teachers need to remember that punishment has a pedagogic nature.

**Conclusion**

Findings need interpretation. They can lead to the construction of many different stories, which can be contingent on the narrator more than on the findings themselves. In the following chapter I will construct my theory, which focuses on understanding student indiscipline and how it is dealt with as an institutional reality rather than as an individual action, by identifying the interrelations of institutions connected with school discipline.
CHAPTER VII
DISCUSSION

In this chapter I analyze the findings from the two schools. The discussion is focused around the axis of cultural reproduction as this is aided by: functional-structural differentiation and the ideology of efficiency in modern schools; the power of rules as cultural institutions that become categories of thought; the function of school administration within the parameters of institutional constraints; and the effects of the instrumental nature of modern education. I also attempt to understand the school as an institution in the context of contemporary governmental practices, employing Foucault’s concept of governmentality.

Main Findings

My hypothesis is that a modern bureaucracy, with high structural-functional differentiation, many rules, and formality of procedures, is counter-productive for student discipline.

- Findings strongly support the hypothesis that high differentiation of responsibility in the management of student indiscipline is detrimental for both the students and the school. It creates a core of undisciplined students who are constantly excluded from classes and end up dropping out of school. It promotes the surveillance of the whole of student life, which exacerbates lower severity incidents. Even though at first glance, such differentiation may seem effective in the functioning of the school as a whole, I claim that it contributes to the creation of a ‘bad school’ in the long run by allowing a core of undisciplined students a social milieu inside the school building to create institutions related to behavior. These institutions gradually intensify in an incessant process of discussion in
the surrounding school community and return to school more powerful than before. After some years this ratcheting dynamic can turn a school into a violent setting.

• My hypothesis that the formality and abundance of rules run counter to eliminating indiscipline was not clearly supported. I found both settings to be almost equally informal in their day-to-day operation. I also found that the organizational form of the school (democratic decision making vs. techno-bureaucratic administration) directly affects the school personnel’s knowledge and understanding of the rules. Bureaucratic administration acts as a filter between external institutions and school processes by placing more emphasis on rules that promote the categories that they consider most important. My analysis, therefore, focuses on the controlling power of organizations through their rules, which become indeed categories of thought in time and place. By controlling the system of rules, schools control their teachers’ and students’ thoughts and perceptions.

Based on my findings, I predict with some confidence that due to the modern method of governance, which requires a knowledge of the “population” and has economic efficiency as a goal, disciplinary problems in working class schools will continue to proliferate in the future.

**Main Discussion Points**

Student non-conformity is almost three times higher in NY than in Greece. Given the students’ similar socioeconomic status and academic performance, an explanation of this difference required going beyond the reproduction and cultural reproduction paradigms. Through understanding of the production of institutions in specific places, time, and in relation to other institutions (following Mary Douglas’ analysis), this study throws light onto: why some working class students are more undisciplined than others; some styles of administration are more
effective in dealing with student indiscipline than others; some population groups are more likely to reject schooling than others (in particular, students of low SES); and why today more than previously, inner city public schools produce indiscipline. Here I introduce the main points of my discussion, which are further elaborated in the Analytical Discussion section of this chapter.

**Institutional Cultural Reproduction**

I support that student culture is aided in the process of reproduction by institutional choices expressed through:

- **An in-out of class differentiation** in dealing with undisciplined students. Through this process the school is creating a core of undisciplined students who ‘act’ in the hallways. These students are refused the benefits of teaching, which is the main force for establishing ideological hegemony of the school. They use the non-for-instruction spaces of the school to create behavioral institutions that in a dialectical relation with the surrounding community generate more institutions that can turn a good school into a very bad one over the course of a few years.

- **A mind-soul dualism**, which assigns the affective part of the children to the psychologists. This initiates a dialectical process of creation of even more people in need of services who act inside the categories created in hope for benefits or comfort.

- **A mind-body dualism**, which specifies that only policemen are able to touch a student. The institution of the SSA is the line that separates the repressive function of the school from its ideological function. The presence of SSAs and the constant, obvious surveillance generate even more undisciplined students because this is an aspect of over-discipline.
• A *here and now / there and later separation*, which detaches the benefits of education from the present (these benefits should be to derive pleasure from great teaching and learning) and places it somewhere in the future (good job). This makes a split in the mind of the child regarding education. It is taking away part of the whole ‘*Education*’ at the present time, in order to reserve it for the future. As if we are eating sweets now, but someone withholds the pleasure we are supposed to derive from eating sweets for later.

This would deter many people from eating sweets.

A premature *teach/discipline differentiation*, which has been established in the process of the constitution of the teacher as professional before making the institutional structures ready for it. Teacher authority and power got wrongly, but very robustly, connected with punishment in the form of suspension, which has no pedagogic meaning. As a result, students consider teachers who do not inflict punishment as being powerless and these teachers lose their authority in the eyes of their students, who misbehave even more.

**Behaviors as Cultural Institutions and Rules as Categories of Thought**

I demonstrate that certain behaviors are considered as normal until some social institutions make them pathological, or the other way around (are considered pathological until institutions turn them into normal). Infractions, therefore, are points at which institutions meet in time, space, and under specific conditions. All behaviors are regulated and the rules after a while become categories of thought for those who will observe these behaviors in the future. Therefore, more infractions are recorded because people begin to think of previously normal behaviors as being transgressive.

Through controlling the rules and regulations, schools control their members’ categories of thought and, thus, the information they use to: create new institutions; classify behaviors as
disciplined or undisciplined; educate and be educated. For this reason the form of school administration, democratic vs. techno-bureaucratic, demonstrates significant differences with regard to the schools’ educational priorities.

**Schooling in the Modern Neo-liberal States**

The institutional environment of the school and the governance choices of the state define goals, which are promoted through public schooling. They greatly affect school choices in general and in particular choices regarding student discipline. Modern governance emphasizes economic efficiency and strives for the creation of the homo economicus. Schools act as extensions of the liberal state and promote its interests. In NYC, the current focus on data, efficiency, disadvantaged categories of population that need help, and funding on the bases of effectiveness are part of a discourse that encourages further differentiation and incites even more “ceremonial” adaptation of policies at the expense of populations such as the undisciplined.

**Analytical Discussion**

Given that student SES and academic performance were controlled in the design, the significantly lower student indiscipline in Greece invites discussion. I explain this difference with three points of focus: the effect of functional differentiation; the function of the rules; and the role of bureaucracy and administration within the context of the modern neo-liberal state.

**At First Glance**

Before analyzing specific data, I understood that Durkheim’s over-discipline is practiced in NY in the sense that all behaviors are regulated and all spaces monitored, but not in Greece. In NY, the students scan in (they do not simply enter the school building), and from the moment they enter until the moment they leave the building, they are supposed to answer to authorities about everything. The level of control does not even reach the scientific sophistication of
Bentham’s Panopticon. The SSAs are everywhere, cafeteria included, visible and fully armed, as if everyone’s life is in danger. There is literally no space for the students to go without having the authorities’ eye checking on them. This is for “everyone’s security” the argument goes, but according to my findings, serious infractions that would justify this kind of surveillance (Level 4 or 5) similarly in both settings do not exceed 6% of all infractions. Why does this 6% warrant so much surveillance in N.Y., but not in Greece?

This tight security, I argue, does not work for lower-level infractions. According to Durkheim (2002), students perceive excessive discipline simply as “aiming at annoying” them, which then undermines the authority of all rules in their eyes, and has the opposite effect. In his words, students subjected to an over-disciplining regime will become either “rebels,” or “morally impoverished.” Therefore, someone would expect to find more rebels and/or more morally impoverished students in the NY school than in the Greek school.

The Workings of Reproduction

According to Bourdieu (1990), reproduction works because the system does not secure the conditions of its productivity. By this he means that schools continue to employ practices that do not make the pedagogic work amenable and acceptable to the working class children. One such factor he mentions is teacher-centered, authoritarian pedagogies. The system in Greece is still very authoritarian and teacher-centered, and students are expected to be confined to their desks and to work individually. Lambropoulou and Pandeliadou (2005) suggested that at least 90% of Greek teachers follow such techniques. Universities do prepare new teachers using more

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41 The Panopticon is a prison designed by the British philosopher and sociologist Jeremy Bentham in 1785. The purpose was to be able to supervise many people at the same time without them being aware of it.

42 In Greece, a dual educational system, closely subordinated to the demands of capital, was almost absent until recently. All schools followed the same general education curriculum and class-based grouping of schools was unknown. Reproduction was facilitated through a rejection of these general curricula by the working class children (Georgiadis, 2007; Frangoudakis, 1992).
progressive methods, but this is a recent trend compared with teacher training in the States. It will take some time before new practices are integrated into schools and accepted by Greek students as good teaching (Ioakimidis & Mylonis, 2010). This difference can be seen in the attitudes of the teachers who reported on punishment. In Greece only one new teacher refused the responsibility to punish whereas in NY 35% of teachers did not want this responsibility. Also, all teachers in Greece discussed their teaching practices using words and phrases such as, “deliver the lesson,” or “I teach,” whereas in NY many teachers used phrases such as, “I am working with the students,” or “the student does not allow his group members to work,” which, at least, alludes to the fact that teaching is not viewed as lecturing.

The curricula and philosophy of education in Greece invite discussion as well. In secondary schools the books, from which all teachers teach, are very difficult for students (and sometimes for teachers as well). The main goal is to prepare students for university entrance examinations. This does not allow deviance from the curriculum, and the teachers constantly complain that what they are teaching is far beyond the students’ capacity. All curricula are imposed from the Ministry of Education down to the schools (nothing is locally developed). Generally, the academic work is more likely to be rejected in Greece due to: teaching approaches; the curriculum’s unnecessary complexity; or the curriculum’s lack of relevance or interest for the students. Students therefore misbehave because they do not understand the work and get bored.

The NY educational system differs from that of the Greek system in terms of curricula and teaching. Student-centered pedagogies are preferred and teachers are evaluated on the extent to which they advance all students’ learning. The state, likewise, has laws, which demonstrate
how much it “cares” for disadvantaged groups. Student performance is constantly measured and data is generated.

Based on the above, and if we accept Bourdieu’s doctrine that the higher the rejection of the curriculum by the students, the greater the numbers of the undisciplined, the difference between the two systems would not favor Greece if counteracting factors were not in place. Common wisdom might suggest that the students in Greece are inherently “better kids,” “more respectful,” or come from “less troubled families.” However, the findings of this study indicate that institutional practices and procedures, including the categorization of behaviors and punishment, set into motion processes that exacerbate student misconduct, create spaces for new forms of indiscipline, or divert resources at the expense of those who have already rejected schooling. Additionally, the study of educational laws and policies suggests that the two school systems are working toward substantially differing goals. This is not because the respective goals per se are different at this moment in time. It is predominantly because the Greek legal/governmental system does not reflect the current priorities of the state.

Differentiation and the Creation of the “New Men”

Findings indicate that the adoption of functional differentiation has a significant effect on student discipline. Differentiating the roles of those who handle a particular aspect of discipline brings about the classification and definition of “populations.” Knowledge is then developed to better “serve” these populations, which helps to define even further these categories, or introduce new ones. Through this process, categories of people are gradually created who did not exist before and alter the institutional landscape.

In or out of the classroom? An institutional choice. There is a big difference between the two schools regarding the location of the indiscipline. In Greece infractions are mostly
classroom-based, whereas in NY they are dispersed through the whole school. On record, the in-class infractions per student per year are a little more in NY than in Greece, but the out-of-class infractions are almost non-existent in Greece. This contrast seems to be the main factor accounting for such a significant difference between the two schools in terms of registered indiscipline.

This in or out distinction came with demands for quality instruction and teacher professionalization. Teachers were given the responsibility for developing the cognitive part of the child and the rest was assigned to administrators and other professionals. Being in agreement with Meyer and Rowan (1977), in the United States (more than in Greece, I argue, due to the different level of pressure on schools with regard to performance), schools similar to my research setting have to make choices regarding who to divert resources toward, and who to sacrifice, in order to better survive as organizations. Under the pressures of State demands for quality teaching, advancement of all student learning, and tough graduation requirements, schools have to change their priorities. As Popkewitz (2001) describes, instead of centering the educators’ attention on the child as a whole, the school system encourages teachers to focus on teaching their academic subjects (i.e., take care of the cognitive part of the child, which is measured by standardized tests) and entrusts the affective and behavioral aspects of the child’s wellbeing to other professionals. Traditionally, if a child was unable to be disciplined, he was sent to the headmaster. The behavioral part, therefore, could go to the administrators. Most probably, the children who were not interested in learning (and who would therefore bring the schools’ test scores down) would also become behavioral problems. Rather than jeopardizing the education of all children (and most importantly, the statistics of the school) it seemed better to “sacrifice” that
eight to ten percent who were failing academically regardless. In Greece, there are still no similar institutional requirements forcing schools to make these sorts of choices.

The students comprising the *out* part of this distinction constitute the category of the “uneducable,” and in this process of differentiation learn: that the teacher and the administration have little power; that there is nothing particularly bad about being sent to the dean (Durkheim suggests that the punishment should mostly exist as a possibility); and that by being unruly they achieve what they want, which is not to be in class. Therefore, they misbehave even more in the hope that the teachers will send them to the dean. They create their out-of-class “clubs,” they plan their cutting, they bother the teachers, they play hide-and-seek with the SSAs and the deans, or they prepare fights, get into bullying, stealing, and other transgressive activities. The same students wander around the school all day long and consequently misbehavior proliferates both in numbers and level of severity. This helps to explain the 20 percentage points of difference in the level of severity that we have between levels one and three. Given the similar distribution in levels two, four, and five, it seems likely that 20% of the infractions in the NY school are elevated from severity level one to level three in the process of this differentiation.

This *in-out* differentiation is an institutional choice. It is supposed to facilitate the teacher in her job, but also to increase the effectiveness of the school as an educational and bureaucratic organization. There is a rational behind this decision. The assumption is that if the teacher, free from the burden of disciplining, teaches the rest of the students without interruption, he will teach better, the students will learn more, and the school’s statistics will improve. In addition and with regard to the bureaucratic function of the school, in the current litigious environment it seems advisable to have a special office to deal with disciplinary issues. Such an office can exercise a greater control over the disciplinary process and ensure its legality. Of course, for the
whole process to be efficient it is not necessary to benefit 100% of the student population. It is a
cost vs. benefit exercise: a choice of the least cost for the most benefit. By sacrificing the
education of five to ten percent of the student population, the school effectively addresses many
other issues. We could say that the efficiency of Taylorism is not delivering in this case, or that
differentiation in the area of student discipline is efficient for 90 to 95 percent of students, but is
damaging for the remaining, relatively small number of students (the five to ten percent who are
regularly in the deans’ office, and have already rejected schooling—a fact that helps to justify
this decision).

I claim, though, that this has unanticipated effects for the whole school. What at first
appears to be simple misbehavior, within a few years, gradually and slowly, after it feeds into
itself internally, and then into the surrounding community (in combination, of course, with all the
other influences that exist in communities), feeds back into the school and back into the
community incessantly and evolves. In a spiral motion, where each circle is bigger than the
previous one, where every new cohort of students that enters the school seems “a little tougher”
than the previous, a school may indeed turn into a war zone that needs police involvement and
constant surveillance.

This happens in the way Douglas (1986) describes the creation of “new people” through
the institutions and the production of new labels. The students inside their gangs and their “social
clubs” that flourish in the schools’ hallways and continue operating outside the school, (or,
perhaps, begin outside and are transferred into school) have opportunities to classify themselves
in relation to the school, and inside the school culture. The classifications are not empty
categorizations, Douglas asserts. They make people act accordingly in the hope of gaining some
comfort or benefits from acting as their label indicates. If the label is in relation to school culture
(“the best at stealing,” the “toughest in fights,” the best “fight organizer,” etc.) then, the students will benefit by acting accordingly inside or around the school. The whole school community then not only learns about it (and gives them “props,” a form of reward), but also gets involved and talks about it for days. The more the school community talks about existing institutions, the higher the production of new institutions and “new people” over time. The students, not by accident, turn from being simply undisciplined, into very undisciplined, and then into criminals who want to operate inside the school.

Most of us have teachers that we remember who changed our lives through their teaching. Children who spend their time in the hallways of the schools, instead of the classroom, do not have anything to counteract and balance out the forces that create their social reality. I had the opportunity of visiting my NY research school four years later. I witnessed what I assert in the previous paragraph. Student fights were much rougher, the back hallways smelled of marijuana, which they hadn’t previously, and a special police force with metal detectors were more often called into searching for weapons.

In Greece this reinforcement of undisciplined behavior cannot work. There are many students out of class, more than in N.Y., for many reasons: because they were cutting, because the teacher had removed them, or because the teacher was absent. This, however, was not a core of students who had lives organized outside the classroom. Additionally, students in Greece are organized as groups, not as individuals. They develop identities within a group of students, their class, which remains the same throughout the school year and, for most students, throughout all the high school years. They are taught as a group and they participate in school life through their class’s organization as a political entity. According to the law (5566/86), they have to vote for their representatives and they are responsible as individuals and as a group for their behavior.
The students, as a class, have the power to challenge the teachers and the school. If they have a problem with a teacher, they are able to complain through their class governing body to the principal and they can, as a class, rebel against the teacher in class, preventing him from teaching. If they dislike a particular school policy, they can organize a strike against the school until their petition is honored, or negotiated to their satisfaction. The teachers and the administration always have to take account of students’ perspective when making policy decisions. This requires giving a significant amount of time on the part of school officials, and might seem counter-productive in the short term. Specialists in organizational efficiency might reject this as a model of efficient organization. Long-term however, this process of negotiation between the school authorities and the students help to establish the school as a legitimate, trustworthy authority. This democratic process has the effect of establishing a sense of justice in the minds of the students and removes sentiments of powerlessness. They, as students, can indeed shape school decisions regarding discipline in addition to many other aspects of school life. The fact that student representatives are required at the TA meetings when disciplinary matters are discussed adds legitimacy to the TA’s decisions and the transgressing students are more likely to accept their punishment as fair. The US legal system and bureaucracy prevent students from taking part in decision-making and implementation of school policies.

**The specialists: Is it better to care less?** In both systems opinions were similar regarding the kinds of problems that need to be handled by professionals, psychologists and social workers. There is a universal understanding that psychological, home, personal, and chronic issues are beyond the remit of a teacher’s responsibility. In Greece, there is literally no specialist support, while in N.Y. the specialists of the school are not effective, or for others are
not enough. This is an important difference, the effects of which can be better understood if examined in relation to the social environment of the school institutions.

The creation of the “New Man” that the Progressive movement brought about in the United States, has not yet taken place in Greece. In the current economic climate, in a decade or so, this may happen, but until then, the psychologists are not going to have any significant role to play. The critical separation regarding pedagogical practice, Popkewitz’s “binary,” which suggests the “cognitive” part of the student is handled by the teacher and the “affective” part by psychologists and other “professionals,” is slowly beginning to be supported as a positive step forward by educators, but the psychologist has not become an institution in Greek society, let alone a recurring feature of the schools.

This situation goes some way in explaining how Greek teachers discuss the need for psychological help. Common sense might suggest that the absence of such help would be a cause for having more indiscipline in a school rather than less, because the treatment of the psychologists and the professionals of the “soul” are missing. However, the institutional categories and supports work differently. Following Douglas, in order for the institution of the psychologists to be seen as necessary in schools, it first needs to get generated as an institution in society, the realities have to be created, and the categories of people who will act inside the parameters of these realities. At this point Greek schools have not seen yet “the new people” because they have not been created, or fully constituted. As an indication, according to Lambropoulou and Pandeliadou (2005), only about 10% of the special education population is classified as such, and the rest is educated in the regular education settings. It might be expected that this would create more indiscipline. Perhaps, but conversely, undiagnosed special education children are less likely to behave according to a label (with the hope to get benefits that come
with the label). Once a classification is adopted, a never-ending and more sophisticated classification process gets into motion, which “finds” more and more people to subsume into these categories.

Of course, we expect to have specialist help and all necessary supports to address the behavioral challenges of children with special needs. As we see in NY, however, support is indeed in place, but is either underutilized or insufficient (the specialists are overwhelmed with work). In this case, the politics of care operating in American society have produced “at risk,” “uneducable,” or “suspension material” categories of students and schools are expected to educate them without adequate support, at least in the specific New York school I studied, resulting in an increase in undisciplined students.

**Policing or guarding?** In both schools, the overwhelming majority of teachers recognized that there is need for hallways to be supervised by SSAs or school guards. In NY, however, most deans have a justification that is different to the Greek teachers. The concern in Greece was for someone to protect the hallways when the teachers are in class, but between periods the teachers were expected to supervise the students. In NY the conviction was that SSAs are needed to guard the hallways in general because teachers do not have the right to touch students and the SSAs are necessary to help with fights and with involuntary student removals. In other words, there is also a mind-body differentiation in NY. We have those who teach, but do not touch (teachers), and those who touch, even at times applying force such as SSAs or medical professionals (i.e., the school nurse). The students’ minds are for the teachers to cultivate, but their bodies, through which undisciplined behavior can occur, are not to be touched, because corporal punishment is not permitted. Corporal punishment is also not allowed in Greece, but this strict mind-body differentiation that exist in NY has not been established in Greece.
Touching students does not constitute (and does not register with the educational community and the broader public) a serious misconduct.

The involvement of the police signifies that working class and inner-city schools (where we find SSAs) are not effective Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA) and need the Repressive State Apparatuses’ help to survive. For ISAs work to be successful, teachers have to teach, which is not possible in the cases of students who constitute the “hallway crowd.” As Devine (1996) writes, members of “hallway crowds,” when asked to express their opinions about their school answered, “The SSAs are good.” The in-out differentiation is responsible for schools losing their capacity to act as effective ISAs, which has not happened in Greece. And although, as mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, reproduction has more favorable conditions in which to work in Greece, the Greek educational system has better maintained its concealing effects by allowing the best agents of the system, the teachers, to complete the pedagogic works of reproduction by teaching all students inside the class (where also undisciplined students coexist with other students that have different projects than theirs and value education). This minimizes student rebellion, no matter how much they reject the pedagogic work they are offered. In Greece, schools rely more on ideology than on the Repressive Apparatus of the police. This also protects their moral authority over the students. In NY, the presence of the police signifies to students that the school lacks credible authority and /or power over them and for the hallway crowds there is no opposing view in the form of a teacher, or peer pressure from classmates to persuade them otherwise.

**The constitution of the teacher**

**The teacher as professional.** The definitions of teacher professionalism differ between NY and Greece, with a key distinction being the question of which aspects of education fall
within the scope of the teachers’ responsibility. In NY, a professional teacher knows how to enhance the cognitive development of his students with student-centered, effective techniques (cooperative learning, differentiated instruction etc.), and how to utilize appropriate student evaluation methods to accurately measure student progress. The affective features of students remain unaffected. Schools of education train future teachers accordingly, and schools are expected to provide appropriate structures to assist their teachers in behaving professionally, which includes the provision of classrooms where they can teach without distractions, and support to manage undisciplined students. Due to their progressive training, many teachers believe that the roles of teaching and disciplining at the same time are incompatible. This is demonstrated by the relatively high percentage of NY teachers (about one third) who did not want to have any responsibility for student punishment. Modern pedagogy tries to disconnect the teacher’s moral authority from disciplining and punishing the students, as this is traditionally understood.

By contract, in Greece, a good teacher is one that knows and teaches their academic subject well, disciplines the students effectively, and guides them appropriately. Based on this it is understandable why Greek teachers are not interested in administrators handling their disciplinary issues. Their moral authority is connected with discipline and punishment. Students perceive these differences and act accordingly. The Greek teachers reported that one reason to avoid disciplinary intervention by administrators is the impression of teacher powerlessness that this conveys to the students. The students view external support as teacher weakness, and verbalize it, “Oh! You cannot handle the situation and you are asking for help? We need the Great Powers to intervene?” (A.N. 2009) In contrast, the students in NY say, “What can you do to me? Nothing!”
The teacher as disciplinarian. The ideology of teacher professionalism generates some contradictions between the Greek teachers’ actual and expressed preferences. The teachers and deans in NY wanted responsibility for disciplining the students to be dispersed, because this meant that their workload would also be divided. They wanted less work, something that the Greek teachers also sought. However, Greek teachers could not imagine delegating this task. They preferred to keep their students inside the classroom and to deal with problems themselves rather than sending them to the principal. They were most concerned about the risk to their professional reputation if there was a perception amongst their peers that they could not manage disciplinary issues. The irony here is that even though Greek teachers are expected to both teach and discipline their students, they are not given appropriate training. This explains the high percentage of hourly suspensions by the teachers. This also encourages unregistered classroom removals, which directly contravenes legal mandates and increases the actual indiscipline. Additionally, I argue in the following section that teachers cannot imagine surrendering responsibility for discipline because, in their minds, it is connected with student punishment (whoever disciplines also punishes) and they recognize a connection between teacher authority and the entitlement to punish students.

Instrumentalism’s hegemony: Suspensions and reproduction. The majority of teachers in both schools reported that suspending students, the most frequently used punishment, does not work for the undisciplined students. However, almost all teachers in Greece and almost all deans in NY (who currently are responsible for suspending students) wanted to retain this responsibility. Almost half of NY teachers (who currently do not suspend students) expressed a desire to have this power. The license to punish students with a suspension gives a sense of power and authority to those who have it. Punishment is a robust institution for everyone,
teachers, parents, lawmakers, the general public, and students alike, in the sense that they recognize power and authority in those who have the right to punish them. As a result, teachers in Greece (who currently punish students) feel very powerful in the process of disciplining students, while their N.Y. counterparts do not. Additionally, the only category that NY and Greek teachers reported equally as being undisciplined was *not responding well to authorities* (see chart 6.4), which further emphasizes the importance of authority to the professional role of the teacher. Also, acting without the permission of the teacher, as expressed in the category *leaving class without permission* (see chart 6.5) was the only behavior that found equally high percentages of teachers in both settings in agreement with school categorizations.

Despite beliefs regarding the ineffectiveness of suspension, teachers and schools refrain from using alternative forms of punishment. Where does this form of punishment derive its power from and why does it seem that there is no other alternative? What difference does its current mode of distribution make in our schools? I argue that teacher authority was connected and continues to gain strength from the institution of punishment in the form of suspension from school and not as a pedagogic tool connected with the sound education of the child (schooling being understood inside the parameters of an instrumental education). In a way, if a student behaves well, he deserves to get an education and be rewarded in life with good career prospects. If he does not behave, then the teacher is in a position of authority (and this role as disciplinarian gives him authority, not the great task of teaching he is performing) to refuse the student such reward by suspending him. This idea is so hegemonic that as much as the NY law tries to inform the educational community of the importance of supporting disenfranchised students to gain education, – although without appropriate enforcement – it has been proven incapable of eradicating teachers’ instrumental sentiments. According to Chancellor’s Regulation A-443,
“Suspension is the temporary removal of a student from the regular school program because his/her behavior negatively affects the health, safety, welfare and/or morals of others.” (p.19)

Most cases of suspension cannot be justified in these terms, but the school community acts as if suspension is perfectly legitimate. Inside these instrumental parameters, suspension may serve the reproductive function of schooling and only has negative effects as distributed in NY, but, as I explain below, could have at least one positive effect as distributed in Greece.

Punishment, according to the Oxford American Dictionary, is “the infliction or imposition of a penalty as retribution for an offense” and penalty is connected with a “disadvantage,” or an “unpleasant experience.” Regarding benefits, education has always being the route to a better and privileged world. People initially understood this “better” world to be the world of knowledge, in which the student could enter only by studying under great teachers. The teacher had authority because of the greatness of his teaching. Suspending a child was the ultimate punishment given that the child was therefore refused the benefits of teaching. Under capitalism, “better” was connected with the job market and meant more material benefits through the financial rewards of a better job. The children, in exchange for this better world of the future (that is located in the job market), and with few immediate rewards (one such reward could be pleasure derived from great teaching) are expected to behave well and are punished if they do not. However, this contradicts the principles of punishment, because something that the child already has (access to great teaching that schools can provide) can be taken away, but something that the child may get in the future (a good job that schools cannot secure) cannot be taken away. Currently, suspension from school is not connected to missing great teaching and learning experiences, but to risk of not graduating from high school and failing to earn later life privileges.
In this context, given that education is compulsory in modern societies, it can be easily understood why children do not understand suspension as a punishment. Education promotes meritocracy to a degree and rewards its recipients, but it also has excluding mechanisms, and upward mobility is not guaranteed for many students, even those who meet the behavioral standards of the school. As the reproduction theorists suggest, students who do not see themselves as possible recipients of the advantages of education reject schooling altogether and are most likely to become the undisciplined. Other students may reject education for different reasons, such as choosing not to get educated in the first place, or choosing not to subscribe to this particular type of education. For them, education offers very little of worth and therefore suspension cannot take away anything, which means there is no “penalty” involved. As a result, the students have no reason to change their behavior. Teachers in both settings testified to that.

If the purpose of punishment is to change behavior, why are suspensions still given? A student can experience suspension as a punishment and change her behavior only if she values education, but rarely are these students in a position to be punished. In reality, suspension constitutes harsh punishment of those who do not value education; the system takes revenge for not been liked by going along with the logic of reproduction. By suspending students (as explained previously in the section *In or out of the classroom*), the teachers and the school miss an opportunity to intervene in the students’ cultural sphere in class, and thus support cultural reproduction.

I assert that the process of cultural reproduction, as Willis (1977) describes it, becomes possible, or gets facilitated, in the modern school by the dialectic relationship of the school’s bureaucracy with the instrumental approach to public education. In this sense, the more that governments stress education for all by enforcing “rising to the top” strategies in order to fund
schools, the more the schools will be forced to exclude, (mis)educate, or (mis)represent (by classifying them under categories that primarily fit bureaucratic ends) the most disadvantaged of their population in order to be able to report at least some “rising” to the top and to secure funding for themselves. In this climate, suspension becomes a form of exclusion, because it is a specific group of children that are recurrently given three- or five-day suspensions. According to my findings, the majority of suspensions in NY are three to five days long, while in Greece almost all are one-day long or less.

The administration of the school seems not to recognize this effect (as long as they statistics of the undisciplined remain manageably low). Teachers are also happy if the “trouble makers” are kept out of their classes. There is little discussion regarding changing punishment practices or attempts to punish the students in pedagogical ways. If schools were genuinely interested in educating all their students, they would have developed appropriate educational philosophies, programs, and practices to accommodate them all. But this would require resources, which the school administration decides how to allocate. According to Meyer and Rowan (1977), in order to survive as an institution, the school has to become aligned with other institutions and find ways to address administrative and educational issues in the most efficient way. For example, it has to raise its statistics in order to continue receiving funding, but also maintain the amount of work for teachers and administrators at a tolerable level in order to better manage its internal dynamics. In this process, educating a low percentage of undisciplined students requires significant creative thinking and probably large amount of resources per child. It is easier to allow these children to be forgotten. It might be expected, though, that teachers would care and champion the cause of these students; however teachers embrace the official (managerial) school definition of “teaching the students,” and “for the benefit of the child.” Also,
exercising power over students has been so deeply ingrained in teachers, I argue, that they cannot understand their pedagogic authority differently, through the power of their teaching.

In Greece, the reproductive function of the school cannot work at this level (even though it works very well at the level of academic performance through different mechanisms). Given that there is no differentiation, undisciplined students are punished promptly in class by their teachers and receive only hourly suspensions. These suspensions cover 80% of all suspensions, while almost all other suspensions are for one day. Four-day and five-day suspensions are considered extremely serious, and the TA has to meet in order to punish (or exclude) to this extent. I think this is because suspension still has its actual meaning in Greece, that of exclusion of a student from educational opportunities. In NY, suspension is supposed to be the removal of a student from class because he is considered to be a threat for his classmates and according to the law the student should not be subjected to any educational penalties (that is supposed to be accomplished through the In-School Suspension programs). Therefore, in everyone’s eyes there is no educational exclusion associated with suspension, and the educational community lacks a sense of guilt about it. The school performs its duty and educates the undisciplined students, “even though some of them are criminals and are supposed to be in prison” (H.T. 2007). As we know, despite the fact that schools are expected to educate the suspended students, this is not the case. Teachers describe the In-House-Suspension program as a “joke.” The students who do come in, stay for about three hours and do not do any work, but most students cut suspension altogether. The school not only does not care to find out what happens to those students, but, in certain cases, suspends them even further for not serving the suspension, and this continues on and on. Through the mechanisms of separation and punishment, the NY school’s core of
undisciplined, permanently-excluded-from-their-classes students, is created and institutionalized. This is unknown in Greece.

**The erosion of teacher authority.** Another kind of damage can be justified in this process of differentiation: the erosion of the moral authority of the teacher. Given that teacher authority is (misguided as demonstrated previously) connected with punishment in the minds of teachers and students, the inability of a teacher to suspend a student after threatening to do so (deans do not always suspend the referred students), signals students that there is no reason to obey in general. The Greek system, by not differentiating and by stressing the pedagogical aspect of teaching (regardless of whether the teacher has the knowledge to do it correctly), gives teachers no other choice but to handle the misbehaving students inside the classroom – perhaps, at the expense of other students who are behaving well. Most punishment is suspension for one teaching period and that is why we have almost 80% of punishment under the category *hourly suspension* in Greece and nothing like that in NY. However, the Greek student knows that if he misbehaves the teacher will immediately assert his power (the student, also being a product of this cultural construction, recognizes the ability of the teacher to punish him as power and authority over him). If the teacher deals with the transgression knows how to handle it appropriately, his moral authority remains intact.

The Greek hourly suspension is equivalent to “Referral to the dean” by the teacher in NY. Most of these students, who in Greece would received an hourly suspension, in NY are either not punished, or have a conference with the dean, as can be easily seen in chart 6.2 *Anatomy of discipline*. This damages the teacher’s authority in the eyes of the children not because it is indeed correct for the students to be punished, but because they are sent with the purpose of being punished. The message the students get is, “He wanted me suspended, but…” Therefore,
the teacher appears to have no power, and the students know that with low severity infractions the most serious consequence is being sent to the deans to discuss the issue. In NY, it is well known that suspensions are applied to a core group (those who have already rejected education and constantly loiter in the hallways), or to those who do something serious. In Greece, suspensions are spread out among a broader population in the form of hourly class removals (a relatively minor form of suspension). However, the high percentage of hourly suspensions in Greece shows what many teachers asserted in their interview: that alternative forms of punishment are not considered because teacher-training programs in Greece do not properly prepare pedagogues in how to manage indiscipline.

Perceptions as an effect of position. Differentiation partially explains why the NY and Greek teachers have similar views on the severity of indiscipline. Teachers in both schools were referring to their classroom experiences rather than to indiscipline in the school in general. In NY, severe infractions were concentrated and dealt with in the first floor deans’ office. As a N.Y. dean of discipline explained, “It was not until I became a dean that I saw a whole new world. What? Is this really going on?” (I.L. 2007) Therefore, differentiation has the additional effect of not allowing knowledge of the whole picture to all, and through it the institution is able to control perceptions.

Regarding the magnitude of infractions, the interviewees of both schools had similar perceptions; that very high percentages of students were breaking the rules, based on what they were experiencing in their classrooms and in the hallways (the fact that NY teachers do not deal with the hallway incidents does not prevent them from observing student behavior there).

The Rules: We Tell You to Think Accordingly
More than in NY, the Greek teachers report that they do not follow official rules, regulations, and procedures. As I mentioned in the Greek findings chapter, following or not following rules in general is also an institution, which, complicates the understanding of my findings; lower indiscipline in Greece is not to be expected if it is culturally acceptable to break the rules.

The role of the rules, of which there are many more in NY compared with Greece, is very important and warrants analysis. Rules should not be mistaken with simple categorizations that are enforced to regulate phenomena that exist as essences. The rules specify the points where institutions came into an agreement with regard to what people will think as being essences; they become therefore categories of thought. The rules, according to Douglas (1966), are the lines of separation between the normal and the pathological, and in this case, the disciplined and undisciplined. They are products of “consensus” at a given point in time, under specific circumstances, and guided by particular historical memories.

A good example of how regulations direct the thinking processes of those who follow them is the act of suspension. In Greece, the clarity of the law regarding the exclusionary effect of punishment makes the teachers think of suspension as indeed being a form of exclusion. This makes them particularly conscious of the effect of their decisions on students’ education and they avoid giving lengthy suspensions if possible. In NYC, the law disconnects the punishment from the exclusion by mandating instruction for the suspended children during the period of suspension. Despite this, suspension continues to equal to exclusion due to the way it is administered. Teachers and administrators know that suspended students do not receive any meaningful education during their suspension, but they do not recognize it as such. They act under moral conviction (it is right to suspend students who misbehave, and they suspend the
students), but they think according to the law’s mandates (we must educate the suspended students, and we do try to do our best despite circumstances beyond our control - whether the students go to In-House suspension or not - and therefore, we can suspend them even more because there is no deliberate exclusion on the part of the school).

The more rules to do with discipline, the more behaviors that are perceived as being undisciplined and the more often these behaviors are seen. Of course, it is not surprising that the NY school has more rules, with more details attached to each. The process of discipline is highly litigious in the United States, and schools are required to adjust to the institutions of other organizations, justice, and the law. These institutions present schools with new categories and expectations. Students are entitled to due process and have the right to an education for example, whereas the school does not have a right to deny education to undisciplined students (there is a lack of discussion about what constitutes an appropriate education). Therefore, my expectation was that the NY teachers would think more in terms of the rules and have a broader variety of behaviors that they considered to be undisciplined, due to the fact that rules indicate thinking about those behaviors as being undisciplined. This, in conjunction with other factors I highlight could go some way in explaining the higher indiscipline in NY. The category of attendance is a good example of how a behavior is constituted as undisciplined and of the role that the rules, which regulate it, play. The categories of smoking, or having forbidden items show the effect of timing and of institutional circumstances, which explain why certain categories are more salient in the Greek school.

Any infraction is just a point where institutions meet. Attendance dominates the NY out-of-class category of infractions, but barely registers as a problem in Greece. It could be

43 See Richard Arum, Judging school discipline: The crises of moral authority (2003) where he explains how school practices on discipline were affected by the court system.
concluded that Greek students, even in the most troubled schools, have good attendance, do not cut, and are not late. This is far from the truth. I will analyze the category of attendance further in order to demonstrate how infractions start being seen as such, but also how institutional practices can trigger other transgressive behaviors due to the way they treat a given category.

According to Chancellor’s Regulation A-210, in New York, “The tracking and follow-up of attendance is one of the Department of Education’s most important responsibilities as it relates to the safety, welfare, and educational success of the students of New York City” (A-210, p.1). In Greece, the Presidential Decree 104/79 dedicates articles 20-25 to the issue of attendance. It states that the promotion of the students from one grade to the other depends on their attendance, defines the maximum number of absences allowed, and exhaustively lists the categories under which non-attendance may be excused. Subsequent Presidential Decrees, specifically 294/79 and 485/83, present adjustments to issues of attendance. The most recent one, 385/83, defines attendance as a “duty” for the students and states that, “For ensuring the regular attendance of the student the parent or guardian is fully responsible.”

In NY, there is a whole apparatus with responsibility for attendance, with an attendance committee and an attendance coordinator to supervise the whole process. The Chancellor sets minimum attendance standards and each school is responsible for meeting those standards. The school requests that parents justify their children’s absences with a personal or doctor’s note, but if a student accumulates 10 consecutive absences or 20 aggregate days of unjustified absences the school is obliged by law to officially investigate the case. An attendance teacher is assigned to determine the reasons for the student’s absences, usually by visiting the student’s home and personally evaluating the situation. There are consequences for the parents in cases where educational neglect is confirmed. Often educational neglect is an indicator for other forms of
maltreatment and school officials, if they suspect maltreatment, in cooperation with the Statewide Central Register for Child Abuse and Maltreatment (SCR), the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS), and the Administration for Children’s Cervices (ACS), are required to take action.

In this process of discussing and addressing school attendance requirements and reporting procedures, a new terminology, “truant,” was established to describe children that have four unexcused absences in any given month or ten unexcused absences in a year. In order to describe a child that has 20 or more unexcused absences in a year the term, “habitual truant” was introduced. The “welfare of a child,” the effects of truancy on society as a whole, the “politics of care,” and “parent accountability,” all are institutions that are used to justify the penalizing of parents (mostly through the welfare system) who fail to ensure that their children go to school every day and/or do not cooperate with the school and other state agencies in an effort to stop their children’s truancy. According to Foucault, the lower, degenerate, classes need to be taught how to promote their own and their children’s well being in ways that promote the public good.

In NY all parties involved in the educational process have the category of “truancy” established in their minds and can think and make decisions accordingly. Of course, cutting is undisciplined as can be seen in the agreement of NY teachers with the official categorization of this (see chart 6.5).

In Greece, based on the number of a student’s absences, the Teacher Assembly will characterize a student’s attendance as “sufficient,” “incomplete,” or “insufficient.” Students with incomplete attendance need to take written examinations for all academic subjects in September, before the beginning of the next academic year, while students with insufficient attendance have to repeat the year. The Ministerial Decision Φ.353.1/324/105657/Δ dedicates
one paragraph to the duty that the Teacher Assembly has regarding student attendance. It states that, “The TA should intervene in cases of student failure and dropping out of school by applying appropriate compensatory educational programs in order to address these problems effectively.” (ΦΕΚ 1340, τεύχος Β´, σελ. 17902, άρθ. 38) There is nothing, however, to dictate specific actions or programs, let alone to hold the school accountable for not intervening. It is simply suggested that teachers address the issue of attendance, but the law does not give them any power with which to act.

Greek educators do not think of students who, by NY standards, fall into the category of “truant” as being “truants.” They have a different cultural perspective. These students are unjustifiably absent from school, and therefore the law punishes them by not allowing them to proceed to the next grade. This is enough. The law states that the parents are responsible for the attendance of their children and up to now the parents have generally complied. According to comparative data published by the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) in 2009, Greece’s high school graduation rate is the highest among all 34 OECD member countries. Therefore, why should attendance be discussed in Greek society as a problem? However, some schools in disadvantaged areas (my research site included) do have problems with attendance. According to Matsaganis (2009), it is estimated that about 14% of secondary school children never graduate (this 14 percent being concentrated in schools in disadvantaged areas), but Greek society does not seem to be unduly perturbed about it; there is little discussion. The teachers at the school in my study do not see it as a problem either, even though it is in their school, because there are no rules to indicate differently. The state could have rules, of course, but without any institutions directing to the issue of attendance as being a problematic area, the state is not going to regulate it as such. That is why Greek teachers do not
report absenteeism and cutting as being common or even undisciplined, even though from the TA’s end-of-year pedagogical meeting we can see that during the 2007-2008 academic year 22 (4%) students had incomplete attendance and 80 (14%) had insufficient attendance. The non-attendance figure for NY for the year of my fieldwork was 18%, which is very similar.

The Greek students, however, consider attendance as being an issue that justifies further misbehavior on their part. They are not “truants,” but they may end up having “insufficient” attendance. That is why the figures for the out-of-class category getting physically aggressive is slightly higher in Greece compared with N.Y. By “getting physical” the Greek teachers do not refer to fights (where the safety of other students and teachers is at risk) as their N.Y. counterparts did, but to students’ banging the door, kicking their bag, or throwing objects in anger or frustration because the teacher had decided to remove them from their class. This also accounted for the students’ insubordination inside the class, which was also higher in frequency in Greece. Students were refusing to leave the class when their teachers instructed them to do so. In some instances one more unjustified absence on their record could result in failing the year. Conversely in NY, if a student is removed from a teacher’s class for a period the consequences for them are not significant, and the student is not marked as absent because students are not supposed to be punished academically for their misbehavior. Given that, students are unlikely to challenge an instruction to leave the class. To the contrary! This also helps in understanding the category falsified school documents. In both schools there are few infractions under this category, but they are indicative of how rules and institutional practices shape behavior. The Greek students were attempting to erase their absences from the official attendance books, while NY students were changing their programs in order to be able to go to lunch at a time that suited them better.
Infractions are the point when institutions act. Smoking and having forbidden items are categories of out-of-class infractions that prevail only in the Greek school. This phenomenon can be explained if we take into account when the infractions were registered in relation to the school’s circumstances at the time. In Greece, out-of-class infractions account for less than 6% of all infractions, and the few that were registered, took place at the beginning of the 2008-2009 academic year, immediately after the TA passed the rules banning cell-phones and smoking. From that point on teachers were expected to treat those behaviors as undisciplined.

A study of the TA minutes indicates that the school was already struggling with student indiscipline during the previous years as well, but the TA failed to act. Only at the beginning of the 2008-2009 academic year, with the initiative of a new, dynamic principal, did the TA decide to do something about it. (I had originally planned to conduct this research during 2007-2008, but permission from the Greek government took longer than expected. If the research had taken place earlier, the use of cell phones and smoking would not been classed as infractions at all.)

The above shows how much the timing of actors and observers and institutional memory and circumstances affect the existing (and prepare the ground for the future) disciplinary situation. The teachers in Greece, without the bad experience of the previous years (see Chapter V), would most probably not have voted for the internal regulation that was enacted in the beginning of 2008-2009. Smoking in particular, had enjoyed a tolerance, and in many cases the open support, of Greek society in general (the anti-smoking laws were to be enforced in public spaces in Greece in July 2009). The teachers, many of whom were smokers themselves, in all probability, would not have voted to ban this behavior.

A “Thoughts’ Controlling” Organization.
A fuller examination of the findings might cast doubt on my assertion (section of this chapter, “The rules: We tell you to think accordingly”) that the abundance of rules in NY contributes to higher indiscipline. More than half of the teachers in NY did not know the rules (let alone experience them as categories of thought to guide their perceptions and actions); those who knew them mentioned the building rules only, a short list, similar to that of the Greek school. The NY school, by focusing on a small list of building requirements and overlooking the Discipline Code, established these few rules (rather than the whole body of existing rules) as the core categories by which teachers would think, judge student behavior and take action.

Therefore, the rules are categories of thought that are defined by the school bureaucracy after being filtered. If teachers start thinking based on a general set of rules and policies (such as the Discipline Code), then the process of institutional/administrative choice may be jeopardized. The leadership of the school, in order to be able to “ceremonially” adopt externally determined policies and maintain some autonomy in the way that the school is administered, needs to decide which rules and polices it will focus the teachers’ attention toward, and which to direct attention away from. The abundance of rules, therefore, is simply an illusion in the process of discipline in NY; they do not necessarily direct teachers’ thinking let alone guide them in managing undisciplined behaviors. It is important that these rules exist in order to be used or referred to if necessary, in order for the institution to legally justify that it has done everything possible to ‘abide by the book’.

A good example of how rules are filtered and policies are adopted “ceremonially” is the school’s choice in NY to not enforce the Chancellor’s regulations regarding student punishment. The Discipline Code clearly states the range and severity of suspensions, and who is responsible for punishing the students. Teachers are supposed to initiate class removals of students who
misbehave in their classes, and the principal must honor the teacher’s request if it is properly justified. The administration, however, prefers the discipline process to be managed by the deans in order to control the number of suspensions and the legality of the process. They also wanted to avoid the paperwork that this formal process would require, and did not want to divert resources toward this externally determined practice. The principal explained that the teachers did not want class removals because they were very happy with the way things were working up to that point, however I cannot agree with him. The teachers were never given an informed choice. The administration made decisions on their behalf. Therefore, instead of training the teachers to properly undertake the process of student removal from their classes, the administration filtered the rules for them and maintained the status quo.

This explains the similar impressions that the teachers had in both settings regarding the (in)adequacy of the rules. The NY teachers had ingrained in their minds the short list of common infractions they were bombarded with (as brief as the list of rules of the Greek school), but not the lengthy and comprehensive Discipline Code. Only a few deans ever referred to the Discipline Code.

The filtering process of deciding which rules and policies to adopt draws attention to a very important difference between NY and Greece. The Greek school is democratically governed and the TA is responsible for the formation of school policy. All teachers need to know the laws in order to make informed decisions. The laws of the state are supposed to be the guiding categories within which teachers think and operate and school policies are not only formulated according to state laws, but are also openly contested. There is no opportunity to adopt policies “ceremonially” because knowledge of the laws cannot be filtered by institutional practices. In NY, the administration of a school constitutes a filtering divide that stands between teachers and
external institutions. The administration sets goals for the school and then, decide which policies and practices would most efficiently help them to achieve these goals. They define “efficiently” of course, based on bureaucratic priorities and not educational. For example, the administration in a NYC school would never hold two all-faculty meetings to decide what to do about a student who pulled a knife. This would be dealt with quietly, in the dean’s office; the student would be arrested, and most teachers and students in the school would be non-the-wiser. Additionally, it would be considered an unwise use of resources to “waste” so many teachers’ time over such an issue. Teachers need time to plan lessons rather than being distracted making decisions about a “criminal” student. The process of filtering is presented as making the work of the teachers easier, as minimizing paperwork, as facilitating communication, and so on. In reality, however, filtering determines the perception of teachers regarding educational priorities. Bureaucratic priorities of efficiency are mistaken for educational ones, and teachers are turned into educators who think in bureaucratic terms. The undisciplined students, since they are out of their classes, belong in different categories and are not their responsibility.

**Bureaucracy and Modernity**

The NY school is a well-organized bureaucracy with regard to student discipline. It has to follow a long list of written disciplinary rules and stated consequences for all infractions. Conversely, the Greek school has a very short list of rules, and there are no stated consequences for infractions. The principal had stated, “Whoever is brought to my office gets suspended,” but nothing is formally in writing. Weber (1978) stated that legal-rational authority is founded upon instrumental reason; any decision on the part of the students to obey or not to obey the rules would be based on a cost benefit analysis. Students need to know the consequences of their actions in order to decide what course to take. The presupposition, of course, for a valid cost-
benefit analysis to be able to take place is that the organization’s enforcement of rules and policies is consistent. I suggest that the existence of rules that students are expected to follow, with enforcement that is not consistent, is counter-productive for the aims of discipline.

**Rules and punishment.** The NY school indeed, has the elements of a well-organized bureaucracy; however I have demonstrated two important concerns:

a) The administration filters the list of externally determined rules and teachers and students are constantly reminded about only a few of these. The rest of the rules remain in a book to be consulted only when needed (similar to the laws that only become apparent when something regulated by those laws is in question); this, in a sense, makes the NY setting similar to the Greek school. Both act on a short list of rules.

b) In NY punishments are explicitly outlined, but there is a wide range of possibilities for the disciplinarians to choose from. Most students cannot predict what a dean might do in any given situation. Indeed, as was demonstrated under the “punishment” findings, there is a significant lack of consistency; most students who are referred to the dean do not receive any punishment, but a small percentage does. Some deans are punishment-oriented and some are not. In Greece, similarly, it is recognized that some teachers will suspend and some will not, or that the principal will usually punish. I would say that in Greece the expectation of being suspended is higher than in NY because there is no second layer of administrators for the students to rely on; the teacher can punish them on the spot and the principal will definitely punish. In both systems, however, the students deal with actors; they are subjected to personal decisions rather than objective and consistent laws. This subjective personal factor cannot play a part in effective bureaucracies.

This puts into question whether the NY bureaucracy is indeed effective. Students’ ability to perform a cost-benefit analysis is compromised. The regular offenders learn how to work the
system and assess the probabilities: “It’s more likely that I’ll have a talk with the dean. I don’t think they’ll suspend me,” or “Send me to the dean, what do you think might happen? Nothing!” Equally in Greece the students do not know what each teacher will do in each case and cannot make a well-informed cost-benefit analysis, but they learn with time what probabilities they have with each teacher. Also in both systems, students are hopeful that they are not going to be caught.

**Implementation of policies: We may not get caught.** Indeed, students realize that for less serious infractions it is unlikely that they will get caught, and even less likely that they will be punished. Institutions must survive inside other institutions, and individuals inside institutions. All schools have rules that their teachers are expected to follow, but in general, some of the rules cannot be followed 100% of the time and 100% “by the book.” The teachers in both schools underreport or under-punish infractions that they do not consider to be serious, such as the use of phones, the wearing of hats, smoking (in Greece), or mild disturbances in class. As mentioned previously the discrepancies between reports from teachers and recorded infractions and the ratios between observed and registered infractions of certain rules such as wearing a hat, smoking, or having a cell phone are startlingly. The students know that they are unlikely to get caught and punished; the rules of probability teach them that it is “safe” to break some rules, and they are willing to take the risk.

Even for more serious infractions, it’s a fairly safe bet that due to teachers’ and administrators’ indifference students will avoid punishment. As most teachers and deans testify in both schools they do not adopt a formal approach to following procedures. As an example, in the NY school most teachers do not call a student’s home before referring them to the deans because they are overwhelmed with work. In cases where they do call, it is usually during school
hours when the students’ parents are at work and communication between parents and teachers breaks down. Additionally, when teachers leave answering machine messages, it is easy for students to delete them in advance of parents returning home. Deans also for low severity infractions do not call home. They have a chat with the student, or just deal with the infraction on paper. For more serious infractions, in which case the deans do call home and impose a punishment, again, the student finds out that there is nothing to be afraid of. The first time they go to the In-House room they realize the ‘benefits’ they get: they are not forced to do any work, their day is shorter, and if they cut, they get further suspensions (i.e., more days of doing nothing). In Greece, things are no better. Some teachers do not register absences when they remove students from their class and parents are not always informed. Some teachers set a bad example by smoking in front of the students, or being late for their classes. These teachers will not punish students for behaviors that they exhibit themselves and students take advantage of it.

The failure to implement policies consistently significantly affects the level of indiscipline in a school because students can see where there are policy failings and they take advantage of it. Teachers in Greece, for example, do not inform the principal of impending absences. This, as the principal claims, does not give her sufficient time to rework the schedule. However, according to the law, the schedule still has to be reworked. This results in many students remaining in the hallway, unsupervised, during periods and creating disciplinary problems. Some teachers remove students from their classes for minor reasons (e.g., because they do not have their books) even though the law clearly states that students should not be removed for trivial reasons. The principal had declared in the TA that all suspended students would be accommodated in the library and work on educational projects but this promise was never honored. As a result, students continued to loiter in the yards, or roam the hallways.
Accountability and consistency: Two different systems with the same face. In both systems, teachers report a lack of accountability and consistency with regard to their colleagues. In NY, deans and teachers complained about staff getting tired of pushing children along in the hallways and of suspending the same students. They also talked about colleagues “passing the buck” and doing nothing, and about laziness, or overwhelming work. In Greece the teachers stressed similar things – the fact that their colleagues are not consistent in following the rules, that they are not doing their job properly, that some are lazy, and that those who are conscientious are overworked. Particular criticism was leveled at the specialists, and teachers were not positive at all in NY. Many deans said that the more people they involve in a case, the more difficult it becomes to efficiently address the issue at hand. I also observed much indiscipline taking place in the hallways and the SSAs, being tired already, pretended not to see.

In both schools this is a significant problem in terms of students’ calculation of the consequences. Will the teachers, deans, or SSAs address the infraction? Are the rules going to be enforced or not? Will suspension be given and for how long? Given these findings, even though we would expect the NY bureaucracy to be effective, I contend that the factor of bureaucratic organization has little positive impact internally, in terms of the behavior of the students. However, as Meyer and Rowan (1977) suggest, this perception of a comprehensive disciplinary bureaucracy is good for the relationship of the school with its external environment and the legitimacy that it needs to have in the eyes of parents and external institutions.

Structural-functional differentiation. The NY school as a modern institution has very high structural-functional differentiation, whereas the Greek school does not. Has differentiation made teachers, deans, and SSAs; or psychologists and social workers better at their jobs? Interviewees in NY and in Greece complained equally about ineffectiveness. Yet, in NY, there
was one extra area of concern: the job description of each person and not stepping into somebody else’s area of responsibility. Has differentiation improved disciplinary efficiency? NY student has been dissected and examined in great detail, and a variety of professionals and agencies have being sharing the “business” of education; which I believe is where the problem regarding student discipline lies. As I noted before, in the process of dealing with indiscipline, each category of professionals, through “caring” about the students and about their own professional existence, initiates processes that create even more indiscipline. These processes are supported by governmental priorities and practices. In the following section I discuss further, but very generally, the function of governance in order to better portray its role with regard to the professions, but also to show how the production of categories inside an institution does not occur in a vacuum.

**On the Principles of Good Governance: Know Your Population**

By a mere examination of the way the principals of the two schools of this study expressed their disciplinary philosophies, we can see the point where governance philosophies meet with educational priorities. In Greece, the priority is the disciplining of the individual in order to enable him to learn and also ensuring that students obey the law. In NYC, the disciplinary/educational priority is to support students with services that encourage healthy psychological development and with programs (mostly in the arts) that address their need for self-expression, while implementing an indirect disciplinary operation—panopticon (NYC).

The Foucauldian governmentality categories are applied in the United States more than in Greece. This is indicated by at least two factors: a) the abundance of state and non-governmental agencies involved in the work of governance (for student attendance alone, the school, SCR, OCFS, and ACS), and b) the focus on data collection and economic efficiency. The NY
government has a health of information about its population. This is not the case in Greece, where governance has not yet proliferated (on the same issue, that of student attendance, there are no specific provisions). The state does not even have comprehensive statistics about its population, let alone the capacity to coordinate governmental activity in order to direct economic efficiency.

Ignorance of the population (due to a lack of data) results in an inability to secure economic efficiency through an appropriate “disposition of things.” In concrete terms, this means that the Greek state has not yet developed the necessary sophistication to target the populations which present risks to its economic efficiency (only in the last decade has a focus been placed on immigrants). This is bad for the state, but good for education. The lack of systematic data regarding student demographics and performance, teacher qualifications and performance, and the work of the schools in general, does not allow the Greek state to direct the organization of its education system with the purpose of cultivating the homo economicus effectively. Therefore, by default, it still maintains as its priority education with a humanistic focus. Efforts to offer vocational education in the past have failed due to resistance from students who consider Vocational Lycea to be of lower quality than General Lycea (Kassotakis, 1981) – the state has been more successful only lately (Commission of the Communist Party, 2011). Due to this “failure,” the Greek school still maintains a democratic character, as is apparent in its administration, the minimally differentiated curricula, the lack of student academic tracking and ability grouping, and so on. Greek law states that the school’s goal is to offer a general, democratic education to all children. I believe Greece has, until now, resisted a transformation of its educational system to completely serve the economy because the state has failed to organize governmental categories to serve economic measures and ends.
With regard to student discipline these democratic features are of paramount importance. Public schools in Greece can still afford to educate students without worrying about competitiveness and markets. They can maintain an education without divisions, in or out, special or general, the education of the minorities and of others who need help, the statistics, and the funding. There are no special programs that will bring money to the school if they improve standards, or if they show good disciplinary outcomes. In short, the state has created neither the categories nor the incentives to fully turn the schools into “workshops” for the production of the *homo economicus*.

The idea of educating the whole child is in conflict with the model of “good governance.” According to Foucault (1991), governmentality has economic efficiency at the heart of all its activity and its main objective is to effectively develop the *homo economicus*. This point of conflict is of great importance for disciplining in general and for student discipline in particular. Future workers are seen as bodies and souls and as skills and competencies; each person is expected to develop both and to be directed (by the government) toward benefiting the self in ways that advance the economy. The development of the body and the soul lays the preconditions for the successful acquisition of skills and competencies. Individuals will acquire incentives to discipline the self towards the requirements of the economy (they will be willing to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to become good workers) through the appropriate direction of their pleasures, desires, demands, or attitudes. In short, state cultural interventions and the addressing of the soul (psychagogy) may be needed, especially in the lower classes.

Modern schools, as extensions of the capitalist economy, unfortunately cultivate skills, aptitudes, and knowledge with the purpose of serving this economy. The question remains if they do this in a way that can also benefit the students; how will the schools intervene in the
formation of attitudes, pleasures, desires, etc., which will give the students the incentive to
discipline the self in order to become willing and able to acquire the desired skills and aptitudes
(which will help the economy, but also themselves) (cf. Aronowitz 2008). Neither the Greek nor
the NY school systems have answered this question yet, let alone figured out how to formulate
policies and direct practices accordingly. According to Foucault (1991), an over-reliance on the
law does not work in modern society, which has moved towards managing obedience through
managing pleasure and directing the soul. Both schools in this study, in fact almost all schools of
the western world, have embraced the ideals of capitalism and work in preparing the future work
force. However, they have not thought of addressing the prerequisite of their teaching’s success;
they have failed to apply appropriate technologies (such as psychology, the arts, aesthetics, and
recreation) in order to address the fields of (engage students through) desire and pleasure. That is
a curriculum yet to be written.

Contributions of the Study

This dissertation research has made some original contributions to the fields of Education
and Sociology through its methodology and findings. Although more research is needed to
substantiate and extend its findings, the study has laid the ground for a new approach to
understanding student discipline.

It is the first ethnographic study to attempt a comparison of two schools of different
nations in examining student indiscipline as an everyday occurrence. Most of the studies that
have been conducted up to this point have been one-case ethnographic studies (MacLeod, 2008;
Ferguson, 2000; Valenzuela, 1999; Fordham, 1996; Willis, 1979), but all try to explain student
behavior within the parameters of a school in capitalist societies. A comparison of schools
located in different countries helps to isolate the factors of national policies and styles of school administration.

Student indiscipline has been examined from a non-essentialist perspective. Up to this point, most studies viewed it as an essence that exists externally to institutions and rules. This research project measured the extent of “the problem,” of what is perceived as an essence, and demystified its creation by locating it inside the nexus of institutions. It is the first study to attempt an institutional, not-essentialist understanding of student discipline.

Theoretically, this research lays the ground for going a little further than the cultural reproductive model did, using Mary Douglas’s explanation of “how institutions think.” Agency (student, teacher, administrator) is to be understood as the actor inside structures, which itself (agency) creates in dialectic and non-ending process in the form of institutions (concepts, beliefs, ideas, categories, professions, organizations, laws, practices, infraction, disciplined, etc.). These institutions, after their creation, create “new people,” in short, new agencies (“new” students, “new” teachers, “new” administrators – in the same physical body, of course, but as thinking existences) and delineate the parameters for them to create more institutions (more or different infractions, more professions, different pathologies, different laws, etc.). We have to see this as a constant action where at times the agency creates institutions and other times the institutions are creating the new agencies, sometimes simultaneously when people create institutions, institutions create people. Each category of new people, again, creates new institutions as part and to be part of a creating process that goes on endlessly. Each time, we need to keep in mind, that neither the structure nor the agency remains the same (it just appears to be so), because agency and structure are not essences; they are points in place and time. It depends on who the observer is and on what point and place this observer observes in order to see who acts and what is created. In short,
Willis’ Lads do not only affect the process of their reproduction as a class, they affect other processes, but in fields that we often cannot clearly see as researchers due to our perspectives. While reproducing themselves under the influence of institutions that are already in place, they also create new institutions that establish new practices, which prompt new institutional reactions, which make teachers and students, but also policy makers think differently, which creates people who are thinking differently, and who are going to create further new institutions, and so on. Since social action and struggle is not static, it is constantly transforming its own conditions of possibility and the contours of future struggles. This process will have unanticipated effects and will produce new people to act regardless of what we, the observers, can observe and regardless of what the actors may have originally intended.

This is one of the few studies to systematically observe negative effects of differentiation and specialization on the disciplining of students. Contrary to popular opinion that expects the deeper knowledge acquired with specialization to act beneficially in all cases, I show that this is not the case with student discipline. Indeed, the fact that knowledge about something becomes deeper, by itself, justifies a more precise definition of the object under study and more and/or better production of specialized personnel. This may be functional if the whole process generates what is perceived to be “normal.” However, it is harmful when it generates the “pathological,” at least for those who fall outside the definition of normal. Of course, we need to note here that what is harmful for one set of people may be functional for another group or for the society in general.

Finally, this project is the first attempt to construct an organizational theory of student discipline. Despite some shortcomings from incomplete research due to time limitations, it constitutes a good foundation on which later research can be built.
Implications for Future Research and Practice

As a preliminary understanding of student discipline, this dissertation research would benefit from further investigation in order to assert its claims. First, I consider that the mechanics of the in-out of class differentiation need to be further studied in longitudinal comparisons that involve similar institutions in the same country. This, I believe, would shed light on the process of institutional cultural reproduction I describe and help in understanding how students, administration, and teachers can play a part in defining the character and trajectory of a school.

School administration is a critical area that also needs to be extensively studied as an apparatus that, in its effort to better coordinate external forces with internal needs, takes decisions that harm its own population, students and teachers alike. The process of controlling teachers’ thinking through the filtering and emphasis on particular rules and polices, I believe, warrants further exploration. Because of this process, the institutions that teachers are able to produce as pedagogues are determined by administrative rather than pedagogical priorities.

The idea of the institutions and the process of the social creation of the “new man” is one that can be used in studies of educational transfer. Often, international education practitioners complain that many programs only secure funding for their initial stages of implementation and take for granted that after the program stops, its effects cease as well. This analysis of institutions demonstrates a different assumption that needs further exploration. Depending on the initial stages of program implementation, new institutions may be created, which will continue working after the program stops as cultural categories. These institutions, by themselves and without appearing to be controlled from the outside, may well create what the program was trying to bring about in the first place. This creation, however, would rely on local forces (less expensive for the donors), and would be free from the stigma of being imported, and therefore
inappropriate. Studies need to explore how the initial stages of implementation would direct locally created institutions and how these institutions would incorporate the local elements as well.

Taking into account state policy priorities, administrative styles, and student population characteristics, education consultants could evaluate schools’ progress in the area of discipline. With further research, knowledge could be produced to advise schools and policymakers accordingly and direct them toward appropriate practices.

My findings clearly indicate that laws and policies that are democratic in spirit can be converted to unjust practices in the process of their adaptation by schools. It is recommended that policymakers always develop safeguards to counter “ceremonial,” poor, or illegal implementation practices.

Training programs for teachers and administrators would benefit from this study. Teachers’ and administrators’ perceptions and beliefs have to be carefully examined through approaches that emphasize an understanding of behavior if positive changes in education are to be introduced. Also teachers need to be made more aware of the importance of examining the legal framework of education themselves in order to better understand schooling and assess the value of their work.
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Appendix

Teacher Interviews

Background information

1. How many years have you been working as a teacher?
2. How many years have you been in this school?
3. What subject(s) do you teach?
4. Which grade(s) do you teach?

Perceptions / definition of what is student transgression

1. In general, if I say ‘undisciplined students’ what picture comes to mind? What behavior would you describe as undisciplined?
2. From the following list of behaviors what would you classify as unruly behavior?
   (1) Wearing a hat
   (2) Using a cell-phone
   (3) Leaving class without a pass
   (4) Cutting class
   (5) Coming to class late
3. In general, what kinds of student transgressions would you classify as serious and what as less serious? What is the differentiating factor in your classification?
4. Are there many students breaking the rules, school wide, or just a few, according to your experience?
5. In general, what constitutes “proper” student behavior for you? How should a disciplined student behave?

Administration of discipline (rules, regulations, practices)

1. What rules of conduct does the school follow? Do you know them?
2. Regarding the effective targeting of student behavior, do you think that the present system of rules is about right, is it inadequate, or does it also address behaviors that are not really disruptive? Give examples.
3. Is the current system of punishment meaningful, or do you think a more/less strict or different system should be sought? Why? Give examples.
4. Which student transgressions are *common* in your classes?

5. How do you usually handle a “common” disciplinary problem in your class? How did you handle the most recent instance? Give other examples, if you remember.

6. How do you usually handle a disciplinary problem that you classify as “difficult”? How did you handle the most recent difficult case? Give other examples, if you remember.

7. When do you write referrals/send a student to the principal/refer an incident to the Teachers’ Assembly?

8. What is that makes you write a referral instead of solving the problem yourself?

9. Do you always address a transgression when you see it? Why/why not?

10. When you address an infraction do you always follow the official school system of punishment without any deviations? Why or why not?

*Division of labor/specialists*

1. Who is responsible for punishing the students who misbehave in your class? 
   (Does it make sense to you to have people other than the teachers to sanction the students)?

2. Which disciplinary cases, in your view, should be handled by specialists (psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, counselors)?

3. Are you indeed getting any support from specialists (counselors, psychologists, psychiatrists or social workers)? Can you demonstrate with examples some cases where their help was crucial to you and/or to the student?

4. Do you have many cases in which you would say that support by specialists is necessary?

5. How do the SSAs help you in the task of disciplining your students? What exactly do they do? Can you demonstrate with examples situations where their help was crucial to you?

*Perceptions with regard to their own role/actual practice*

1. How do you view your role with regard to student discipline? What should your job be?

2. Please, describe a few examples of disciplinary problems. It would be helpful to include as much detail as possible, for example tell me about the infraction, background information (if any), your intervention, and the student’s reaction. (Why do you single out these incidents?)