THE PRICE OF DEVIANCE:
SOCIAL NORMS AND ACCESS TO JOB SEARCH ASSISTANCE

A Thesis

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by

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ABSTRACT

Assistance in job search is a valuable social resource that can markedly benefit its recipients. However, recent studies have shown that people who have information about jobs frequently withhold assistance from job seekers. In other words, knowledge of job information, the ability to help, and ties to job seekers by no means guarantee that information holders will provide assistance. Although previous research provides a framework for understanding how information holders make decisions about whether to provide assistance, the literature has not yet established that these mechanisms actually impact outcomes for job seekers. This paper addresses this gap through an examination of assistance flows in Japan, using the Working Persons Survey 2000. Based on previous research, I hypothesize that information holders more often withhold assistance from job seekers who violate social norms. I then test whether deviance decreases the likelihood of receiving assistance on sample of male job changers, and find that job seekers pay a price for deviant behavior. This demonstrates the importance of social norms in explaining assistance flows, illustrates the limits of purely structural analysis, and has implications for the study of inequality in Japan and beyond.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Hilary Holbrow is a Ph.D. student in the Sociology Department of Cornell University. Her current work focuses on highly skilled immigration, and how work opportunities and environment influence immigrants' decisions to stay or return to their home countries.

Before coming to Cornell, Hilary worked as a research assistant at Harvard University's Program on U.S. - Japan Relations, as a Coordinator for International Relations in Okinawa, Japan, and as press assistant at the Japanese Embassy in Washington, DC. She is the recipient of a Robert J. Smith Fellowship in Japanese Studies, a FLAS Award, Blakemore Freeman Fellowship, and the Ada Draper Award. She speaks fluent Japanese and is learning Mandarin Chinese. Her work has been published in *Daedalus,* the journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Assistance in job search is a valuable social resource that can markedly benefit its recipients.[1] Ranging from tips about job openings to friends' and acquaintances' direct intervention in the hiring process, job search assistance increases job seekers' information about and access to jobs, compared to workers who rely solely on formal search. Although there is contradictory evidence about the relationship between informal job finding and job outcomes (see Granovetter 1995), recipients of assistance have the opportunity to land better jobs, whatever their ultimate job finding method, because they can select the most desirable job from among a larger array of options (Devine and Kiefer 1991; Mouw 2002; Mouw 2003). Understanding differences in access to assistance therefore illuminates broader patterns of inequality (McDonald 2011).

With a few exceptions (Marin 2012; Ridgeway 1997; Smith 2005, 2007, 2010) previous research has focused primarily on the structural factors that influence access to assistance in job search (e.g. Campbell 1988; Lin 1999; Loury 1977; McDonald 2011). However, structural explanations on their own are inadequate, because the presence of a tie between the information holder and the job seeker does not guarantee a flow of resources: in fact, information holders *withhold* help from job seekers with surprising frequency (Marin 2012; Smith 2005, 2007, 2010).

Drawing on several rich ethnographic studies of information holders (Marin 2012; Smith 2005, 2007, 2010), I identify three mechanisms—self-protection, sanctioning, and effort conservation—that explain information holders' decisions to provide assistance as a function of

[1] Many scholars refer to the benefits available through social networks as social capital. I avoid this term because of its diverse meanings across research contexts, including the ability to enforce norms (Coleman 1988), the norms themselves (Putnam 1995), the resources available through social networks (Bourdieu 1986), the social networks themselves (Burt 1992), or even the exorbitant demands placed on individuals by other network members, referred to as "negative social capital" (Portes 1998). Even within the literature on labor market social capital, scholars differ on whether social capital is best conceived of as social networks, the resources they contain, or the resources that job seekers actually can and do access (Lin 1999; Smith 2005).

job seekers' behavior. However, while Marin and Smith have shown that information holders protect themselves, sanction others, and conserve effort, the literature has not yet established that these mechanisms actually impact outcomes for job seekers. If decision-making mechanisms do not systematically shape job seekers' *access* to assistance, their relevance to social inequality is negligible.

In this paper, I explain how the mechanisms described in Smith and Marin's work allow us to predict that job seeker deviance from "norms of oughtness" (Hechter and Opp 2001; Horne 2001) reduces these jobs seekers' access to assistance. This is because deviant job seekers are more likely to reflect poorly on the information holder's reputation, are more likely to invite sanctions, and are more difficult to assist successfully. I then test the relationship between deviance and access to assistance using a high-quality dataset on job changers in Japan, the Working Person Survey, a sample of employed persons in Japan's three largest metropolitan regions collected in August, 2000.[2] The dataset includes information on employment history, job search, and job finding methods. Employment history variables allow me to identify individuals who have violated labor market norms, while job search and finding methods allow me to measure access to assistance.

Through this study, I make three contributions. Firstly, I identify general mechanisms through which social norms shape patterns of job search assistance. These mechanisms apply across cultural contexts, and allow us to make predictions about access to job search assistance wherever we can identify social norms and job seekers' deviance or conformity. This approach refines and complements purely structural analysis, in that it can explain why assistance might not flow to job seekers even when it is present in their networks. Secondly, I apply an empirical

[2] The data for this secondary analysis, "Working Persons Survey, 2000, Recruit Works Institute," was provided by the Social Science Japan Data Archive, Center for Social Survey and Data Archives, Institute of Social Science, The University of Tokyo.

test to whether deviance and conformity predict access to assistance in a way that is consistent with these mechanisms. While previous research implies this would be the case, my study provides, to my knowledge, the first systemic investigation of this prediction. Finally, I contribute to the sociological literature on the Japanese labor market. Because mobility in Japan is low compared to the United States, most of the previous English-language scholarship on job finding in Japan has investigated only entry into first jobs (Brinton and Kariya 1998; Rebick 2000; Rosenbaum and Kariya 1989). However, because I use employment history to identify deviance and conformity, my sample consists of entirely of mid-career job changers. Thus my study provides a unique look at the role of social networks and access to assistance later in workers' careers. My findings also allow me to predict how patterns of access to job search assistance may influence inequality in the Japanese context.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Assistance in Job Search

Although often treated as a single phenomenon, job search assistance can mean many different things. The first and most passive type of assistance is when information holders tell job seekers of a publicly advertised position (Smith 2010). This type of assistance is less valuable to job seekers than those I outline below, but nonetheless gives job seekers the chance to learn of a position they might otherwise have overlooked. A second type assistance, more valuable than the first, is when information holders give job seekers information about job openings that is not available to the general public. In a similar vein, they can supply the job seeker with other insider insights, such as what qualifications the boss values most, or how and when hiring decisions will be made. Assistance in the form of inside information can give its recipients a relative advantage

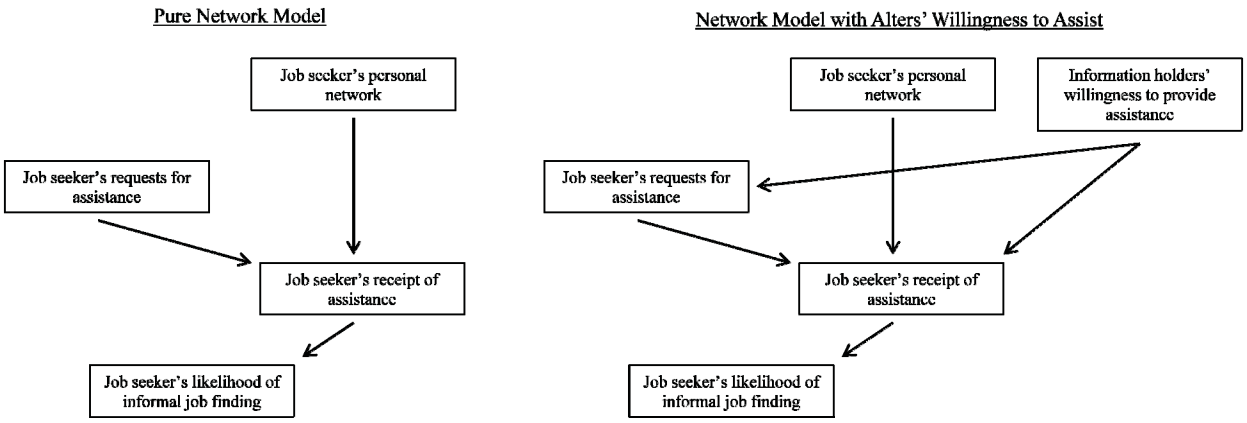
in hiring (Fernandez and Weinberg 1997). Finally, the third type of assistance is when information holders intervene directly with the employer on the job seeker's behalf, for example by personally recommending the job seeker, or even by making the hiring decision themselves. In some cases, this process is formalized when employers deliberately tap employee networks for recruitment (Fernandez, Castilla, and Moore 2000). This last type of assistance is arguably of greatest benefit to the job seeker, because the information holder has the greatest opportunity to influence the employer in favor of hiring (Lin 1999).

Because quality and quantity of assistance available to job seekers tend to be correlated (Montgomery 1992), having greater access to assistance refers both to receiving more information as well as to receiving more substantive, active kinds of help. Thus, when I describe someone as having greater access to assistance, I mean that they enjoy both a higher quantity and a higher quality of assistance than others. In turn, we can expect these relatively advantaged people to find jobs through informal methods more frequently, ceteris paribus.

Factors in Access to Assistance

The sociological literature had identified several factors that influence job seekers' access to assistance, with a particular focus on the role of social networks. For example, larger networks (Montgomery 1991), networks that reach farther into social space (Burt 1992; Granovetter 1973, 1983), networks containing more employed contacts (Calvó-Armengol and Jackson 2004), and networks that connect the job seeker to high status alters (Lin 1999; Lin, Ensel, and Vaughn 1981; Marsden and Hurlbert 1988; McDonald 2011) are all thought to contain more job information, which increases the supply of assistance, and contributes to higher rates of informal job finding.

Figure 1



The left side of Figure 1 depicts the pure network view of access to assistance. The model suggests that job seekers' networks contain a certain amount of assistance and information at any given time, and depending on how active they are in requesting help from their networks, job

seekers receive greater or lesser amounts of help from the pool. However, the right networks contain so much assistance that job seekers' pursuit of assistance is a relatively unimportant part of the causal story: the best networks will provide information even when job seekers do not solicit assistance at all (Granovetter 1973; McDonald 2011).

Several recent studies, however, draw attention to the limitations of a stand-alone network approach. Intriguingly, research by Sandra Susan Smith and Alexandra Marin suggests that even when friends and acquaintances *can* provide assistance, they choose not to with surprising frequency. In interviews with 103 workers in a predominantly black and impoverished Michigan community, Sandra Susan Smith (2005) found that 81 percent of respondents expressed reluctance to assist job seekers. In another study of 19 black and 20 Latino workers in service jobs at UC Berkeley, Smith (2010) likewise found that only 50 percent of Latino workers and 27 percent of black workers had provided the most proactive assistance (employer intervention) when they had the opportunity to do so. Alexandra Marin found this same reluctance to help in substantive ways, or even to help at all, among white collar workers. Marin (2012) interviewed 37 insurance agents who reported knowledge of 222 job openings. She discovered that information holders provided even the most minimal assistance only 27 percent of the time, even when information holders knew of a job *and* of a contact who would be appropriate for the job. This surprising infrequency of information sharing suggests that information holders' decisions about whether to provide assistance are a second major influence on the supply of assistance available to job seekers.

The right side of Figure 1 shows how information holders' willingness to provide assistance affects job seekers' receipt of assistance, independent of network effects. The diagram illustrates the insight that information holders' willingness to provide assistance affects the

amount of assistance accessed by job seekers both directly and indirectly. This is because unwillingness to assist both makes information holders more likely to refuse job seekers' requests for help, and makes job seekers less likely to request that help in the first place (Smith 2007), even when information holders could theoretically provide assistance.

Mechanisms in Information Holder Decision-Making

Given the prevalence of information withholding, in order to accurately model access to assistance, it is crucial to understand how information holders decide whether to provide or withhold assistance. Supply side studies of information holders suggest that the decision to provide assistance is a rational cost-benefit calculation, informed by social norms and cultural scripts (Marin 2005; Smith 2005, 2007, 2010). In the following section, I classify findings from the supply side literature into three general mechanisms, and explain how all three mechanisms imply that deviant job seekers are likely to suffer from reduced access to job search assistance.

The first mechanism in information holder decision-making is one of self-protection. Because behavior that would alienate employers would in turn reflect poorly on the person who referred the job seeker, information holders are reluctant to "put their name on the line," and provide the more substantive types of assistance to job seekers who they believe will make a negative impression on employers (Marin 2012; Smith 2007). However, information holders do not have perfect information on how job seekers will behave on the job, or on employers' preferences. This means information holders must rely on observations of job seekers' previous behavior to predict their future job performance, and on general "norms of oughtness" (Hechter

and Opp 2001; Horne 2001)[3] as a proxy for employer preferences. When job seekers' behavior and characteristics deviate from "norms of oughtness," information holders (rightly or wrongly) fear that referring the job seeker could damage their reputation or material wellbeing. Thus, the self-protection mechanism strongly suggests that job seekers who violate social norms are likely to receive less assistance in job search.

The second mechanism is sanctioning. Many of Smith's informants saw certain types of job seekers as "unworthy" or "undeserving" of assistance (Smith 2010). For example, respondents to both the California and Michigan surveys made negative moral judgments about job seekers with long histories of unemployment, and were reluctant to assist these workers (Smith 2007, 2010). Likewise, some information holders went out their way to assist job seekers whom they evaluated positively (Smith 2010). These findings suggest a sanctioning mechanism in which information holders use job search assistance to reward or punish job seekers, independently of information holders' concern for their reputations. Unlike the self-protection mechanism, the sanctioning mechanism does not involve calculations of the direct, external benefits or costs of helping a particular job seeker. Rather, it reflects the information holder's innate desire to uphold the social order by punishing job seekers who violate social norms or rewarding those who follow them. In further contrast to the self-protection mechanism, which can explain why information holders might not help certain job seekers when they have to put their names on the line for them, sanctioning can explain why information holders might deny job seekers even the most perfunctory and passive types of assistance. Once again, the prediction for job seekers' access to assistance is clear: deviant job seekers are more likely to invite sanctions, and are thus less likely to enjoy access to assistance.

[3] Norms of oughtness describe behaviors and attitudes that are prescribed or proscribed. They differ from norms of regularity, which describe behavior that is common, but not *necessarily* required or desirable (Hechter and Opp 2001).

The third mechanism is effort conservation. Assisting job seekers requires exertion, and information holders must decide how to expend their efforts most efficiently. Providing unwanted or useless assistance is not only a waste of time; information holders also worry their contacts might see it meddling interference (Marin 2012). Therefore, information holders look for signals that job seekers want assistance and that such an exchange would be productive, even before providing the most minimal types of assistance. Like the self-protection and sanctioning mechanisms, effort conservation suggests that deviants would receive less job search assistance. For example, Smith's informants reported that they did not assist certain deviant job seekers not because they feared for their reputations, or because the job seekers did not deserve help, but because the job seeker was likely to be such an undesirable worker that he or she would never pass the employee screening or would be fired soon anyway (Smith 2007). [4] Thus information holders may withhold assistance from job seekers who violate norms of oughtness in order to save time and effort.

Understanding access to assistance is important in that it helps explain advantage and disadvantage in the labor market. Therefore, linking information holder decisions to outcomes for job seekers is a key theoretical step. Using supply side studies, I have identified three mechanisms behind information holder decision-making, and explained how they could be used in conjunction with knowledge of social norms to make predictions about job seekers' access to assistance. But while the supply side literature strongly implies that deviance decreases access to job search assistance, it does not test this prediction. It is possible that because job seekers are embedded in networks with many alters, alters' decision-making processes and judgments

[4] If the effort conservation mechanism is at work, norms of regularity could also predict assistance. This is because job seekers who are following expected social paths more clearly demonstrate what types of assistance they would need, and are thus easier to successfully assist (Marin 2012).

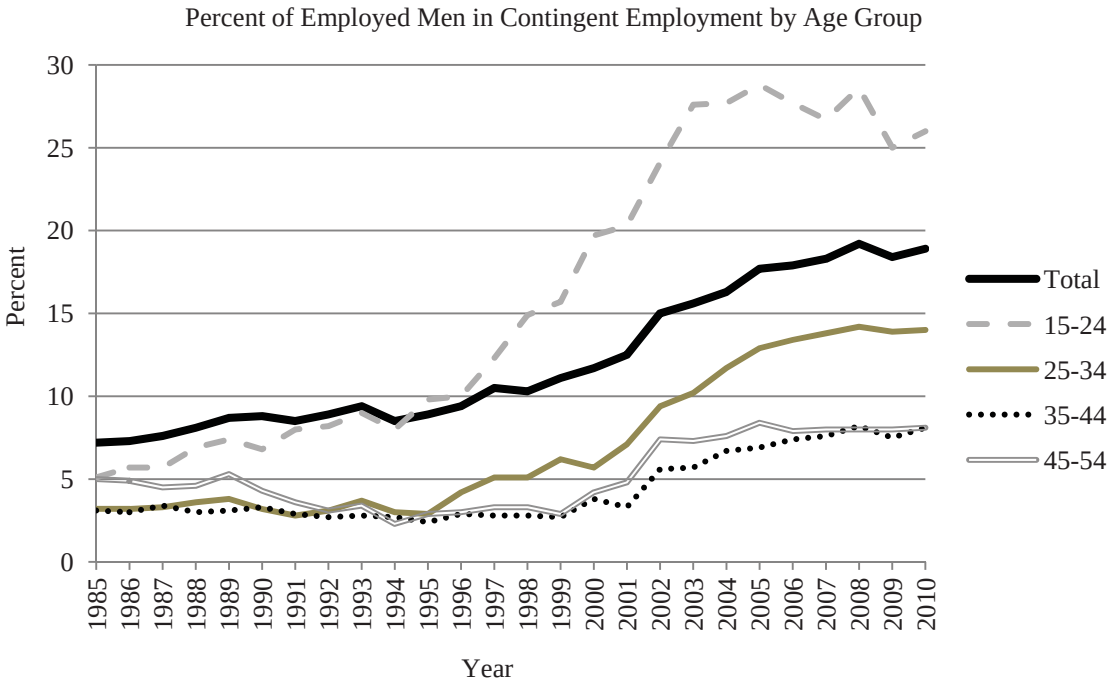
average out such that deviance from a particular norm has little effect on job seekers' access to assistance. Moreover, both Smith's population and Marin's populations were small, and it is unclear whether their findings extend to other situations. Smith's Michigan study was conducted in a community with a disproportionately high number of deviant jobs seekers, many of whom had histories of drug abuse, chronic joblessness, or incarceration. Marin's study of 37 insurance agents falls on the opposite extreme, where we might expect rates of deviance to be relatively low and minor. To test whether deviance more generally reduces access to assistance, we need a large, diverse population of job seekers, knowledge of relevant norms, and a way to identify conformity or deviance.

LABOR MARKET DYNAMICS AND INEQUALITY IN JAPAN

Japan presents a unique opportunity to test whether deviance reduces access to job search assistance. Generally speaking, identifying deviance in a large-n survey is challenging, but Japan has well-documented labor market norms that discourage workers from changing employers, as I describe in greater detail below. The strong evidence for the norm against job change, and the ease with which we can observe conformity or deviance to it make Japan an ideal large-n test case for the general claim that deviance decreases access to job search assistance.

Access to job search assistance in Japan is of substantive interest as well. Japan, like other developed countries, faces rising inequality (Tachibanaki 2006). In part, this is due to a decrease in employment stability. The percentage of workers in contingent employment is increasing and the likelihood of layoffs and unemployment is growing (MHLW 2011; Rebick 2005; Yu 2012).

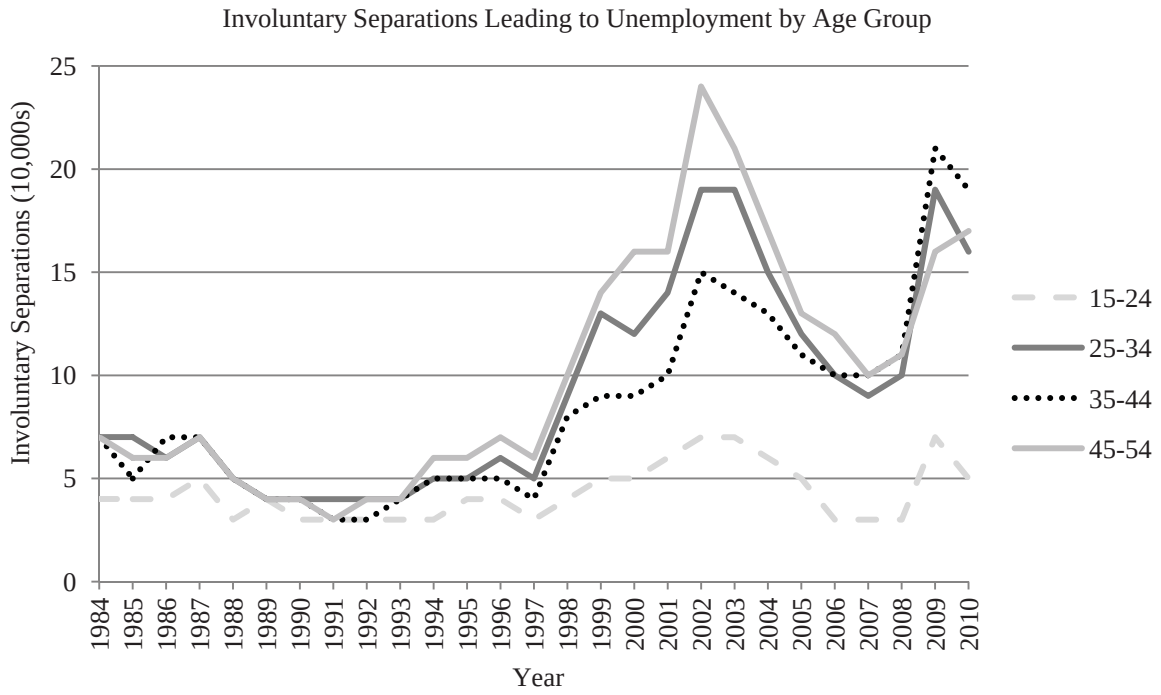
Figure 2



(MHLW 2011)

As depicted in Figure 2, younger people are most likely to experience contingent employment (Brinton 2011; Rebick 2005), although all age groups have shown at least slight increases in contingent employment rates since the 1980s. However, this does not mean that the picture is rosy for older male workers. Involuntary separations have increased for all workers, regardless of age, but older workers have born the brunt, as depicted in Figure 3.

Figure 3



(Statistics Japan 2013)

What this means is that access to assistance in job search is increasingly important for all workers (Ono and Rebick 2003). Not only has the risk of layoffs grown for everyone, but younger male workers are less likely to stay permanently in their first job (MHLW 2006). And yet we know little about job changers' access to assistance, and how it might impact stratification. The existing literature in English (Brinton 2000, 2011; Brinton and Kariya 1998; Rebick 2000; Rosenbaum and Kariya 1989) has focused primarily on "institutional social capital"—the job finding assistance available to graduating students through their high schools or universities—but this is largely unavailable to job changers, who are much more likely to use personal ties to find work than new graduates (Kobayashi 2008). Precisely because access to this institutional social capital is fading for new graduates (Brinton 2011), and employment stability is declining even for those who do find jobs right out of school, it is important to understand

mid-career job changers' access to job search assistance. The theoretical framework I have outlined above allows us to derive hypotheses about who receives the most assistance in job change, and predict the role that this plays in mitigating or perpetuating inequalities.

My specific hypotheses rest on one particularly important norm—the enduring proscription against job change. Despite the increased labor market instability I have described above, labor mobility in Japan has been and remains strikingly low by international comparison (Abegglen 1958; Cheng and Kalleberg 1997; Cole 1979; Dore 1973; Ono 2010). In 2000, only 4.1 percent of Japanese men changed employers (MHLW 2006) and the average number of jobs held by men aged 45 to 54 was 2.1 (Ono 2010). In contrast, in 1997, an estimated 16.4 percent of U.S. workers changed employers (Kambourov and Manovskii 2008) and in 1998, men in the 45 to 54 age group had held 5.6 jobs on average (Ono 2010). Nor has Japanese men's labor mobility increased significantly in the decade since 2000. Between 2000 and 2010, labor mobility among Japanese men actually declined to 3.9 percent, although this figure remains higher than the 1990 rate of 3.0 percent (JILPT 2011). Despite the increase in instability shown in Figures 3 and 4, overall mobility has stayed relatively constant for more than a decade because voluntary separations have declined even as involuntary separations have grown (Ono 2010). Thus, there is little evidence that Japan's low-mobility regime is fading away.

Why is mobility in Japan so low? In part, low mobility is a rational response to economic incentives of the labor market, and an inevitable result of patterns of labor demand. Seniority-based wage structures, internal labor markets, and company-specific training and pension plans make changing jobs disadvantageous (Brinton 1993; Schoppa 2006). Moreover, good mid-career jobs are hard to find, as almost half of companies hire no regular employees at the mid-career

level (Recruit Works Institute 2010), and often employ explicit or implicit age cut-offs in hiring (Rebick 2005).

However, there is also a strong normative component to low mobility which has emerged and developed in concert with economic incentives. Since the 1970s, companies, government publications and the press have encouraged workers' loyalty to their employers and associated mobility with dilettantism and a poor work attitude (Rohlen 1974; Usui and Colignon 1996). A 1973 report from the Japanese Prime Minister's Office exemplifies this view, declaring that "...changing employers can be thought of as a response to defective human relations" (cited in Cole 1979). While labor mobility has slowly increased since 1970s, and competing narratives sometimes paint job change in a positive light, job change is stilled "viewed with suspicion" (Brinton 2011), and workers feel that censorious attitudes make job change more difficult. In a survey from 2000, 30 percent of respondents cited damage to their reputation or relationships as a significant barrier to changing jobs, compared to 22 percent who said that detrimental effects on salary posed a barrier.[5]

Employer surveys indicate that job seekers are right to be concerned about negative attitudes towards job change. A 2006 survey of companies found that 52 percent of managers *responsible for mid-career hires* had reservations about hiring employees in their thirties with up to three past jobs and 82 percent had reservations about potential hires with up to five past jobs. 8 percent of these managers even expressed doubts about job seekers with one past job (Riwanabi NEXT 2013). Because this survey was conducted by a job placement agency that caters to job changers, on respondents whose responsibility it is to identify and hire human

[5] Respondents were asked, "If you were to change jobs, what would present a hurdle to job change?" Included in the 30 percent are those who stated that family opinion, damage to reputation, damage to work relationships, or loss of trust from financial institutions would make job change difficult. (From the author's analysis of the Working Persons 2000 data).

resources at the mid-career level, its results are almost certainly more permissive than average. As these employer and employee surveys starkly illustrate, in Japan, job change remains deviant, violating both norms of oughtness and norms of regularity.

Where job change is deviant, we can expect that it would trigger all three mechanisms of information holder decision making. Prior job changes suggest unreliability in the Japanese labor market, raising the danger that these job seekers would disappoint their employers. Information holders, fearing for their reputations, would thus be less likely to provide job changers with substantive assistance.[6] In addition, if the mechanisms of sanctioning and effort conservation are also at work, job seekers' access to minimal assistance would be expected to decrease as well. If the information holders themselves see job change as negative, they will likely view job changers as unworthy and undeserving of their help, leading to sanctioning and lowered access to even the least substantive assistance. Moreover, because employers are more likely to view these job seekers askance, assisting them would be relatively unprofitable, and to conserve energy, information holders would tend to proffer help elsewhere. As each subsequent job change becomes more deviant, we can expect these mechanisms to further reduce access to assistance as the number of past job changes grows. I cannot directly test these mechanisms with my data because I lack detailed information about the kind of assistance job seekers received. However, the data does allow me to test the broader prediction implicit in supply side studies that:

Hypothesis 1: Job seekers with more past jobs receive less job search assistance than job seekers with fewer past jobs, ceteris paribus.

[6] This concern is particularly salient in the Japanese context, where labor law makes it extraordinarily difficult for companies to lay workers off for poor performance. Because of the difficulty of dismissing unsatisfactory workers, hiring decisions are made with great care. Thus the shadow of future is long, and information holders may be correspondingly circumspect when making the decision to provide substantive assistance that would link them with the job seeker in an employers' mind.

This hypothesis stands in contrast to predictions of a purely structural framework. In purely structural analysis, job seekers with more past jobs should have larger, more expansive networks and thus *greater* access to assistance than those who had only worked in one or two past jobs.

Because my sample consists entirely of job changers, we might jump to the conclusion that every individual in the sample is deviant. However, not all kinds of job change are equally bad. Particularly when men change jobs due to the financial instability of their companies, this says more about the company than it says about the man (Yu 2012). Returning to the mechanisms, a man who changes jobs due to employer stability does not signal unreliability in the same way that a man does who changes jobs for other reasons. Thus, the man who changes due to instability is a less likely to reflect poorly on someone who refers him. There is also little reason for information holders to sanction men who change jobs due to company financial instability, since it is the company, not the job seeker, who is "at fault" for the job change. If anything, cultural expectations about breadwinners should make men who are changing jobs due to financial instability appear particularly deserving of assistance. Moreover, because men who are in danger of losing their jobs would probably be quite motivated to take a job, it is relatively productive for information holders to help them. Thus we can predict that:

Hypothesis 2: Men who change jobs due to company financial instability receive more assistance in job search than men who change jobs for other reasons, ceteris paribus.

DATA

To investigate these hypotheses on how deviance and conformity might shape access to job search assistance in the Japanese labor market, I turn to the Working Person Survey from the year 2000. This is a high-quality dataset collected bi-annually by the Recruit Works Institute in the Tokyo area (Tokyo, Kanagawa, Ibaraki, Saitama and Chiba), the Osaka area (Osaka, Kyoto, and Hyogo), and the Nagoya area (Aichi). Respondents are sampled randomly from all persons aged 18 to 59 who were employed in the target area during the last week of July 2000, excluding students, and stratified by sex, employment type (contingent or non-contingent), and age group. To adjust for non-response bias, the resulting data are weighted based on the distributions of gender, age group, and employment type in the survey region reported in the 1995 Employment Status Survey conducted by the Ministry of Public Management, Home Affairs, Posts and Telecommunications. Although not nationally representative, the 11 prefectures surveyed are home to about 50 percent of Japan's population, and the survey design allows for inferences about Japan's three largest urban labor markets. [7]

To conduct my analysis, I subset the full dataset. Because labor market norms vary starkly for women (Brinton 1993) and for workers in contingent labor pools (Ono 2010; Yu 2012), I exclude from the analysis female respondents, male respondents in irregular or contingent employment, and male respondents who left the primary labor market due to retirement. I also exclude men in their first jobs and men who changed jobs before 1995 because these men were not asked detailed questions about job search techniques or employment history.

[7] Despite a large sample size and the wealth of data it provides on employment history, attitudes, and human capital, because the Working Persons data and codebook are available exclusively in Japanese, with a few exceptions (e.g. Ono and Zavodny 2005; Ono 2007; Terasawa 2011; Ueda and Ohzono 2013), this dataset has been neglected in the English-language social science literature.

Thus the subjects of my analysis are men in standard employment who changed jobs between 1995 and August 2000 (n=1,113).

Independent Variables

To test the two hypotheses, I rely on two explanatory variables. The first is the number of jobs each respondent has held. The second explanatory variable is the respondents' most important reason for leaving the previous job. The level of primary interest within this variable is those who left their previous jobs due the financial instability of their employer. Two of the 24 categories in the original survey, "bankruptcy or financial restructuring" and "I was worried about the financial future of my firm," fit this classification. Thus, I concatenate these two responses into one level, which I call "financial instability." In the analysis below, these respondents are compared to the reference category, which I call "other." A detailed list of the reasons included in the reference category appears in Table 1. Seven percent of the respondents in the subsample form the third level of this variable, which I call "non-search." This group consists of people who took over a family business or reported they had no reason for leaving their previous job but that "a better job came along." I separate these from the other two levels, for both practical and theoretical reasons.[8]

[8] Practically speaking, respondents who take over a family business are very unlikely to use formal methods to take a job. Likewise, respondents for whom a "better job came along" are also particularly likely to have used informal methods. When not actively searching, informal (and likely unsolicited) job tips will naturally account for a much larger proportion of the job information available, leading to higher rates of using ties in job search and higher rates of informal job finding. Theoretically speaking, the temporal ordering implicit in my argument is that information holders know about job seekers' deviance or conformity, as measured by their reason for changing jobs, before they make the decision to provide assistance. However, in these cases it is quite likely that the job seekers received assistance *before* making the decision to change jobs. If job seekers receive assistance before the decision to change jobs, it is impossible for their reasons for changing jobs to influence information holders' choices about providing or withholding assistance. Thus reason for changing jobs tells us nothing about conformity or deviance for this group of job changers. Rather than throw out these cases entirely, I include them as a separate level in the variable for reason the respondent left his job.

In addition to the two explanatory variables, I include control variables for respondents' demographic characteristics, their human capital, and the characteristics of respondents' current and former places of employment. Among the human capital variables is a binary measure of whether or not respondents have experience in contingent employment. Although I restrict my analysis to workers currently in standard employment, previous experiences in contingent employment may reflect differences in ability, differences in networks, or other important variations, and so I include this variable as a control.

Table 1. Description of Dependent and Explanatory Variables

Dependent Variables	Coding	Survey Question
Informal job finding	0 = No (e.g. online ad, employment agency, etc.) 1 = Yes (family, friend, or acquaintance)	How did you ultimately find your current place of employment?
Used ties	0 = No (e.g. online ad, employment agency, etc.) 1 = Yes (family, friend, or acquaintance)	When you were looking for places to apply to, what sources of information did you use?
Work contact provided assistance	0 = No (e.g. neighbor, friend from school etc.; missing) 1 = Yes (coworker, boss, etc.)	Who gave you information about your current place of employment?
Explanatory Variables	Coding	Survey Question
Reason R left job	1 = Other (problems with coworkers or superiors; dissatisfaction with job fit, company strategy, working hours, pay, commute time, evaluation systems, opportunities of advancement; struggle with mental or physical demands of job; changes in family structure) 2 = Financial Instability (company bankruptcy or restructing, R worried about financial future of company) 3 = Non-search (better opportunity came along, R took over family business)	What was the most important reason that you left your previous job?
Number of jobs	Constructed by adding 1 to reported number of separations; top coded at 95th percentile	Have you ever left a job? If yes, how many times?

Table 2. Descriptive and Bivariate Statistics for Variables Used in the Analysis of Access to Job Search Assistance

	Total Sample (N=1113)		Informal Job Finding		
			No (N=666)	Yes (N=447)	Comparison
	Mean	SD	Mean	Mean	
Used ties in job search	0.50		0.15	1.00	***
Reason R left job					***
Other	0.69		0.75	0.62	
Financial instability	0.24		0.21	0.28	
Non-search	0.07		0.05	0.10	
Number of jobs	3.31	1.44	3.34	3.27	
Age at entry into current job	32.74	9.70	32.36	33.30	
Married	0.73		0.70	0.77	*
Parent	0.61		0.56	0.69	***
Education					
High school or less	0.54		0.56	0.52	
Some post high school	0.17		0.16	0.19	
University or above	0.28		0.28	0.29	
Years of experience in current occupation	5.33	6.82	4.51	6.52	***
Experience in contingent employment	0.29		0.30	0.27	
Difference between log salary in new job (in 10,000s of ¥) and log salary in old job	0.02	0.33	0.02	0.02	
Log annual salary (in 10,000s of ¥) immediately after job change	5.99	0.40	5.95	6.05	***
Job level					***
No supervisory authority	0.72		0.75	0.67	
Supervisor	0.15		0.15	0.14	
Manager	0.13		0.10	0.19	
Size of previous employer					
<50 employees	0.50		0.48	0.53	
50-299 employees	0.23		0.24	0.22	
300-999 employees	0.12		0.13	0.11	
>999 employees or government	0.15		0.16	0.14	
Size of current employer					**
<50 employees	0.53		0.48	0.61	
50-299 employees	0.26		0.29	0.20	
300-999 employees	0.10		0.10	0.10	
>999 employees or government	0.11		0.12	0.09	

Table 2. *(Continued)*

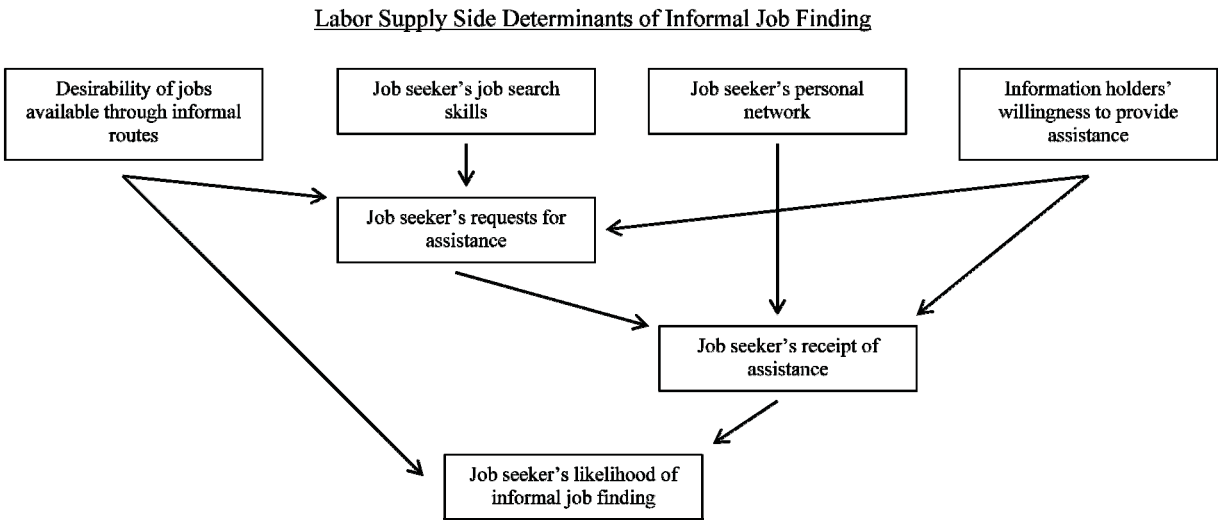
	Total Sample (N=1113)		Informal Job Finding		
			No (N=666)	Yes (N=447)	Comparison
	Mean	SD	Mean	Mean	
Occupation at previous job					*
Service	0.17		0.19	0.14	
Transport/communication	0.10		0.10	0.10	
Manufacturing	0.10		0.10	0.09	
Construction	0.08		0.07	0.10	
Management	0.06		0.04	0.08	
Administrative/office support	0.04		0.05	0.03	
Sales	0.17		0.19	0.14	
Professional and technical	0.23		0.21	0.25	
Other or missing	0.05		0.05	0.05	
Occupation at current job					*
Service	0.14		0.15	0.13	
Transport/communication	0.12		0.13	0.09	
Manufacturing	0.11		0.10	0.12	
Construction	0.07		0.05	0.10	
Management	0.05		0.05	0.06	
Administrative/office support	0.05		0.05	0.06	
Sales	0.16		0.17	0.14	
Professional and technical	0.22		0.20	0.25	
Other or missing	0.08		0.09	0.05	

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

Dependent Variables and Analytic Strategy

I estimate access to assistance in two different ways. The survey asked respondents how they found their current jobs. I construct a variable called “informal job finding,” coded as 1 if respondents found their current job through informal methods (i.e. through, friends, coworkers, family, or other acquaintances) and 0 otherwise. Higher informal job finding rates could indicate greater access to job search assistance. I use this measure as a dependent variable in two logistic regression models.

Figure 4



However, there are a number of causal relationships which could bias informal job finding as a measure of access to assistance, as depicted in Figure 4. The second and third parts of my analysis deal with these sources of bias. The first source of bias is search skills. If search skill co-varies with the explanatory variables, this would mean that informal job finding increases for some workers not because of access to assistance, but because of their job search strategy. This could be problematic if, for example, frequent job changers are more skilled at using formal job search methods than infrequent job changers, or job changers leaving due to financial instability are more active in requesting help from their networks than job changers who leave for other reasons. The Working Persons data provides a unique opportunity to adjust for this source of bias, because it allows me to control for search strategy. In addition to whether or not respondents found their job through informal methods, the survey also asks what job search methods they used. I construct a second dependent variable called "used ties," coded as 1 if respondents used informal methods of job search (i.e. if they received information from family,

friends, coworkers or acquaintances), and coded as 0 otherwise. I model search strategy by running logistic regression models predicting the likelihood of using ties. Then, I run an additional model predicting informal job finding, restricted to job seekers who reported using ties. This produces a second estimate of access to assistance that is not biased by job seekers' search strategies, which might differ based on their search skills. It also represents a conservative measure of the relationship between deviance and access to assistance, because it excludes job seekers with the least access to assistance—those who sought assistance but did not receive even the most minimal help.

The third part of my analysis deals with the remaining sources of bias in informal job finding as a measure of access to assistance. As depicted in Figure 5, informal job finding rates could also be influenced directly by the desirability of jobs available through informal channels. There is some debate about the quality of jobs available through informal routes in the Japanese labor market (e.g. Chae and Morishima 2002; Ishida 2009; JILPT 2003). This ambiguity is also visible in my data: as the descriptive statistics in Table 2 show, informal job finding is associated with higher levels of supervisor authority, with higher salaries, and with professional and technical employment, indicating that it can lead to good jobs. On the other hand, it is also associated with employment in the smallest companies and with construction trades, indicating undesirable employment. However, these ambiguities do not present a problem. In my analysis, the quality of jobs available through informal channels is only of concern if it varies in concert with the independent variables. This is because correlations between rates of informal job finding and the explanatory variables might reflect variation in job seekers' decisions to use that assistance or to accept jobs available through assistance, rather than variation in access to assistance. To test whether the quality of jobs available through informal routes co-vary with the explanatory variables, I run models predicting the difference between respondents' salaries

before and after job change, including interaction terms between the explanatory variables and the informal job finding variable. Non-significant interaction terms would indicate that informal job finding is a reasonable proxy for job seekers' access to assistance.

Finally, I deal with the concern that associations between the explanatory variables and access to assistance are due to networks rather than information holders' willingness to provide assistance. Because job seekers who leave due to financial instability are selected at the company level rather than at the individual level, after the inclusion of demographic, human capital, and employment controls in the statistical models, it is unlikely that their networks are particularly advantageous. It is even possible that their networks are worse, because contacts within their company are also experiencing reduced attachment to the labor force. Thus there is little reason for concern that a greater access to assistance in the financial instability group might stem from better networks. However, for frequent job changers, network differences may be an issue. Prior research suggests that job hopping may be particularly deleterious to network formation in the Japanese context. Japanese people have lower generalized trust than Americans (Yamagishi, Cook, and Watabe 1998; Yamagishi and Yamagishi 1994). Possibly as a result, they are more likely to use strong ties in informal job search than Americans (Watanabe 2001). However, because these relationships take time to establish (Watanabe 1987, cited in Brinton 2011:50), job hoppers may lack appropriate networks. Although the Working Persons data does not include network variables, I can test for evidence of bad networks by examining responses to the question put to all respondents who used ties in job search regarding their relationship to the primary person who gave them information about their current job. Since job hopping would damage coworker networks, but not family or neighborhood ties, if frequent job hoppers name coworkers less often, this would indicate that their networks are bad, making it less likely that correlations are due to information holders' normative evaluations of job seekers.

RESULTS

The main models predicting the likelihood of using ties and informal job finding include the explanatory variables, controls, and an interaction term between number of jobs and experience in contingent employment. I include the interaction term because of concerns that contingent jobs and standard jobs play a different role in shaping information holders' perceptions of job seekers, and therefore the relationship between number of jobs and access to assistance may vary depending on workers' histories of contingent employment.

Model 1 predicts the likelihood of informal job finding for all job seekers. The coefficient for number of past jobs is negative, indicating that informal job finding is lower among job seekers with more past jobs, as predicted in Hypothesis 1. However, the interaction term between number of jobs and contingent experience is positive and significant. This demonstrates that while the "number of jobs" variable has the predicted relationship with informal job finding for respondents who have never worked in contingent employment, the predicted relationship does not hold true for job seekers who have histories of contingent employment.

Table 3. Logistic Regression Coefficients from Analysis of Informal Job Finding and Used Ties

	Informal Job Finding	Used ties	Informal job finding (used ties=1 only)
Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Reason R left job[a]			
Financial instability	0.408*	0.370*	0.338
	(0.182)	(0.177)	(0.366)
Non-search	0.888**	0.808**	0.727
	(0.277)	(0.285)	(0.497)
Number of jobs	-0.212**	-0.143*	-0.371***
	(0.073)	(0.069)	(0.112)
Age at entry into current job	0.051	0.019	0.153
	(0.073)	(0.069)	(0.109)
Age at entry squared	-0.001	-0.001	-0.002
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Married	-0.261	-0.177	-0.712
	(0.235)	(0.234)	(0.435)
Parent	0.551*	0.422	1.007*
	(0.217)	(0.218)	(0.398)
Education[b]			
Some post high school	0.241	0.251	-0.044
	(0.210)	(0.201)	(0.340)
University or above	-0.004	-0.191	0.532
	(0.211)	(0.208)	(0.448)
Years of experience in current occupation	0.031*	0.029*	0.025
	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.021)
Experience in contingent employment	-1.009*	-0.902*	-0.811
	(0.419)	(0.397)	(0.690)
Contingent experience * number of jobs	0.301**	0.283*	0.283
	(0.116)	(0.111)	(0.169)
Difference between log salary in new job and log salary in old job	-0.048	-0.249	0.517
	(0.253)	(0.245)	(0.434)
Log annual salary immediately after job change	0.392	0.407	-0.189
	(0.271)	(0.266)	(0.457)
Job level[c]			
Supervisor	-0.014	0.004	-0.156
	(0.213)	(0.214)	(0.384)
Manager	0.606*	0.571*	0.334
	(0.260)	(0.262)	(0.462)

Table 3. *(Continued)*

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Size of previous employer[d]			
<50 employees	0.343	-0.125	1.007*
	(0.253)	(0.264)	(0.416)
50-299 employees	0.146	-0.227	0.542
	(0.252)	(0.264)	(0.449)
300-999 employees	0.098	-0.177	0.426
	(0.283)	(0.287)	(0.522)
Size of current employer[d]			
<50 employees	0.797**	0.748**	0.416
	(0.266)	(0.257)	(0.465)
50-299 employees	0.078	0.078	-0.003
	(0.285)	(0.278)	(0.465)
300-999 employees	0.541	0.331	0.748
		(0.316)	(0.588)
Constant	-4.181*	-2.952	-0.622
	(1.732)	(1.684)	(3.006)
Observations	1,113	1,113	542
Pseudo R2	0.0946	0.0842	0.126

Robust standard errors in parentheses.
Coefficients for previous and current occupation suppressed from table.
*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05
[a] Reference category is other
[b] Reference category is high school or below
[c] Reference category is no supervisory authority
[d] Reference category is >999 or government

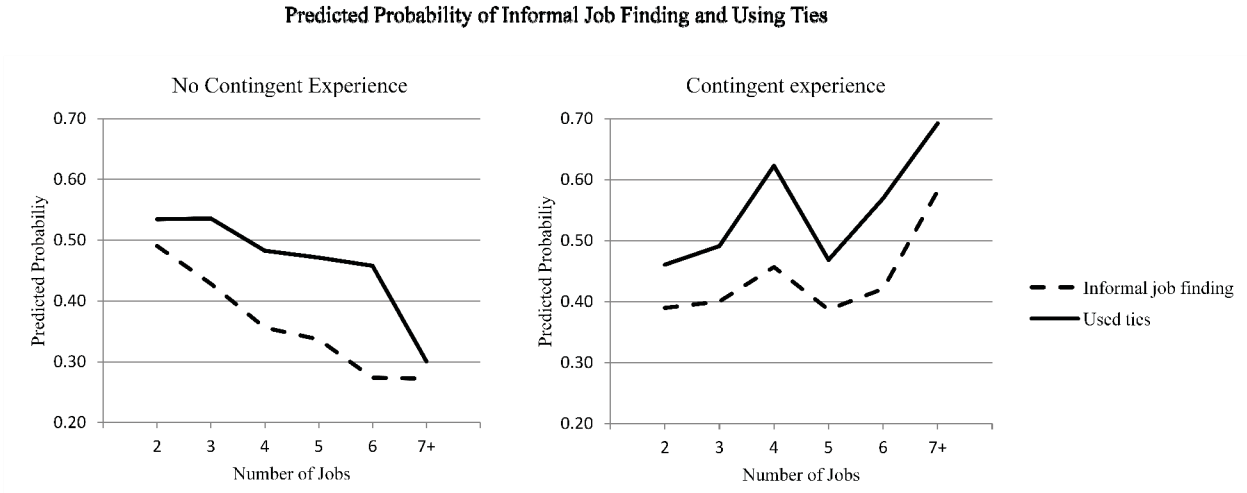
Turning to the evidence in Model 1 in support of Hypothesis 2, the coefficient is positive and significant, showing that men who leave their jobs due to financial instability find jobs informally more often than men in the reference category.

However, as discussed earlier, this relationship could indicate differences in search skills, leading to different search strategies, rather than differences in access to assistance. Model 2 predicts search strategy, and shows that search strategies follow the same general pattern as

informal job finding: the coefficient for number of jobs is negative and significant, the coefficient for the interaction between number of jobs and experience in contingent employment is positive and significant, and the coefficient for financial insecurity is positive and significant. Nonetheless, in all these cases, the coefficients are smaller in magnitude than their counterparts in Model 1, suggesting that search strategy alone does not account for the relationship between informal job finding and the explanatory variables.

Figure 5 plots the relationships between using ties and informal job finding by number of jobs. This figure is based on two additional statistical models (not shown) which are identical to Models 1 and 2 except that they include number of jobs as a factor variable in order to investigate the possibility of non-linearity.

Figure 5



As the plot for workers with no contingent experience shows, rates for using ties and rates of informal job finding both decline with number of jobs. However, the gap between using ties and informal job finding grows for each additional job until the last category of 7 or more jobs, when

it shrinks again. This implies that it is not just search skills and strategy that change with number of jobs, but also access to assistance, which appears as a decrease in the rate of informal job finding *relative* to the rate of using ties for job seekers with 2 to 6 jobs.

This relationship does not hold for contingent workers. For contingent workers, rates of tie use vary erratically with numbers of jobs, and the gap between seeking and receiving assistance remains relatively constant. So far, these results suggest that Hypothesis 1 is supported for workers who have never held contingent jobs, but not for workers who have: for workers with no contingent experience, access to assistance appears to decrease with number of jobs, at least for those who have held fewer than 7 jobs.

The data are less supportive of Hypothesis 2. Based on Model 1, although men in the financial instability category find jobs informally at a predicted rate of 47.6, compared to 37.6 percent in the reference group, based on Model 2, their rates of using ties are 56.3 percent and 47.1 percent, respectively. This means that 84.4 percent of the financial instability group used ties successfully, compared to 80 percent for the reference group. This fairly small difference does not dispel the possibility that the two groups differ primarily by search strategy rather than by information holders' willingness to help.

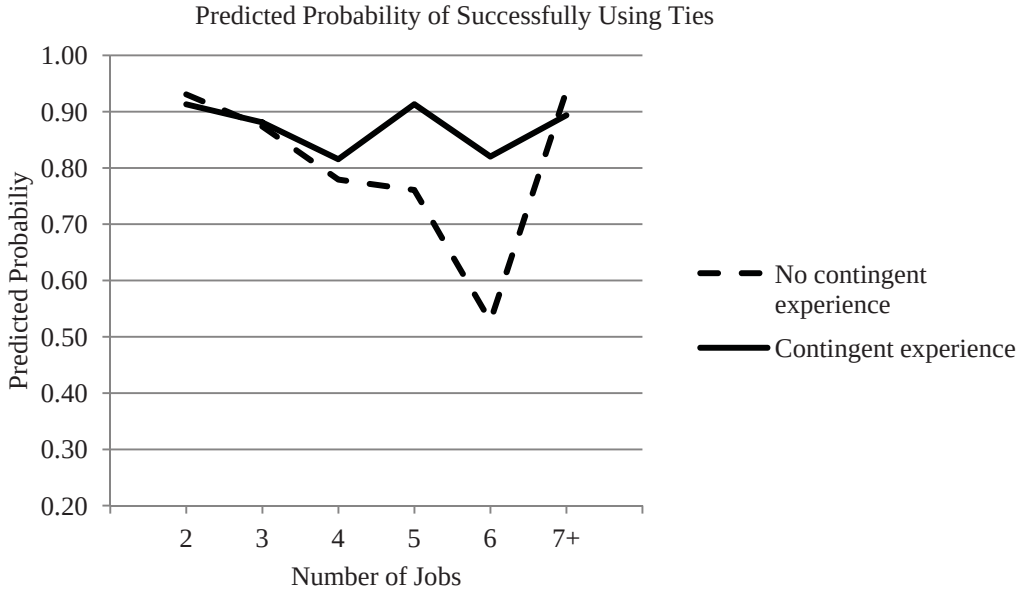
Model 3 subjects the gaps between the rates of using ties and the rates of informal job finding to a more formal test, controlling for search strategy by excluding all job seekers who did not use report using ties. This is a conservative test, because job seekers who sought assistance, but received no assistance at all are excluded.

In Model 3, the coefficient for number of jobs remains significant and negative. The coefficient for the interaction term does not reach significance, but its magnitude and sign are identical to the coefficient in Model 2. Thus the non-significance in the interaction term is

plausibly due to Model 3's low statistical power, the inevitable result of excluding about half of the sample.

Figure 6 plots the size of the gap between rates of using ties and rates of successful informal job finding for workers with and without experience in contingent employment. Like Figure 5, it relies on a model where number of jobs is included as a factor variable. It shows that, holding search strategy constant, the effectiveness of informal search declines from 92.6 percent for those with two jobs to 62.4 percent for workers with 6 jobs. However, for workers with 7 or more jobs, the success rates of using ties is approximately equal to that of workers with only 2 jobs. For workers with contingent experience, the rate of successful tie use does not vary systematically by number of jobs. These results reinforce the support for Hypothesis 1 discussed above, at least for men with no contingent experience.

Figure 6



With regards to Hypothesis 2, Model 3 confirms that the relatively small difference in successful use of ties between the financial instability group and the reference group is not statistically significant.

Supplementary Analyses

As discussed in analytic strategy section, there are concerns that the results of Models 1 through 3 are biased because the desirability of jobs available through formal and informal routes co-varies with the explanatory variables. To test for this possibility, I run a linear regression model predicting the difference between log salaries in the respondents' current and previous jobs. The dependent variable is calculated by subtracting the log new salary from the log old salary, such that positive coefficients in the models indicate better salaries in the new job, and negative coefficients indicate worse salaries in the new job.

Table 4. Linear Regression Coefficients from Analysis of Pay Differences

	Difference between log salary in current job and log salary in previous job	
Variables	Model 4	Model 5
Informal job finding	-0.016	-0.024
	(0.036)	(0.056)
Reason R left job[a]		
Financial instability	-0.065*	
	(0.032)	
Non-search	0.085	
	(0.045)	
Reason R left job: financial instability * informal job finding	-0.008 (0.054)	
Reason R left job: non-search * informal job finding	-0.046 (0.062)	
Number of jobs		-0.009 (0.009)
Number of jobs*informal job finding		0.008 (0.015)
Constant	0.047	0.048
	(0.025)	(0.036)
Observations	1,113	1,113
R2	0.007	0.001

Robust standard errors in parentheses.

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

[a] Reference category is other

As Table 4 shows, there are no significant interactions between the explanatory variables and informal job finding. Formal and informal job finding produce similar outcomes across levels of the explanatory variables. Not surprisingly, the coefficient for financial instability is negative and significant, suggesting that men who leave due to financial instability do not have as good salary outcomes, relative to their previous earnings, as other men. However, because the interaction term between reason for leaving and informal job finding is non-significant, this is

true whether or not men use informal methods. These results suggest that it is appropriate to interpret higher rates of informal job finding as representing greater access to assistance.

But is greater access to assistance really due to information holders' willingness to provide it? Although there is little reason to be concerned that better networks among men who leave their jobs due to financial instability would drive positive effects, there is the possibility that the inferior networks of frequent job changers could drive negative effects. To investigate this possibility, I run a logistic regression model predicting the likelihood that respondents who used ties were assisted by a work contact.

Table 5. Logistic Regression Coefficients from Analysis of Contacts Who Provided Assistance to Job Seekers

	Work contact provided assistance	
Variables	Model 6	Model 7
Number of jobs	0.177*	0.027
	(0.085)	(0.100)
Experience in contingent employment	-1.173*	-1.165*
	(0.570)	(0.579)
Number of jobs *	0.199	0.296
Experience in contingent employment	(0.149)	(0.157)
		0.100***
Age at entry into current job		(0.021)
		0.053***
Years of experience in current industry		(0.015)
		-2.590***
Constant	-0.654*	(0.536)
	(0.298)	
Observations	542	542
Pseudo R2	0.0271	0.146

Robust standard errors in parentheses.

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

Model 6 dispels the idea that people with more jobs have worse networks. Indeed, the likelihood of receiving help from a work contact increases significantly with number of jobs in

Model 6, although this effect becomes non-significant when I include controls for occupational experience and age, as Model 7 depicts. These results reinforce my argument that lower rates of informal job finding among workers with more past jobs stem from reduced access to assistance, and that this reduced access is related to the normative judgments of information holders.

DISCUSSION

In this paper, I have argued that three mechanisms from the supply side literature on job search assistance imply that job seekers who violate social norms will receive less access to job search assistance. I have used these mechanisms to derive two predictions about job seekers' access to assistance in Japan. In support of Hypothesis 1, I have found strong evidence that frequent job change decreases access to assistance for job seekers who have never held contingent employment. I have shown that informal job finding declines with number of jobs for these workers, and I have ruled out the alternative explanations that search skills and relative quality of jobs available through informal routes are responsible for the decline. My evidence therefore indicates that the decline is due to lack of access to assistance. Further, I have shown evidence that this lack of access is not due to network quality, and therefore is most likely linked to information holders' unwillingness to provide assistance to deviant job seekers.

However, I have also found that these relationships do not hold for workers who have held contingent employment. There are several possible explanations for this finding. Firstly, workers may have held several contingent jobs as students. Because having many student jobs is not considered deviant, these workers may therefore not suffer from reduced access to assistance. A second possibility is that contingent employees are *expected* to change jobs more frequently, so that even when they move into standard employment, information holders excuse their past

jobs changes, or look at them with less alarm. However, given that post-graduation contingent employment has long-term negative effects on occupational standing and income (Yu 2012), the former explanation seems a more likely reason for this result.

An unexpected finding is that the relationship I predicted between number of jobs and access to assistance for workers who have never held contingent employment holds only for workers with 6 or fewer jobs, not for workers with 7 or more jobs. Although the effectiveness of using ties falls sharply between 2 and 6 jobs, the effectiveness of using ties for workers with 7 or more jobs is high. However, as Figure 5 shows, among job seekers with 7 or more jobs in the group with no contingent experience, the predicted likelihood of using ties is only 27.2%. This represents only 15 jobs seekers in total, so the estimate that 93.6% of these job seekers used ties successfully is not very reliable. This high statistic may also be an artifact of the conservative nature of the test, because respondents who were unable to get any assistance at all would not report using ties and are therefore not included in the denominator of the tie effectiveness calculation. The alternative possibility is of course that search strategy differs for this group, but access to assistance is similar to that of job changers with only 2 jobs. However, given that alters' willingness to provide assistance can influence the degree to which job seekers' request assistance (Smith 2007), and overall rates of using ties are low, it seems more likely that job seekers with 7 or more jobs also lack access to assistance, and the high rate of tie effectiveness detected for this group is a data artifact.

Turning to the results for Hypothesis 2, I find that leaving a job due to financial instability is associated with higher rates of informal job finding. However, I am unable to rule out the alternative hypothesis that this is due to search skills and strategy, rather than access to assistance. Even though rates of using ties are about 56.3 percent compared to 47.1 percent in the

reference group, the rates of successfully using ties differ by only 4.4 percent. This difference is in the predicted direction, but does not reach statistical significance. Why is informal job finding higher in the group who left due to financial instability? If information holders' reluctance to provide assistance to deviant job holders reduces deviant job holders' requests for assistance, as Smith (2007) found in her supply side studies, the norms around job change in Japan could be driving the higher rates of informal job finding in the financial instability group. However, the possibility remains that these jobs seekers have poorer skills in formal search, or are in a more desperate financial situation and are thus more willing to incur social obligation by actively seeking assistance.

My data do not allow me to test which of the three mechanisms of information holder decision making are at work. However, the most likely possibility is that I am capturing effects of the self-protection mechanism. Evidence of decreased access to minimal assistance (i.e. information about jobs) would provide support that the sanctioning and effort conservation mechanisms are at work. In this dataset, however, there is no way to distinguish between job seekers who requested assistance and did not even receive minimal help and job seekers who requested no help at all. Everyone who reported using ties received minimal assistance. Therefore, the gap between using ties and informal job finding is most likely explained by differential access to more substantive kinds of assistance, indicative of the reputation protection mechanism.

CONCLUSION

Smith and Marin's ethnographic work has raised the possibility that a pure network approach misses a key element of job seekers' access to assistance: information holders' willingness to provide assistance. Their supply side studies of information holders strongly suggest that deviant jobs seekers will have less access to assistance than conformists. This differential access to assistance is important because having access to assistance improves labor market outcomes whether or not respondents take jobs found through informal routes. Barring cases in which the quality jobs available through informal routes is much lower than those available through formal routes, access to assistance increases the number of options available to job seekers, ultimately allowing them to choose a more desirable job (Mouw 2003). However, while supply side studies have identified several mechanisms that affect alters' willingness to provide assistance, and all three mechanisms imply that deviance is likely to decrease job seekers' access to assistance, the supply side studies have not been able to confirm this intuition. The possibility remains that alters' willingness to provide assistance varies such that even if some alters withhold assistance, other alters will provide additional assistance, and job seekers' deviance will not seriously affect their overall access.

My data from Japan shows, using a conservative test, that deviance is associated with decreased access to assistance in the case of frequent job changers, and several supplementary analyses support the interpretation that this relationship is causal. My analysis also shows that for men who change jobs due to financial instability, conformity is associated with higher rates of informal job finding. However, with a conservative test I am unable to confirm that this is due to increased access to assistance.

My results have several implications for inequality in Japan. The most socially desirable *and* financial remunerative path for men in Japan remains for them to stay in the same job from graduation until retirement (Rebick 2005). Frequent job changers are already disadvantaged in that they lack the seniority benefits which accrue to employees with longer tenure (Moriguchi and Ono 2005). Information holders' reluctance to assist these job seekers compounds that disadvantage.

However, my results suggest that when men break the rules through no fault of their own—when they leave their jobs due to company financial instability—the price of deviance may be less. If high rates of informal job finding among the financial instability group are due to access to assistance, this would indicate that the very norms which discourage job change to some extent protect these vulnerable workers from downward mobility. This is not to say that men who experience layoffs do not face hardship. Rather, the norms that have developed in concert with the formal institutions of the Japanese labor market shield this particular category of vulnerable job seekers from the worst effects of labor market inflexibility. Counterintuitively, this implies men who lose their jobs due to company financial instability in Japan may be advantaged compared to their counterparts in countries with more flexible labor markets, because they receive a larger share of available network assistance. However, this conclusion is speculative as I was unable to confirm that higher rates of informal job finding were due to access to assistance using a conservative test.

As these examples show, patterns of assistance in job search can inform our understanding of broader inequalities in the labor market. Structural arguments have provided great insight into who receives assistance and who does not, but they cannot explain why information holders often withhold assistance from job seekers. To fully understand patterns of

job search assistance and the inequalities they generate, we need to look beyond social structure and to social norms. As I have shown in this analysis of Japanese job changers, deviance has a price: job seekers who violate social norms jeopardize their access to job search assistance.

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