



It's Who You Know: How Teachers Use Social Networks to Find Jobs in Decentralized Labor Markets

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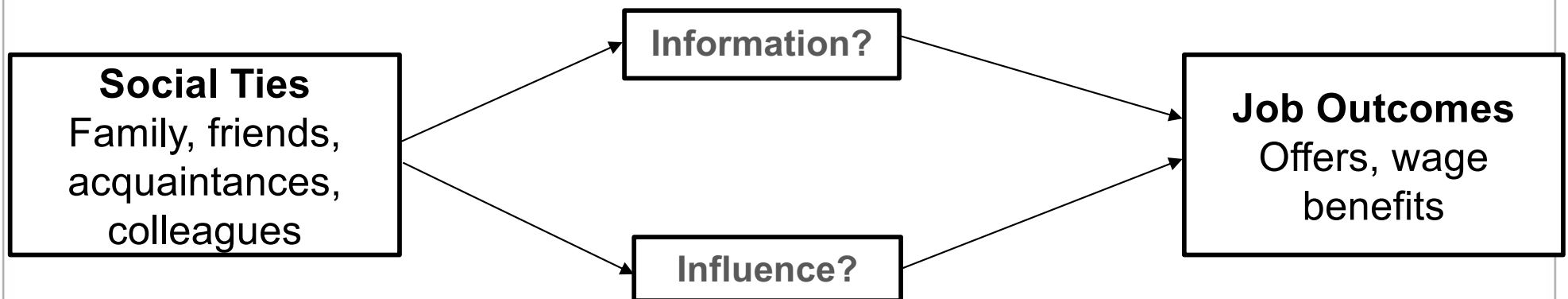
A Changing Education Landscape

- School labor markets in large cities are evolving
 - Charter schools, alternative certification, portfolio districts
 - Multiple paths to becoming a teacher, multiple employment options
- Networks may matter even more in portfolio districts
 - Charters exempt from salary schedules, more autonomy in hiring/recruitment

(Cannata, 2011; Engel, Cannata, & Curran, forthcoming; Hoxby, 2002; Jackson, 2012; Merrifield, 1999)



Social Networks and the Job Search



(Bian, 1997; Campbell, 1998; Cannata, 2010; Castilla, Lan, & Rissing, 2013; Fuller, Waite, & Irribarra, 2016; Fernandez & Sosa, 2005; Granovetter, 1973, 1995; Ioannides & Loury, 2004; Kim, Youngs, & Frank, 2017; Lin & Dumin, 1986; McDonald, 2015; McDonald, Lin, & Au, 2009; Montgomery, 1992; Trimble & Kmec, 2011)



Research Questions

- What role do teachers' social networks play in the job search process?
- How are network ties activated and used in the process of finding a teaching position?



Sites

- New Orleans (~95% charter)
- Detroit (~53% charter)
- San Antonio (~30% charter)

Methods

- Understand *process* of decision making
- Recruit teachers via job fairs, listservs, snowball sampling
- Follow 128 teachers in three cities through one job cycle (roughly January to August 2017)
- Hour-long semi-structured interviews, followed through job cycle (also completed short questionnaire)
- Coding, “social network memos,” cross-case analysis

Sample Description

	New Orleans	Detroit	San Antonio
Total Teachers	42	39	46
Current teachers	31	36	23
% Charter	80%	70%	42%
% TPS	17%	30%	54%
% Private	3%	0%	4%
Prospective teachers	11	5	23
Teacher pathways			
Traditional	31%	70%	44%
Alternative	55%	10%	53%
Both	7%	15%	3%
No Response	7%	5%	0%
% Teachers of Color	55%	30%	48%
% Female	89%	80%	85%



Findings

1. Extent of **fragmentation or decentralization drives use of networks**, with networks more important for job searches in settings where information is less centralized
2. Teachers' **preparation programs and pathways influence use of social networks**, with some programs (e.g., TFA) having explicit emphasis on cultivating and maintaining networks
3. **Downside of social networks**, whereby tight networks can serve to limit teachers' job opportunities and reinforce inequitable access to high-quality teachers.



Use of Networks

“It’s all about who you know”

“You can apply for a job, but the real way is networking”

“You need to be able to network or know someone...to really have any pull”



Networks for Information

- Filling in gaps in information
 - Job openings, salary in New Orleans and Detroit
- Creating school “reputations” and ruling out schools
 - e.g., *“Everybody told me Southwest Detroit’s the best.”*

	Used networks for information
All	78%
New Orleans	88%
Detroit	77%
San Antonio	69%
Traditional	72%
Alternative	85%
Current charter	75%
Current TPS	74%



Networks for Influence

- Seeking influence, legitimacy, and access through network ties
- Referrals
- Connecting with leaders or hiring managers
 - *“The principal had sent me a text message to let me know that he was opening up two positions, and that I should go on to apply.” (Detroit teacher)*
 - *“I had some friends that worked there and I said, okay, put this in somebody’s hands. My resume ... Then they eventually called back offered me the job.” (New Orleans teacher)*

	Used networks for influence
All	40%
New Orleans	45%
Detroit	51%
San Antonio	26%
Traditional	42%
Alternative	42%
Current charter	60%
Current TPS	24%



Networks for Influence: “Shadow Jobs”

- Bypassing traditional hiring procedures (e.g., postings, interviews)
 - Teachers with connections sometimes had meetings that were “not really interviews” and received offers
 - One New Orleans teacher referred to these positions as “shadow jobs,” where “you have to know people to get to [them].”



Teacher Pathways Influence Network Use

- Teacher preparation programs and pathways as organizational contexts driving network use
 - Traditional vs. alternative
 - Central role of TFA for corps members and alumni

	Used organizational network
All	35%
New Orleans	29%
Detroit	38%
San Antonio	37%
Traditional	28%
Alternative	47%
Current charter	25%
Current TPS	26%



The Downsides of Social Networks

- Networks can exclude people from access to teaching positions
 - Principals may “hide vacancies” and use networks to fill positions
- Tight networks can create restrictions on teacher mobility
 - “principals are networky” (Detroit teacher)
 - Fear of attending job fairs (New Orleans teacher)

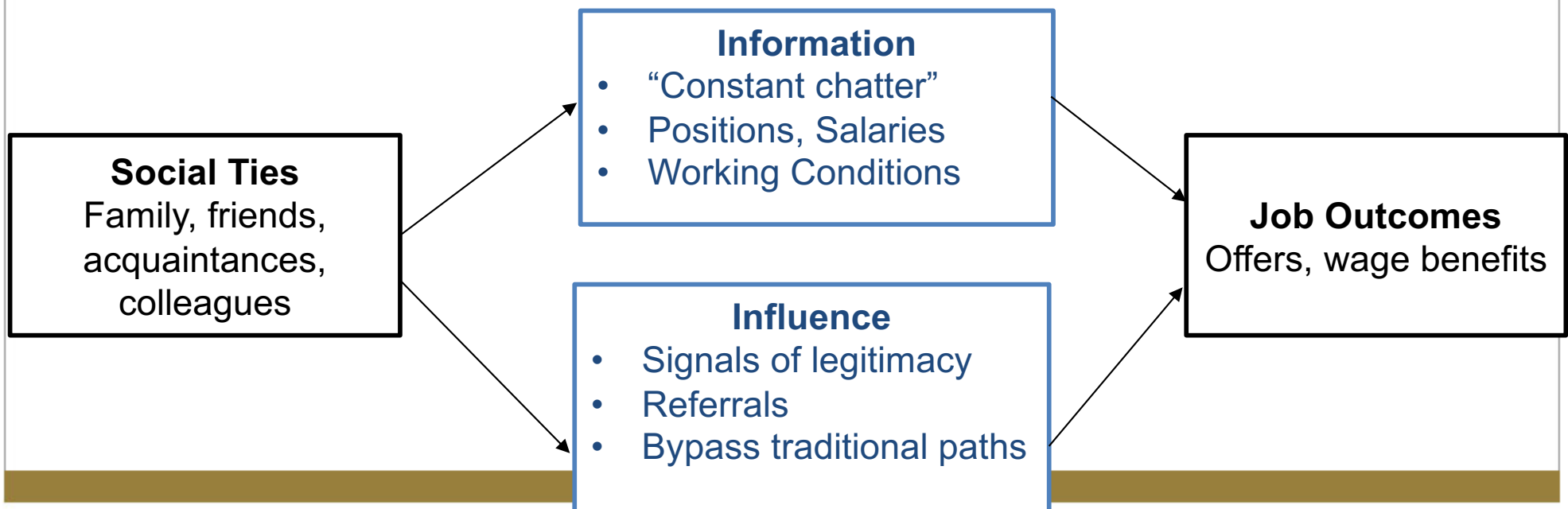


Social Networks and the Teacher Job Search

Policy Context

- Extent of fragmentation
- Organizational networks

Mechanisms





Discussion & Implications

- Drawbacks to the role of networks in the job search
 - Excluded from the network
 - Networked with people demographically similar
 - “Too” tight networks
- How researchers define “applicants” or “job seekers”
- Schools and preparation programs:
 - Teacher preparation programs might consider network cultivation
 - Rethink strategies of referral, network-based recruitment for goals of increasing teachers of color, diversity
- The ‘new economy’ in education—broader implications?



Thank you!

Questions, comments, feedback:

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