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BLURRED BOUNDARIES IN CONTEMPORARY WORK SPACES

by

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Blurred Boundaries in Contemporary Work Spaces

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This dissertation explores how “customers” of three different locations of a major coffee shop chain accomplish work-like activities. By examining the blurred boundaries within the context of “publicness” and “ privateness,” this study examines the kinds of work-like activities that were performed, and explores views of work by “customers” that routinely occupy these spaces. The reasons “customers” report about their working in these coffee shops are examined, along with how they feel when doing so, and what encourages doing work-like activities in these coffee shops. By identifying norms that are both reproduced and breached, the interaction between social actors as they navigate challenges as “customers” is explored.

Data for this study were obtained through 108 participant observations and 30 interviews with those who conduct work-like activities in these coffee shops. Participant observation provided data in two forms, fieldnotes containing observations of interaction and data regarding my involvement as a “customer” in these coffee shops. The study utilizes the theory-based natural history method (Mokros, 2003), consisting of interpretive microanalysis rooted in the constitutive perspective of communication (Goffman, 1959; 1967).

The constitutive view captured both interaction and talk as work-like activities are accomplished, whereby “publicness” and “privateness” reveal the primary blurred boundary of “customer” and “worker,” along with the eroding of the boundaries between “home” and “work,” and “recognized” and “unrecognized” work, which accounts for face-work (Goffman, 1967). Face-work contributes a broadened understanding of work by focusing on the interaction that occurs between “customers.” Three types of encounters for work-like activities are identified, namely unplanned, planned, and opportunistic, and “customer” identity is captured as emergent, contributing to the constitutive view of identity (Mokros, 2003). Micro-level occurrences producing affirmed norms, such as speaking in lowered voices, and those breached, such as actors’ work-like practices obstructing others, were identified. Taken together, these contributions indicate the relational nature of work-like activities as they occur in interaction in these coffee shops. Macro-level implications of these micro-level occurrences are discussed, along with the limitations, ethical considerations, and an agenda for future research.

Dedication

To my mother and father, of course. Thank you Mom and Dad, for consistently providing me with the greatest gift possible, your belief in me.

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“It is not the critic who counts, not the one who points out how the strong man stumbled, or how the doer of deeds might have done better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred with sweat and dust and blood; who strives valiantly, who errs and comes short again and again; who knows the great devotions and spends himself in a worthy cause; who, if he wins, knows the triumph of high achievement; and who, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory or defeat.”

- President Theodore Roosevelt, 1858-1919

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CHAPTER ONE

BLURRED BOUNDARIES IN CONTEMPORARY WORK SPACES

Introduction

In recent years specific types of public spaces, such as cafés and coffee shops, have transformed into locations where activities are conducted. Scholars (Forlano, 2009; Hampton & Gupta, 2008; Hartmann, 2009; Sayers, 2010) have examined people, hereafter referred to as actors, who occupy public spaces to accomplish work. This study focuses on the use of one specific type of public space, three different locations of a major coffee shop chain, in order to investigate the boundaries of “publicness” and “privateness” that are blurred, or have become eroded so as to make the distinction between them difficult, when actors frequent these locations. These locations are hereafter referred to as research sites except when the use of coffee shop is needed for clarity.

Since actors are surrounded by other actors as they perform “work-like” tasks, a term selected to capture the range of activities performed involving both electronic and non-electronic devices in these coffee shops, face-work (Goffman, 1967) also occurs. Therefore, by accounting for the work-like activities performed, this study also captures symbolic analytic work (Reich, 1991), which involves processes of thought and writing, as performed for work-like tasks, allowing for ambiguity as to whether what is done is work or not. It is these private work-like behaviors, and the interaction that occurs in these research sites, that create the blurring of public and private space. Preconceived and traditional notions of customer are challenged in this space, as customers conduct work-like tasks and assist other customers with work-like tasks, creating the primary blurred

boundary which emerged iteratively in this study, that of “customer” and “worker.” The intersection of such roles is captured by the analysis of work-like activities.

While on the one hand, actors are “customers” while in these coffee shops, they at times behave as if they were at home, and at other times behave in ways that acknowledge an awareness that they are not at home or in an office or work setting, creating a second iterative blurring, “home” versus “work.” Actors also perform various work-like tasks, creating a blurring of “recognized” work versus “unrecognized” work, resulting in an expanded definition of “work” put forth herein. Through the lens of “customerness,” or the state of being a patron or potential patron in a business establishment, this study uses both observational and interview data to explore the questions, “What is work?” and “How does work get accomplished in interaction?” The view taken herein highlights Sacks’s (1984) perspective that research in this vein captures “an attitude of working at being usual, which is perhaps central to the way our world is organized” (p. 429).

This study applies the theory-based natural history method (Mokros, 2003), consisting of interpretive microanalysis rooted in the constitutive perspective of communication (Goffman, 1959, 1961; 1963; 1967, 1971; 1983; Mokros & Deetz, 1996), to the study of routine, everyday relations in public. Mokros’ (2003) constitutive view of identity is also utilized, and applied to an emergent “customer” identity. Therefore, Goffman’s constitutive perspective of communication and that of Mokros and Deetz (1996), which asserts that reality is produced within communication, will be used as a primary lens, since the rituals, routines, and dialogue that shape everyday interaction among actors who work in such settings can be examined through this framework. By

observing and interviewing those who work in one type of public space, a coffee shop, the constitutive view is applied in this context in order to examine views of work, the kinds of work-like activities that occur in these coffee shops, what encourages the doing of work-like activities, and the interaction between social actors, with the goal of better understanding how “customerness” shapes everyday interaction in this setting. The boundaries that emerge iteratively in this study as blurred within this context of public and private, namely “home” and “work,” “recognized” and “unrecognized” work, and “customer” and “worker” are examined, uncovering the relational component of every encounter as actors partake in the doing of “customerness.” Every encounter is complex and therefore potentially problematic, since interaction is occurring in this public space. By examining the interaction that occurs when these boundaries intersect, the blurring of these boundaries is problematized. The goal of this analysis, and the contribution of this study, is to highlight the blurring of the boundaries identified, not only illustrating the intersection, but also the complexity, of this intersection.

Background

Recent global and economic changes have contributed to new forms and patterns of work. A recent change is that of the US economic downturn, contributing to a relocation of both capital and labor. In addition, it has led to a downsizing of the traditional workforce. For example, as of August 2013, the unemployment rate is 7.3 % (<http://www.ncsl.org/issues-research/labor/national-employment-monthly-update.aspx>, 2013). A second simultaneous change, which altered the ways in which work is conducted, are technological developments that enable work to be performed anywhere at any time. An increasing number of social actors use technology to facilitate forms of

work, such as tele-work (Mallia & Ferris, 2000), consulting, and freelance work (Forlano, 2009; Pink, 2001). Consequently, we are witnessing greater flexibility with regard to where work is performed, as actors increasingly occupy public spaces to accomplish work (Forlano, 2009; Hampton & Gupta, 2008; Hartmann, 2009; Sayers, 2010).

In part, this study examines the understanding of the concept of work by focusing on four types of work identified in this analysis: paid work, at times captured in the performance of work-like tasks, domestic work, such as parents caring for children, and personal work, such as those unemployed looking for paid work and students studying. It also analyzes face-work (Goffman, 1967), the term that Goffman coined for the effort required in order to present a positive image of self to others. The importance of incorporating face-work is that it is an ongoing process as actors occupy this space. A public space, such as three different locations of a major coffee shop chain, is germane for a study of this nature as it allows for the observation and examination of these multiple forms of work, the performance of which creates a blurring of boundaries between them.

The terms social, public, and private space are relevant for this study of the blurring of boundaries and require clarification. Social space refers to both public and private spaces, each of which contains various types. Public spaces include civic and commercial spaces, such as coffee shops. Private space, on the other hand, can be conceived along a continuum of visibility, whereby the individual experiences the illusion of being away from the social gaze of others. For this study, the term private is relevant in that actors conduct private work-like activities in the presence of others in this public space. This study applies Goffman's (1967) approach to interaction, whereby the

potentially awkward social interaction is less so when rituals are utilized, and can be found in greetings and when holding a conversation. This study acknowledges that constraints for social actors when in public are enormous. Therefore, when attempting to manage the impressions given to others, acting as “customers” in this coffee shop is, by its very nature, a challenge constantly in need of being managed (Goffman, 1967).

Rationale

Previous studies have examined employees working in service-related professions, such as Whyte’s (1949) study of restaurants, now considered a classic in the scholarly literature. More recently, settings such as bars (LeMasters, 1973) and coffeehouses (Nathe, 1976) have served as locations in which to examine social behavior, since the complex processes that are involved when actors enter the presence of others can be captured. Goffman’s (1959) work is germane for this study in that his perspective is not limited to specific social settings, but rather to many “social establishments” (p. 238). Specifically relevant to the current study is the research of scholars (Kleinman, 2006; Laurier, Whyte & Buckner, 2001; Lee, 1999; Shapira & Navon, 1991) who have investigated social interaction in cafés and coffeehouses, with Kleinman (2006) and Shapira and Navon (1991) concluding that the café environment is both a public and private space, allowing an actor to be alone yet surrounded by others, overcoming loneliness. The existing literature implies the intersection of boundaries. This study further explores the blurring of those boundaries.

In this study, “customerness” was identified as both granted by the coffee shop and as emerging out of interaction with others. In this sense, every actor, with the exception of those who work for or with the coffee shop, is granted the identity of a

“customer,” regardless of whether or not they make a purchase. This demonstrates that every actor’s social status becomes normalized in social settings (Goffman, 1967). For Goffman (1959) “social establishments” (p. 238) serve as the backdrop for informal interactions which contributes to social norms. Goffman (1959) also draws upon Simmel’s (1908) discussion of the stranger when noting that interaction among others in public is far from anonymous. Goffman (1959) discusses a “performance team” (p. 79) to address how actors cooperate to complete a routine, or a “pre established pattern of action which is unfolded during a performance” (p. 16). Therefore, the selected site for this study, that of a coffee shop, allows for the observation and examination of actors’ behavior as they interact with others regarding work, and also act as visitors who have taken on the role of “customer.”

With the onset in recent years of specific types of public spaces transforming into locations where private work is conducted, scholars (Forlano, 2009; Hampton & Gupta, 2008; Hartmann, 2009; Sayers, 2010) have researched the use of technologies and its effect on social interaction as actors occupy these types of public spaces to work. In an especially relevant study, Hampton & Gupta (2008) have concluded that despite the occurrence of “public privatism,” (p. 832) or actors occupying public spaces and conducting activities which decrease the likelihood of interacting with those around them, public spaces should create as open an atmosphere as possible to attract those who wish to socialize with others. This study provides further insight into these interactional patterns, hereafter referred to as encounters, since the potential for interaction is one of the affordances offered by these research sites as actors conduct work-like activities.

Setting: Public spaces and the expectation of behaviors

Goffman (1963) examined behavior in public places, exploring what occurs when actors enter the presence of others, and when actors enter into an encounter. Goffman (1961) defines an encounter as the process of “joint orientation” in face-to-face engagements. Goffman notes that when actors are in one another’s presence, it is possible for no encounters to take place, even with “persons being in one another’s presence” (p. 7). Goffman describes focused interaction as what occurs when actors come together and focus on one another, which may include taking turns speaking, as opposed to unfocused interaction, which is what occurs when one obtains information about another person only by glancing. Goffman’s analysis of the intersection of public and private is again germane for this study, since this coffee shop serves as public space in which private work-like activities take place. With a coffee shop as the chosen backdrop, it becomes possible to observe the ways in which actors behave when in the presence of other actors, and how face-work is used by actors as they navigate the challenges they encounter when working in this public space. Through observations, this study demonstrates that everyone is aware of being in the presence of others, and therefore uses behavioral sanctioning-like practices for managing the feelings that arise when private activities, such as work, are brought into this public space.

This location provides a situation (Goffman, 1963), or an environment of “mutual monitoring” (p. 18) possibilities, which occurs whenever two or more actors find themselves in the presence of others. Mokros (2003) states that “Situation refers to the relationship between specific individuals, the social situation of their engagement, and the conventional or discursive assumptions that appear salient in accounting for the

observed order of the interaction and the types of practices performed” (p. 14). A situation differs from Goffman’s setting (1959), since a setting includes what is found in the environment where the interaction occurs, such as the furniture, décor, props, and physical layout, also noted in this study. With situation accounting for interaction, and setting comprised of the environmental features of a location, these concepts reciprocally influence one other in these coffee shops. The use of the term setting will also be used in chapter four when describing the life of the selected coffee shops.

A coffee shop as a public space creates the expectation of certain types of behavior. For example, while performing field observations, I witnessed actors reading, socializing, consuming food and drink, and, quite commonly, working with various communication devices. The environment was constructed so that actors can relax and feel comfortable while occupying this space as they engaged in these various behaviors. However, these behaviors are not specific to a coffee shop. They can be witnessed in other spaces, such as airports or train stations, but such spaces are only minimally equipped to respond to the needs of those who occupy it, whereas a coffee shop is designed to respond to these needs and aspires to make a profit while doing so. In other words, the primary function of airports and train stations is to move actors from one place to another, compared to a coffee shop whose primary function is to sell goods, with actors able to occupy space and perform the previously mentioned behaviors.

There are additional differences between an airport, a train station, and a coffee shop, however. For example, while performing field observations, I was asked to monitor the belongings of others while they used the restroom or stepped outside for a phone call or cigarette. Also, I recall no one ever declining to monitor another’s possessions in

response to requests to do so. This practice is common in a coffee shop, whereas it is considered a potential risk to public safety in an airport or train station, with actors warned against doing so. Also, while waiting is common at an airport, a train station, and a coffee shop, the expectation while picking up others at an airport or train station is that it should be accomplished as quickly as possible. This is quite different in a coffee shop, where actors are able, and even encouraged, to spend time conducting various work-like behaviors. This analysis demonstrates that the behaviors identified in these coffee shops challenge traditional customer behavioral expectations since these work-like behaviors are normalized, pointing out that a “customer” in this context is not solely a customer. Rather, their identity as “customers” seems quite secondary when one looks closely at the “worker” activities that occur in this space.

Theoretical approach

Goffman’s (1967) perspective provides a framework for examining the rituals and rules that shape interaction, since actors perform rituals as they occupy this space, and may need to navigate their way through communication issues. Goffman’s framework is employed to examine the interaction and talk, observed and recorded in fieldnote observations and during interviews, in order to more fully understand the interaction between actors working in this space.

The constitutive perspective presented in the work of Goffman (1967) includes a microanalytic approach to the study of the interaction order, analyzing the everyday practices of interaction. The constitutive perspective views communication as a way to understand identity (Mokros, 2003), asserting that communication expresses meaning, which is negotiated and renegotiated with each encounter. By focusing on identity

construction and emergence in and through communication, the use of the term identity herein follows Mokros's (2003) conceptualization, whereby identity is co-created by actors as they interact with others. Mokros's (2003) conceptualization of identity allows for the primary blurred boundary in this study, that of "customer" and "worker," to be explored. A constitutive perspective is most useful for this analysis by demonstrating how "customer" identity is produced and reproduced in interaction with others, all of whom are simultaneously "working."

The constitutive perspective views identity as a dynamic concept which is a result of social interaction (Mokros, 2003). Since this perspective sees identity as emerging in and through communication, it runs counter to more traditional definitions that see identity as a more static concept (McCall & Simmons, 1996), located within an actor, or something an actor has. The constitutive perspective of identity makes possible an understanding of how actors define and manage different aspects of self in relation to work. Mokros's (2003) concept of personhood addresses questions of identity, and is germane for this study. Personhood "refers to a practioner's (in the general sense of someone performing a practice) relational expectations as revealed through the doing of practice" (Mokros, 2003, p. 14). In this study, the application of the concept of personhood highlights the various work-like tasks actors perform under the mask of "customer." As "customers" interact with other actors in these sites, the relational nature of the doing of "customerness" is revealed. The theoretical framework utilized for this study highlights the self as it interacts with others in a coffee shop where work-like behaviors are performed and the identity of "customer" is co-created. Work provides opportunities for actors to connect to others through common experiences. In the case of

this study, this leads, importantly, to a broadened perspective of work as a relational activity, as face-work and views of work from those who occupy these coffee shops are examined.

Mokros's (2003) concept of identity is the foundation of the constitutive view of identity applied herein, derived from sociology (Goffman, 1959; 1967; Mead, 1934; Scheff, 1990), anthropology (Bateson, 1996), semiotics (Peirce, 1991), and communication studies (Watzlawick, Beavin, & Jackson, 1967). These contributions comprise the larger perspective of identity and interaction, including social interaction, social constructionism, and discourse, and will be detailed in the following section. The constitutive view of identity (Mokros, 2003) is selected as a theoretical tool employed for this study. The constitutive view of identity is coupled with a theory-based interpretive microanalysis methodology, the natural history method. More regarding the natural history method will be discussed in chapter three. Since work-like activities, the interaction surrounding these activities, and the doing of "customerness" are of central concern, the application of both the constitutive view of identity (Mokros, 2003) and the natural history method are appropriate.

The constitutive view of identity shifts away from an informational model of communication, placing emphasis on language, interaction, and self-reflection. The approach taken here allows not only for communication to aid in information exchange, but also for communication to uncover central concepts. Primary among these concepts are the challenges actors face acting as "customers," how place is created within space, and the erosion and thus blurring of the boundaries between "recognized" and "unrecognized" work, and "home" and "work." The examination of work from the

constitutive perspective also provides an opportunity to examine the self while attending to the reflective process of how self and work are shaped through communication.

Mokros, Mullins, and Saracevic (1995) summarize how the constitutive approach to communication unfolds in interaction:

“Interactants define the situation prior to entering into interaction with one another with what might be called a ‘framing definition.’ This definition serves as the initial guide to action and evaluation and thereby provides a frame from and within which the interaction progresses. During the course of an interaction, this framing definition is creatively reshaped in all but the most ritualized contexts. Thus, situation defining is conceptualized as a dynamic interactive and negotiated process” (p. 255).

In summary, the theoretical perspective applied herein is not a linear process of information exchange, but rather an interactive one whereby actors navigate each encounter. This study examines the social interaction between “customers” and provides a way to view both the navigation and negotiation of each interaction. The conceptualization of the self herein is identified as both emerging out of, and as a consequence of, social interaction. This leads to the concept of self as a product of interaction and communication with others. An overview of the goals for this study is discussed next.

Goals of study

As stated, the primary theoretical tool employed to investigate the communicative nature of space and the activities that occur within specific spaces is the constitutive view (Mokros & Deetz, 1996), which is the process by which we make sense of our surroundings and relationships to others, and how meaning is produced. Within this perspective, Mokros and Deetz (1996) describe a communicative situation as “not merely a moment of information or message exchange, but it is a situation within which

communicative activities constitute its actors and the situation they believe to be situated within” (p. 32). When examining a communication space, joint construction of meaning can be investigated. Thus, the analysis of activities situated in public is always a study of the joint construction of meaning, for the space within which these activities are situated is a moment of communication. In the case of this study, by focusing on work-like activities that are performed between actors in a public space, the ways in which “customerness” is performed as an interactional accomplishment is analyzed.

As stated previously, Mokros’ constitutive view sees identity as a product of social interaction, resulting in “identity work” (Mokros, 1996, p. 17), an ongoing experience between actors. The constitutive view, then, “assumes communication produces and reproduces systems of order and meaning through everyday practices of individuals in interaction” (Mokros, 2003, p. 5). Once again, this perspective understands roles as negotiated, rather than fixed, and therefore examines the processes through which individuals assume or take up role identities. The constitutive view also identifies blurring, or the erosion of the boundary, between “publicness” and “ privateness” and “home” and “work,” which this study employs to illustrate the potentially problematic nature of every interaction in this coffee shop. In other words, as mentioned, these concepts function on a continuum, so they are blurred, rather than clear and distinct.

As one of the study’s theoretical lenses, the constitutive view of identity (Mokros, 1996) is applied to examine the interaction in contexts where the realms of public and private overlap, in this case a coffee shop. This is possible, since the constitutive view highlights the normal, or assumed, ways in which actors adapt to and occupy an environment. As will be discussed in the next chapter, the perspectives of Barker (1963)

and Geiryn (2000) are in alignment with the principal guiding theoretical lens, the constitutive view. Barker's (1963) notion of actors shaping their actions to conform to stereotypic assumptions of what is expected in certain spaces, and Geiryn's (2000) notion of place, since space facilitates interaction, with interaction heavily influenced by the environment, both show how actions are constituted through communication. This highlights how actors make sense of and navigate their interaction within this space, at times creating place (Geiryn, 2000). The role of environmental affordances in why actors select these coffee shops to perform work-like activities, and how they feel when they do, will also be analyzed in chapter four.

My objective in applying the constitutive perspective is contextual, by showing how *in situ* words and actions represent specific meaning for individuals, as they navigate the intersection of public and private in a coffee shop. As I will discuss subsequently, using context as a guide for analysis "allows us to grasp how we might approach meaning as an enduring problem of interest for the study of communication" (Mokros, 2010, p. 16). But Mokros (1996) also points out that "identity work is, however, incomplete if the very concept of work itself is not problematized" (p. 17). By problematizing the intersection of the boundaries of "home" and "work" as "customers" perform work-like activities, this study seeks to further examine the many "selves" involved in interaction within everyday routines for actors.

Since there is order and continuity to social interaction associated with the interaction order, Goffman (1967) differentiates between norms, and rules and procedures. Norms guide behavior, with rules and procedures being individually interpreted and maintained in social encounters. Rituals, according to Goffman (1967),

are what are used in order to uphold rules and procedures. Norms, then, guide involvement in interaction, with rituals acting as the procedures that are followed when interacting with others. Certain rituals are expected and appropriate at times, and others inappropriate. Therefore, the proper performance of rituals by following norms can preserve face, since the following of expected norms guides how threats to face are handled (i.e., will mistake require apology or explanation, when is it important to show poise, etc.). As will be explored in chapter four, norms are often, but not always, maintained by actors as they conduct “work-like” activities in these coffee shops.

In light of the growing number of public places that allow work to be performed, the matter of choice regarding work location is brought to the forefront. When utilized to examine such a space as a coffee shop, the constitutive view shows how individual agency operates through macro-level social constraints, capturing identity as dynamic, co-constructed, and emergent (Mokros, 2003). For this study, the application of the constitutive view makes it possible to observe how actors define and manage different aspects of self in connection to work, by gathering data reflective of how actors interact. If researchers continue to move in the direction that examines “home” and “work” as integrated, and not as separate spheres, research can capture the moments when the micropractices of “home” and “work” intersect with the macropractices of “publicness” and “ privateness” in interaction. The study herein, involving the constitutive view of identity (Mokros, 1996), would enable us to focus on what individuals do, who they are, and the meaning that their own actions have for them, thereby highlighting the “inherent fluidity of the give and take of daily life as individuals move through time, space, and social context” (Kirby, Golden, Medved, Jorgenson, Buzzanell, 2003), such as the

interaction found in a coffee shop. Mokros (1996) has called for “the empirical study of identity as interactionally constituted, and theoretical implications of interactional perspectives on identity” (p. 7). With the goal of this study to achieve a better understanding of how “customerness” shapes interaction in these coffee shops, this study adds to that body of research by bridging micro-level occurrences in these coffee shops to a discussion of macro-level implications.

In summary, by observing and interviewing those who work in one type of public space, a coffee shop, data is gathered on the work-like activities, how face-work is used by actors during these activities, and the social patterns of interaction that emerge as actors work in public. Additionally, the ways in which technology is used to accomplish work-like tasks and the erosion or blurring of the boundaries within the context of public and private is explored. From a constitutive perspective of communication, this study expressly examines the erosion or blurring of the boundaries between “home” and “work” and the nature of “recognized” versus “unrecognized” work. The constitutive view is employed to capture work in various forms among actors who occupy such settings. This leads to the formation of six research questions, which are posed below.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the research process:

RQ1: What work-like activities are observable when performed in the public spaces identified as a setting for this study? (participant observation)

RQ2: What work-like activities are reported as performed in the public spaces identified as a setting for this study? (interviews)

RQ3: What type of face-work is commonly used by “customers” when challenged while working in the public spaces studied? (participant observation; interviews)

RQ4: What patterns of social interaction emerge as “customers” work in the public spaces studied? (participant observation; interviews)

RQ5: What do “customers” report about their reasons for working in the public spaces studied, and how do they feel about doing so? (interviews)

RQ6: How do the affordances of the public spaces studied shape, encourage, or discourage, work-related activities? (participant observation; interviews)

Presentation of study

The presentation of my study follows the following outline. First, to set the context, in chapter two I begin the literature review with a discussion of the relevance of studying social interaction and social constructionism within public space. Next, I examine the new economy literature, which engages the personal implications of forms of work, such as freelancing and consulting. By focusing on the home work literature within this section, I offer a theoretical broadening of the concept of work to include forms of labor outside that of paid employment, extending our understanding and knowledge by viewing work as having multiple, ongoing dimensions. Then, as a way to understand how the affordances of these research sites encourage or discourage work-related activities, I discuss environmental features, or affordances, that contribute to the interaction in public spaces used for work, since discourse acts as the backdrop within the constitutive view. Lastly, I discuss the new communication technologies literature as a lens through which to view the facilitation of flexible forms of work. This is followed by chapter three, where I provide an overview of the methodological approach to this study.

Chapter four provides a summary of interview and observational data, which includes an analysis of the work-like activities both observed and reported (RQ1; RQ2), the challenges actors face when acting as a “customer” while working in these research sites (RQ3), along with face-work and the patterns of social interaction as they were observed and reported in interviews (RQ4). I also offer an analysis of why actors work in these coffee shops (RQ5), and the role that affordances play in shaping work-like practices (RQ6). The result is a broadening of the concept of work as it contributes to the erosion or blurring of the boundaries between public and private, along with an examination of how work is accomplished as the “customer” and “worker” identity emerge in interaction. Finally, in chapter five I offer a theoretical framework of the constitutive view which is based upon the analysis of concepts and blurred boundaries that are discussed in the analysis. Also, I provide a discussion of the dualisms revealed through the application of the constitutive view as a result of the analysis of reproduced and breached norms. This is followed by a discussion of the limitations and ethical considerations, and the implications and agenda for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

OVERVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter first examines the literature that is foundational to the constitutive view. This view, at least for the purpose of, and as applied to this study, consists of social interaction and social constructionism. This literature is relevant to the examination of interaction and the emergence of “customer” identity in a coffee shop. Then, the new economy literature is explored as a way of explaining flexible forms of work which allow actors to conduct work-like activities in these spaces. Within this section, the implications of new forms of work on the home work relationship is also discussed, identifying a broadening of the concept of work to include forms outside of those performed for monetary compensation. Next, the environmental affordances literature allows for the explication of concepts central to this study, both place and space. Lastly, I examine the new communication technologies literature as a way in which actors’ conducting work-like activities in these research sites is facilitated.

Social interaction, social constructionism, and public space

According to the social interactionist perspective, self is produced through interaction with others. For Mead (1934), “When a self does appear it always involves an experience of another; there could not be an experience of a self simply by itself” (p. 195). Also, Cooley (1902) integrated self with society. In other words, the interplay between the self and one’s social environment, or society, is social interaction: “We see that the individual is not separate from the whole, but a living member of it, deriving his life from the whole through society” (p. 131). With Cooley’s view of the self as a

societally integrated entity, and Mead's (1934) view of the self as interpenetrating, and interpenetrated by, the social world, the self emerges through social interaction.

This position was later taken up in the work of Goffman (1959), who extended Mead's (1934) Theory of Self. Goffman (1959), emphasizing locally produced interaction developed through observation, considered Mead's (1934) theory too simplistic to capture the many loosely integrated social roles actors assume in interaction. For Goffman (1959), meaning, and particularly the self, emerges through social interaction, and is therefore a more complex process than originally posed by Mead's (1934) theoretical framework for social activity. In the analysis section, the many social roles actors assume while working in public is captured in observational data and reported in interview data.

Combining Mead's (1934) theoretical perspective of social interaction with Goffman's (1959; 1983) interactional view, Scheff (1990) provides a lens whereby everyday interaction has an impact on qualities of the self. "Social bonds," Scheff argues, are the important relationships people have with one another, and act as a fundamental force for holding society together. "Attunement" (p. 7) is the relative state of balance between closeness and distance to others, and when in alignment, a secure social bond exists. When out of balance, the social bond is made vulnerable, resulting in feelings of shame. Scheff's concept of the social bond was influenced by Goffman's notion that self-concepts are manifested when individuals interact with others through role expectations. In short, when an individual upholds role expectations, also understood as following a line, the social bond is left intact, and face, or the impression given to others, is not damaged. Failure to maintain role expectations is considered deviating from one's line,

and thereby from the social expectations of a role one assumes. This results in embarrassment, and damages the social bond. This occurs since it is not just the responses of others but one's own emotions that are essential aspects of adjustment in interaction and which guide encounters.

Face-work, or the image of self presented to others, is an active process and is included herein within forms of work. In an interaction or encounter, an actor must work at not only presenting images of self, but also on saving or maintaining face, being poised when loss of face is threatened, and adjusting to (possible) loss of face (Goffman, 1967). Face-work is also a social process, since in an encounter actors are also working to protect the face of others, maintain their own line, or the impression they may have formed, and maintain their own face, making actors active agents as they navigate situations and encounters. Face-work is observed by focusing on the interaction of actors as they work in these research sites.

When examining face-work, an essential component is that of front and back regions. Goffman (1959) defines the front region in daily life as the managing of impressions when dealing with others. In turn, actors partake in a large amount of impression management in order to ensure that the image they give to others in an encounter is in alignment with the image they wish to convey. The back region is what happens as an actor prepares and practices impression management for what they would like to expose in an encounter. For Goffman (1959), everyday situations in which actors interact include work on the part of the actor in order to align the front and back regions for impression management. The current study reveals the interaction order, and more specifically, face-work and impression management, as it applies to the daily activities of

actors as they navigate the challenge of maintaining a “customer” identity when occupying these research sites to accomplish work.

A relevant component of face-work and impression management is that of the emotions actors experience as they interact or enter into encounters with other actors. Certain emotions are critical in Goffman’s analysis of face (1967), since they are part of the interactive process when actors engage in encounters. Emotions such as embarrassment, shame, pride, confidence, and security form part of the means through which an encounter is maintained, and have been explored more recently by Hochschild (1983). This study draws upon Hochschild’s examination of “emotional labor,” and explains that it “requires one to induce or suppress feeling in order to sustain the outward countenance that produces the proper state of mind in others” (p. 7). Drawing upon Goffman’s work to support her analysis, Hochschild’s research focuses on the emotions of actors as commodities, or utilized in a specific way in commercial settings for profit (e.g, flight attendants, bill collectors). For this study, Hochschild’s conceptualization of emotional labor as work in order to adjust emotions for the benefit of saving face in daily life is relevant, since the focus is on actors as they work to manage the perception of themselves when in this public space. Since actors are occupying public space and are therefore in the presence of others, it then becomes likely that they will manage challenges or issues with an awareness that they are, indeed, in the presence of others. This is apparent, as was found in observational data and subsequently explored in interview data, when exploring actors’ decision whether or not to make a purchase while conducting work-like activities in these coffee shops.

With similar emphasis placed on the self in social interaction, Bateson (1996) holds that communication and interaction should be of primary focus in order to identify meaning, with relationship and interaction characterized more as a reciprocal relationship “invoked in context” (p. 56). As noted by Blumer (1969), social life consists of a joining together of “definition and interpretation” (p. 66), allowing individuals to experience the interaction as meaningful. This provides ways for events, such as the communicative management of the challenges actors navigate, and the intersection of the boundaries between “home” and “work,” to acquire meaning in a specific context, such as a coffee shop.

Utilizing the lens of the constitutive view, the self is social, meaning that it is produced by actors as they adjust in encounters with others, as opposed to an inflexible inner self. Examining the patterns that emerge as actors interact with others when they use this space for work is very relevant, since Goffman (1963) notes that “the behavior of an individual while in a situation is guided by social values or norms concerning involvement” (p. 193), concluding that maintaining both of these in interaction requires flexibility and work. The micro-level occurrences that contribute to norms are explored in chapter four, with macro-level implications discussed in chapter five.

When examining the interaction that occurs within a coffee shop when it is used for work and as actors navigate challenges, Goffman’s (1967) concepts of deference and demeanor are also relevant. Goffman states that demeanor, the “element of behavior conveyed through deportment and dress” (p. 77), varies in how actors extend deference, but due deference is the foundation of the interaction order. The providing or withholding of deference, or the “appreciation an individual shows another” (p. 77), contributes to

either a well or poor “demeaned” (p. 77) actor. Goffman’s interaction order (1983) functions as the “ground rules” (1971, p. x) for social life, acting as that which constitutes the social order by addressing the routines that accompany behavioral patterns. Deference and demeanor are salient in a coffee shop used for work. For example, observational data illustrate actors politely questioning others regarding the availability of seats, and actors commonly covering mouths when on their cell phones prior to stepping outside to hold phone conversations. In addition, interactions regarding power cord use are also acts of deference, with those closest to the outlet assuming the responsibility of plugging and unplugging cords for others. More detail on these examples will be discussed in the analysis of the field observations.

Face-work and the social patterns of interaction, or encounters, are examined by applying the constitutive view through microanalysis (Goffman, 1967; 1983; Mokros, 2003) as it applies to the daily activities of actors as they occupy a coffee shop to accomplish work. Actors surrounded by other actors as they occupy space in these locations brings to the forefront social constructionism, and in particular, the concept of self. Social constructionism sees the self as a social process, in relation to others (Gergen, 1991).

Social interactionism coupled with social constructionism asserts that actors are created by their interactions with others, rather than simply connected to others within interaction (Mokros, 1996). Seeing the self as a social process comprised of relationships to others instead of a fixed self, Gergen (1991) argues that contemporary society has completely immersed the self, to the degree that it presents us with the challenge of “the fully saturated self becoming no self at all” (p. 7). Gergen contends that a secure,

authentic sense of self is becoming obsolete, in part, as a result of the plethora of technologies, ideas, situations, and groups available to us in everyday life. This has resulted in a collection of partial identities, or “multi-phrenia” (p. 16). Giddens (1979) holds the more temperate view that self-identity is shaped by both social structures and the individual. In his theory of structuration, it is the social practices that occur over time and space that create and re-create individual identities and larger social systems. Since both structure and individual agency contribute to the construction of self as influential in daily life, the matter of choice in this study is made important when understanding identity, self, and work.

In Goffman’s (1959) view, the self is comprised of multiple social roles, presented through communicative engagement with others. Viewing the self as a social being, social constructionism takes the position that the self is not a given, but rather a consequence of interactive life, or a social construction (Berger & Luckman, 1966). Berger and Luckman (1966) extended Cooley’s (1902) idea that society itself is socially constructed. Social constructionism views identity as an inherently communicative process embedded within discourse, bringing communication to the forefront as the mechanism through which meaning is constituted. In this perspective, communication is central to meaning-making processes in everyday interactions (Berger & Luckman, 1966). It also identifies language as that which shapes the ways we construct our reality and interact with others, providing useful insights into the development of personal identities. In addition to the understanding of self and identity, social constructionism also contributes to a reexamination of the concept of work, including previously

unrecognized forms of work, by examining the processes of how each is understood as relational concepts, which become manifested as communicative activities.

Social constructionism is distinct from the constitutive view, yet complementary. Social constructionism provides the understanding of conceptualizations, such as self, identity, work, and in the case of this study, the role of “customer” that actors assume when in these research sites. The constitutive view emphasizes communication as the process of how these conceptualizations take on meaning.

Within social constructionism, roles are created through an individual’s interaction with others, which then structures their reality and provides meaning to their lives by “taking” up a role. Until recently, existing conceptualizations of role within the home work literature “failed to capture the challenge on a daily basis of maintaining a coherent sense of self while moving physically and mentally between the realms of work and life” (Kirby, et al., 2003). The conceptualization of role taking, or multiple selves, argued for in this study is dynamic, rather than static, as it captures the communication processes involved when actors interact.

Social constructionism contends that role taking is constructed out of “typificatory schemes” (Berger & Luckman, 1966, p. 31) that allow individuals to apprehend aspects of another in order to facilitate encounters. Roles are referred to as typification, since an interactant identifies with types of conduct in a situation, reinforcing types, which are interchangeable in interaction. Roles are actors in this context, acting as constructions, which amount to individuals participating in a social world. Once these roles are reflected upon and internalized, the experience becomes real to the individual. Thus, roles act as a common stock of knowledge containing reciprocal typifications of knowledge, essential

to social interaction (Berger & Luckman, 1966). Mead (1934) reminds us that this form of self-reflection is fundamental to social interaction. Role taking occurs rapidly and repeatedly in interaction (which Scheff (1990) later labeled abduction) as individuals attempt to observe language, or signs, in encounters. The implications of Berger and Luckman's (1966) contribution coupled with that of Mead (1934) and Scheff (1990) is that self reflection is fundamental to social interaction, which advances our communicative understanding of work, self, identity, and role taking. Following West and Zimmerman (1987), the position articulated in this study is that the "social roles of which we are all capable, can be shed, muted, or made more salient, depending upon the situation" (p. 128). The analysis highlights the role of "customer" identity as it becomes more salient in interaction in these coffee shops.

In summary, social interaction and social constructionism are foundational to the examination of interaction and the emergence of "customer" identity in a coffee shop. Utilizing Mokros's (2003) constitutive view of identity, its concepts of identity and "personhood" (2003) are employed as guiding lenses. These lenses capture through microanalysis the dynamic nature of how "customerness" is accomplished, how "customer" emerges through interaction in these research sites, and how traditional understandings of "customer" behavior are challenged. Next I review the literature pertaining to the new economy in order to examine the personal implications for actors who work in these public spaces.

The new economy and new forms of work

This project focuses on the aspect of the new economy literature that suggests that new forms of work have personal consequences and are a result of technological change

and globalization (Beck, 2000; Carnoy, 2000; Sennett, 1998). Both Beck (2000) and Carnoy (2000) proposed that the overall structure of work is becoming more temporary, characterized by insecurity and resulting in more flexible work arrangements. The “insecurity” noted by both Beck (2000) and Carnoy (2000) when discussing new forms of paid work is also evident in Reich’s (1991) argument in support of workers’ becoming equipped to perform symbolic analytic work in order to provide economic growth. In further exploring the new economy, Reich (2000) has contended that new forms of work exert pressure on workers to achieve work-life balance, since paid work additionally requires “emotional energy and psychological concentration” (p. 228). Both actors accomplishing work-like tasks, which in some cases includes flexible forms of work, and the occurrence of face-work (Goffman, 1967) as actors assume the identity of “customer,” are identifiable and analyzed in these research sites. This is a result of social changes that broaden our understanding of work, in turn viewing work as a relational activity.

A further exploration of this dynamic is the fact that the 21st century has provided dramatic social and technological changes, transforming how people experience the two related but different dimensions of “home” and “work” (Kirby, et al., 2003). The workforce is now comprised of more women and dual-earner couples than ever before (Krouse & Afifi, 2007), and the vast array of technological innovations has made the boundary between home and work less distinct and therefore, as the title to this study indicates, the boundary is blurred (Edley, Hylmo, & Newsom, 2004). One instance of this is that paid work can be conducted in public spaces, since it has become more flexible in nature. The consequence is that public spaces have become work spaces.

Although work is traditionally defined in terms of paid employment, scholars have argued for a reconceptualization of work, beyond that of paid employment (Clair, 1996; Hochschild, 1983; Medved, 2004). This reconceptualization includes the identification of forms of hidden labor (e.g., housework, self-care, caring for others, volunteerism), that historically have not been viewed as work. This reconceptualization stems, in part, from the feminist perspective regarding this view of work.

Traditionally, women have occupied the domestic sphere, engaged in the activities of nurturing, or the care of husbands and children, and other domestic chores. With women progressively entering the workforce, the domestic/public boundary has become increasingly eroded or blurred, with this erosion having implications on the private lives of women. Okin (1989) addressed the gender inequalities rooted in traditional families, with a potential resolution through the examination of these inequalities in modern day families. With most women now working outside the home in addition to performing routine domestic labor, it has forced most women to partake in what Hochschild (1989) refers to as the second shift. As an example of the intersection of the domestic/public boundary, Wittenstrom (1996) examined a family daycare, providing an interactional perspective on identity by expanding the traditional conceptualization of women's activities. In her study, Wittenstrom argues against a single definition of work, since a family daycare allows for multiple definitions, with "work" also viewed as "caring," contributing a reconceptualization of women's "work." In this context, "work" is devalued since it is seen as "care." The interactional approach to identity is most relevant to the present study since it examines the work-like behaviors of customers, thereby expanding the understanding of traditional customer behaviors in a coffee shop.

Feminist literature (Hartmann, 1987; Kanter, 1977; Okin, 1989) has investigated the changes regarding women who leave the domestic sphere, or home, to earn money for paid work performed in the public sphere. The orientation herein, and one in which this project is rooted, is that of problematizing the notion of “separate spheres” (Kanter, 1977) regarding “home” and “work.” Scholars to date have tried to move away from the “separate spheres” ideology (Kirby, et al., 2003; Nippert-Eng, 1995), yet the notion of “home” and “work” functioning within two separate realms, even if primarily psychologically or societally rooted, persists (Hochschild, 2001). By problematizing the notion of “separate spheres” (Kanter, 1977) regarding “home” and “work,” this study examines how actors navigate the intersection and overlap, or blurring, of these realms as they work in a coffee shop, why they choose to work in this location, and how they feel when doing so.

The constitutive approach applied herein is a useful tool to examine the intersection of “home” and “work” as it is communicatively constituted, while bringing meaning, process, and interaction to the forefront as it occurs in a coffee shop. By acknowledging the feminist perspective and how it relates to “unrecognized” forms of work, this study is grounded in an expanded understanding of work that includes such activities as family care giving and the management of one’s personal life through the completion of tasks such as taking care of children. Work is also viewed as a relational activity, bringing the self/other interactive component to the forefront, and hence face-work. Conceptualized this way, the self is identified as both emerging out of, and as a consequence of, social interaction. This leads to the concept of self as a product of interaction and communication with others, where “communication is viewed as a site

within which experience achieves a sense of coherence, structure, and meaning” (Mokros, 1996, p. 4).

In summary, a coffee shop used for work-like activities provides a context in which to examine new forms of work and the personal implications of a broadened perspective of work. In this same vein, the discussion of the blurred boundary between the nature of work and “unrecognized” work indicates that the distinction between differing kinds of work is artificial. I now continue the discussion by examining the environment in which these behaviors occur.

Environmental affordances

An assumption of this study is that the setting is an essential component of the encounter between actors. The notion that physical setting, or space, and its features are linked with activities that occur within them is foundational for this study. Glaeser (2000) asserts that “work is communicative action, which can therefore be analyzed in terms of performance” (p. 187). Based on an ethnographic study of the German police, Glaeser (1998) also concludes that space and self together provide actors with an opportunity to experience their own agency. Emphasizing the influence of space on interaction, Glaeser (1998) concludes that “spaces ground human activity as well as the narratives about these activities” (p. 30). This study identifies public spaces as communicative spaces, whereby the activities that occur within this public space can be further understood as modes of communication. This will be accomplished by applying a constitutive lens in order to examine through microanalysis the interaction and talk as it occurs in these spaces.

The research sites for this study are communicative spaces, providing the settings for social interaction. Traditionally, discourse is considered talk, but within the

framework of the constitutive view (Mokros, 2003), discourse is expanded beyond talk to include a much larger societal backdrop, whereby actors are embedded politically and ideologically (Mokros & Deetz, 1996, p. 33). Discourse “identifies the systems of etiquette that guide human agency and provide the parameters within which self-identity is constituted and evaluated” (Mokros, 1996, p. 5). The constitutive view can examine the communication that comprises the dualisms inherent within this study, such as “public” and “private,” or “home” and “work,” along with additional dualisms identified in the data and explored in chapter five, as relevant to actors within the context of larger, societal macro-discourses as they mutually influence each other.

This discussion places emphasis on the features found in this setting, or the environmental affordances, of public spaces used for work. A term originating from the field of environmental psychology, “environmental affordances” was coined by Gibson (1979), and used to refer to “what it offers the animal, what it provides or furnishes, for good or evil. It implies the complementarity of the animal and the environment” (p. 127). This concept is applicable to this study, since certain environmental affordances of the selected research sites is of central focus. Specifically, environmental affordances of each coffee shop, such as the physical attributes of electrical outlets, wi-fi availability, furniture, types of food provided, and restroom access were noted. In addition, an observed tendency was that actors that used other actors as affordances of this coffee shop. The possible presence or absence of a cell phone policy was also noted. These types of environmental affordances indicated the degree to which outside work is considered acceptable in these spaces.

A related theoretical approach to describe how actors engage with the environment is that of place (Gieryn, 2000). When discussing stereotypic activities and actors' behavior in a space, Gieryn asserts that "place" provides a meaningful connection between a physical setting and socialized experiences. In turn, this provides a structure to interaction. This conceptualization of "place" is different from that of "space," since "space is what place becomes when a unique gathering of things, meanings, and values are removed. Space is place filled up by people, practices, objects, and representatives" (p. 3). In the same vein, Cresswell (2004) explains place(s) as "constructed by people doing things and in this sense are never 'finished', but are constantly being performed" (p. 37). Places, then, are made through human action, but simultaneously influence what people do in that space. In other words, to suggest an important summary of this concept, place is the personification of space.

Complementing the constitutive perspective utilized herein is Barker's (1963) work involving "behavior settings." Barker established that the environmental features found in a setting impose structure on behavior, and that routinized patterns of behavior are found in socially-defined functional spaces. He contends that actors shape their actions to conform to stereotypic assumptions of what is expected in those spaces, reproducing the meaningful expectations of behavior. The important distinction follows, then, that space becomes "place" when interaction is introduced. For example, data show how actors creatively adapt to this space, and interact with others regarding work-like activities, creating "place." The finding of place, and the three types of encounters in these research sites, is a result of a transformation of behavioral routines in these coffee shops.

Adding to this discussion and blurring the lines between these distinctions is the perspective of space provided by Lefebvre (1991). Specifically, Lefebvre (1991) contends that space is fundamentally social, and can be further classified as absolute and abstract. Lefebvre states, “(Social) space is a (social) product” (p. 26), pointing out that space is not only a social construction, but also that all places are fundamentally social.

In Lefebvre’s view, space as both social and as a social construction makes the space selected for this analysis germane, since it illustrates the relational dimension of actors working in the presence of others. It is also possible, then, for Lefebvre’s perspective to illustrate the interaction that occurs when strangers share a public space (Simmel, 1908), as Lefebvre’s view encompasses both public and private spaces within his framework. Lefebvre’s (1991) perspective on space is similar to that of Geiryn’s (2000) and Cresswell’s (2004) notion of place since Lefebvre (1991) contends that all spaces are fundamentally social, and therefore are lived and meaningful. This adds emphasis to what actors do in these spaces, consistent with Geiryn’s (2000) perspective on place. The examination of a public space that is also commercial in nature, such as the selected research sites, provides insight into human practices that foster “place” within a public “space.”

Another aspect of affordances offered by a space is that of the built environment. Rapoport (1982) examined the built environment, defining it as “A setting with a specific set of characteristics and cues” (p. 120), and that it is comprised of space, time, communication, and meaning. Similar to Barker (1963), Rapoport (1982) contends, “The social situation influences people’s behavior, but it is the physical environment that provides the cues” (p. 57). It follows then that typically actors act in alignment with their

reading of cues produced in an environment. Once an actor notices and understands a cue, the expectation is that the actor will act as expected within that environment. If the actor does not do so, he or she is considered to be out of face (Goffman, 1967), or a social deviant (Goffman, 1959). Actors' reading cues and acting as expected, and at other times violating those expectations, are amply illustrated in various fieldnotes in the data section herein.

Also of interest is how actors in these settings respond to both formal and informal polices. Specifically, I documented in my fieldnotes whether or not a site had a formal posting of policies (e. g., no cell phone use) and related rules and regulations. In this case, a meaningful fact would include those violations that are routinely tolerated, and those that vary in degree (e. g., a 30 second versus 30 minute cell phone call). I also investigated if an unspoken system of reciprocity exists regarding the observation of more informal violations. For example, what is considered a sufficient purchase to legitimate occupying space? Examples of this reciprocity are discussed in the data analysis herein.

In summary, the three perspectives above, namely Barker's (1963) notion of actors shaping their actions to conform to stereotypic assumptions of what is expected in certain spaces, Geiryn's (2000) notion of place, and Lefebvre's (1991) perspective that space is fundamentally social, are interrelated and suggest that physical arrangements retain meaning, either through the environment or through repeated interaction between actors in that setting. This formulation results in the reciprocally influential interplay of space and environment, highlighting the interaction as it occurs within it. Goffman's constitutive view of communication, and that of Mokros & Deetz (1996), are used to

explore how the specific affordances mentioned herein, namely actors using other actors as resources, shape, encourage, and discourage work-related activities.

New communication technologies and public space

Another aspect of this investigation explores the increasing popularity of technological developments and devices that in recent years have made work possible anywhere at any time (Haddon & Silverstone, 1995). This study advances the notion that flexible work configurations have allowed actors to employ technology to accomplish both paid and unpaid responsibilities, resulting in an interplay of flexible forms of work, technology use, and public space. This interplay is observable in the research sites selected for this investigation.

Because temporal and spatial boundaries between home and work have become increasingly blurred (Golden & Geisler, 2007), new opportunities exist for knowledge workers to perform activities when and where they choose. In a particularly relevant study, Kurland and Bailey (1999) examined differences in work-life balance for teleworkers who worked either at home, in a satellite office, in a neighborhood work center, or in a mobile capacity. Concluding that the availability of technology allows teleworkers to work whenever and for however long they chose, each arrangement presents different challenges to the management of work and life.

This study utilizes the constitutive perspective on how technologies are used in practice, thus highlighting the choice of both electronic and non-electronic use. Further, it extends the development within the technology literature which categorizes “users” as “active participants rather than passive recipients” (Oudshoorn & Pinch, 2003, p. 5), emphasizing that actors may manipulate technology in ways that fit their working in a

public space. These technological developments also allow for and facilitate these new forms of work, such as an actor working in a public space with a smart phone, laptop, and wi-fi. It is this occurrence that highlights the interplay of flexible forms of work and technology use in facilitating working with devices in public.

Placing emphasis on the choice to use technology and in what manner, Orlikowski (2000) argues for a human-centered perspective of technology use in organizations, one which emphasizes how actors make sense of and interact with technology depending upon the circumstance. By noting that the way in which technology is used is not a given, Orlikowski states that it is “constituted and reconstituted through the everyday, situated practices of particular users using particular technologies in particular circumstances” (p. 425). As Oudshoorn and Pinch (2003) point out, new uses are always being found for familiar technologies, making “new” technologies grounded in their predecessors. When technology is viewed in this light, the role of “users” and what they do with technology becomes a central focus.

Highlighting the social interaction that occurs within this space, Bull (2000) examined the intersection of personal stereos and self in everyday life, and comments on the notion of “checking out.” In Bull’s account, personal stereo use created the experience of being “cocooned” (p. 32), by separating the actor using mobile technology from the rest of the world, fostering an “inconsequentiality of the social world beyond them” (p. 109). Bull’s examination, a contribution to “public privatism” later explored by Hampton and Gupta (2008), offers insight into the consequences for public life and interaction when mobile technologies are utilized, arguing that mobile technology transforms the actor’s relation to the environment. Data collection for this study includes

the rise of various new communication technologies, and the use of both electronic and non-electronic devices.

Through interaction with others in this space, and through observing interactions with others, actors may develop new uses for technologies and may interact with one another as a result of their technological needs. However, it is also possible that technology can be used in order to avoid interacting with others, thereby contributing to public privatism. As is found most often in this study, technology supported the accomplishment of work. For example, Goffman (1963) describes ways in which actors in public minimize the possibility of efforts by co-present others to engage them in focused interaction through the use of what he calls “social interaction shields” (p. 38). This concept was later investigated by Hampton, Livio, and Sessions (2010). Hampton, et al., concluded that those using headphones had the fewest interactions with strangers, contending that headphones were the most effective interaction shield. Further, Hampton and Gupta (2008) concluded that laptops and mobile phones were also effective interaction shields. This is particularly relevant for this study, since the choice to use devices, and how it is used for paid or unpaid responsibilities, while acting as a “customer” to justify working in these public spaces, is central.

In summary, this study follows Goffman’s (1967) conceptualization of face-work, by taking the position that when actors are in the presence of other actors, they engage in the work of face. However, this study extends this analysis by including actors as they perform tasks, both paid and unpaid, using various communication technologies in this space. The use of technology itself does not allow for the activity to be considered work.

Rather, it highlights that it is what an actor does with technology that allows for the activity to be categorized as a type of work as found in this study.

Summary and focus of study

In summary, by observing and interviewing those who work in one type of public space, a coffee shop, this dissertation examines the work-like activities of customers. Acting as foundational to the constitutive view, and as applied to this study, both the social interaction literature and the social constructionism literature were discussed. This was followed by the new economy literature, which provided a way of explaining flexible forms of work and the broadened perspective of work discussed herein. The overview of the environmental affordances literature provided a way of explicating central concepts for this study, namely space and place. The overview of literature concluded with a discussion of new communication technologies, emphasizing that technology acts as a way in which actors conducting work-like activities in these sites is facilitated.

This study examines the erosion of boundaries between “publicness” and “privateness” through the primary blurred boundary, that of “customer” and “worker.” Traditional understandings of customer behavior are also examined and challenged. This study also explores the blurred boundary between “recognized” and “unrecognized” work through the examination of the concept of work as conceived of by those who occupy these research sites and the different work-like activities they perform while in these spaces. An examination of the social functions of these public spaces illustrates the difficulty in identifying fixed boundaries between “publicness” and “privateness” as it occurs in these spaces, by also examining the blurred boundary between “home” and

“work,” thereby extending the position that public space fundamentally has social character (Goffman, 1963). Next, the chosen methodology for this study is discussed.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

In order to examine the emergence of “customer” identity, the work-like activities in the selected public spaces, and the boundaries that are blurred in these sites, I employed a two-pronged methodological approach for data collection, namely participant observation, including observations of interaction and instances where I participated as a “customer” in these coffee shops, followed by interviews with those whom I met “working” in these spaces. I draw upon the constitutive perspective of communication (Mokros & Deetz, 1996) to understand, and at times participate in, the social world of these sites, producing written accounts of events. This methodological approach is appropriate, since this study is concerned with the particular instances that involve the emergence of “customer” identity and work-like activities as they occur in their natural setting. I first provide an account of the site selection process, followed by a discussion of the approach and procedures employed for data collection. This is followed by the limitations of this approach, and lastly, I include a discussion of the approach to the analysis of data.

Selection of setting and research sites

The first decision was that of a physical setting that would provide the richest possible data for the observation of actors and their use of public space to conduct work-like activities. In preparation for this study, I observed public spaces where actors performed work-like behaviors, and actors appeared to make themselves most “at home” in a coffee shop. This was evidenced by actors who frequently left belongings unattended when using the restroom and when stepping outside to answer a phone call. This was an

explicit indication of trust that presumably one experiences at home. While other locations, such as parks (Hampton, Livio, & Sessions, 2010), have been selected for other studies in order to examine actors as they conduct work-like activities in public spaces, the selection of a coffee shop most closely captured the intersection of home and work as it occurs in a natural environment. It also “allowed” for work in various forms to be observed and the related behaviors to be recorded as actors interact with others. Additional justification for this site selection follows.

During the site selection process, an additional observed tendency for those occupying these coffee shops was identifiable and fascinating. When actors made themselves “at home” as they conducted various work-like activities, they also assumed the role of “customers” in order to accomplish their tasks. Observing what was occurring, I noted that the activities performed were actually far removed from traditional “customer activities.” Included in such activities was the use of various communication technologies and power outlets provided by the establishment, and the use of the establishment as a meeting point for various appointments. However, these activities were permitted by the establishment, which extended the identity of “customers” to these actors despite the fact that their activities appeared quite removed from what one considers traditional “customer activities.” In a sense, everyone in these coffee shops are “working” at being “customers,” not simply having a cup of coffee.

Of central interest was “customerness” and how it emerges in interaction, and how these spaces encourage the doing of work-like activities. It was this location that provided the contrast of employees’ service work performed in these coffee shops as “customers” performed work-like activities. The presence of actors conducting work-like

activities in these sites also provided the opportunity to explore the intersection, hence the blurring, of the boundaries between public and private and “home” and “work.”

Once the type of public space, a coffee shop, was chosen, specific locations were selected. In order to broaden the scope of locations included in this study, the district factor grouping system of the New Jersey Department of Education (DFG) was consulted (<http://www.state.nj.us/education/finance/rda/dfg.shtml>). The DFG is an index of socioeconomic status determined through analyzing education level, occupation and income. Each town is assigned a letter from A to J, representing the lowest to highest socioeconomic rankings, respectively. This resource ensured that I not only provided variety in my site selections, but that it was also systematic. Social economic status was not directly explored during interviews with informants.

For this study, the location labeled middle shop, representative of the middle class, was assigned an I by the DFG, and is largely locally populated. The location labeled upper, representative of the middle to upper class, is located within a university town, and across from a major university, and was also assigned an I by the DFG. Despite these same DFGs, the major difference is that the upper site location exists within an Ivy League university town, likely to attract more student and university employees as patrons, while the middle shop is located in a residential suburban town. The third location, labeled highway, is representative of the middle to lower class for this study, and is located on a major state thoroughfare. This location attracts mostly transient clientele, but also some local patrons, and was assigned a DE by the DFG. It should also be acknowledged that while the DFG was consulted in order to obtain a socioeconomic ranking for the city in which selected sites were located, transient clientele at each site

was identified through observational and interview data. These selections, high and relatively low on the DFG scale, assured variation in the site sample. While one location of this chain is located in the city closest to where I reside, I intentionally did not select this site. I have spent time in this location over the years, and wanted all sites and the actors who occupy them to be completely unfamiliar to me to assure researcher objectivity and anonymity.

Approach to data collection

I now discuss my two-pronged methodological approach to data collection. The first methodological approach was participant observation to identify work-related activities in the three different locations. Since participant observation is often understood and used as a term for various types of participation and observation when doing fieldwork, the goals of my data collection and clarification of my epistemological position should be provided.

My goals for conducting fieldwork were twofold: to identify the occurrence of work-like activities in these sites, and to capture in detail the interaction that accompanies work. This approach is consistent with researchers who applied the constitutive view of identity (Mokros, 2003), whereby a variety of appropriate methods, including participant observation, auto-ethnography, interviews, focus groups, and document review, were systematically analyzed through the application of microanalysis. By analyzing the “engagement practices, with one’s self, with other(s), or with communication products(s)” (Mokros, 2003, p. 13), microanalysis of interaction when “customer identity” emerges, reflects the “assumption that the microscopic will reflect the macroscopic” (Bateson, 1996, p. 67).

The interpretive microanalysis applied herein utilizes a theory-based methodology called the natural history method (Mokros, 2003). The natural history method analyzes interaction by first providing a detailed description of what is “said and done” (Mokros, 2003, p. 18), followed by closely analyzing the ordering of such between interactants. Foundational to the logic of this methodological tool in the analysis stage is the incorporation of hypotheticals regarding interaction, and will be discussed further in the data analysis section. The posing of these counterfactuals acts as a “set of natural experiments” (p. 18), whereby what could have occurred in the interaction is explored. This leads to the final stage, interpretation, whereby the possibilities of interaction previously posed are rendered meaningful and necessary, in order to determine that which are “observable accounts of human activity” (p. 19).

The first methodological approach, observation, was deemed appropriate, since Geertz (1973) reminds us that in order to understand something, we “should look at what the practitioners of it do” (p. 5). Barley and Kunda (2001) argue that observation and “detailed descriptions of work life” (p. 84) are important in order to understand work, “because most work practices are so contextualized that people often cannot articulate how they do what they do unless they are in the process of doing it” (p. 81). For instance, in his study of technicians managing photocopiers for a major US corporation, Orr (1996) provides an ethnographic analysis in order to examine the concept of work solely from the worker’s perspective. With his goal of illustrating “work as it is done versus work as it is described” (p. 13), Orr argues in support of *in situ* observations and interviews, since the separation of the way work is done is only “analytical and not reflective of real life” (p. 8). This study is consistent with the methodological approaches of all of these

researchers, and allowed me the opportunity to participate in the social life as found in these coffee shops.

In addition to capturing the performance of work-like activities, the goal of observation was to obtain examples of naturally occurring turns of talk involving work-like activities as they were approximately captured by the researcher while listening to conversation exchanges between actors. In the next chapter, I offer a microanalysis of both verbal and nonverbal activities, “creating holistic portraits of embodied, situated interaction” (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002, p. 21), contributing to the doing of “customerness.”

The second methodological approach was conducting interviews with actors who routinely occupy these sites for work-like activities. My data gathering required semi-structured conversations with actors in order to more fully understand why they chose to work in these sites, and the behaviors they engage in when assuming “customerness.” Lindlof and Taylor (2002) articulate that the purpose of an interview is, in part, to “understand the social actor’s experience and perspective through stories, accounts, and explanations” (p. 173). Additional goals relating to the purpose of interviews involve what actors consider to be work, where they usually work, why they work in public, the nature of the activities they perform while in these sites, and their interactions with others when working in public, and how they feel about doing so.

To summarize briefly, the goal of fieldwork was to at times participate in the social life of these coffee shops in order to document the work-like activities that occur, and to obtain examples of work-like activities involving naturally occurring turns of talk as documented in fieldnotes. The purpose of interviews was to obtain views of work and to gain additional insight into the work-like behaviors that actors perform in these sites,

along with why they work in public and how they feel when they do. These sources of data provide a perspective on how work-like activities are accomplished in interaction. Specifics regarding the data collection process are discussed next.

Data Collection

Participant Observation

While performing fieldwork, I recorded in typed fieldnotes instances of actors occupying these public spaces for work-like activities and their interaction and talk with others. Fieldnotes detailing who was present, the activities they were performing, and the talk that occurred during these activities were typed out during each site visit. The observations took place at three sites with a total of 108 site visits, with 36 at each site from October 2011 through February 2012. Each observation lasted a minimum of two hours, and included morning, afternoon/evening, weekday, and weekend sessions. As I visited each site during different days and times, it became apparent that the occurrence of work-like behaviors, and how actors assumed “customerness,” was not bound by times or days of the week.

First I documented fieldnotes, and then I completed the coding sheet following each visit which I will explain below. Since one of the goals of fieldwork was to capture relevant turns of talk and activity as they occurred in these spaces, relevant talk was captured with as high a degree of accuracy as possible while the researcher listened to actors during their conversation exchanges. These turns of talk, labeled herein as interactions, sought to include as detailed talk as possible. However, due to environmental noise in these coffee shops, such as the whirling sound indicative of

beverages being prepared or light music constantly playing in the background, conversations between actors needed to be reconstructed in my notes for clarity. At times, it was more effective to observe interaction visually, while mentally recording both nonverbal gestures and talk. Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw (1995) refer to this process as “headnotes” (p. 19), and state that “extensive jottings may record an ongoing dialogue or a set of responses to questions” (p. 20). Thus, the goal of each observation sought to capture relevant talk in interaction, along with what actors said and did in relation to others. “Relevant” talk was important for both fieldnotes and the data analysis, and is further explained below.

Interactions observed

Once I arrived at a site, I selected a seating location within earshot of others, intentionally selecting a different location during each site visit so as to capture a different visual perspective. As I became situated, I was also attuned to the conversations and interaction that were occurring around me, oftentimes simultaneously. I then selected an instance of interaction involving work-like activity on which to focus in order to capture as accurately as possible the talk as it occurred. Once this interaction concluded, I selected another interaction on which to focus, while also documenting the work-like activities actors were completing while in these sites. If no such work-like interaction was occurring, I used that as an opportunity to approach suitable potential interviewees. More regarding the interview procedures will be discussed shortly.

In addition to typing fieldnotes for each site visit, I subsequently completed a coding sheet, at times while in the site, and other times after I had left the site, but on the same day when the observation occurred. This coding sheet was a shorthand version of

the lengthy fieldnote, with the purpose of capturing the items that were of particular interest during each visit. Since a coding sheet was created for every site visit, it also assisted with efficiently capturing relevant data that were included in the analysis.

The comprehensive coding sheet, included as appendix A, contained examples of all work-like behaviors performed, instances of interaction involving work-like activities, type(s) of technology used as actors occupy these spaces (e. g., laptops, mobile phones, portable music players, electronic tablets), instances regarding how actors worked around environmental constraints in socially acceptable ways, and the presence of policies, both formal (posted/enforced) and informal, and violations of these policies.

Breaching experiment and mapping of coffee shops

It should also be acknowledged that since I was observing “customerness” in these coffee shops, I took on the role of “customer” during fieldwork. Fieldwork was then a combined process of being with others as they experienced events, and my experience of events, as I attempted to understand the circumstances in these coffee shops that gave rise to such (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995). Particular attention was paid to what produced “problems” while I was in the field, informing my thinking regarding how actors understood and interpreted these “problems.” This served as a useful source of information regarding the social life of these coffee shops. By noting what I did in relation to others, I was able to discern better what actors did in relation to others (and in the analysis stage incorporate counterfactuals regarding what was not done), producing an account of specific, situated meanings for those who routinely work in these coffee shops (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995). As will also be described throughout the analysis in the next chapter, I participated in the social life of these coffee shops and justified my

presence through acceptable work-like activities. I usually made a purchase during every visit, and as will be discussed later in this chapter, conducted breaching experiments (Garfinkel, 1967) regarding this typical “customer” behavior.

During my first visit to each site, I created a hand drawn site map, with a graphic rendering of each site included as appendices B, C, and D. Lindlof and Taylor (2002) state that maps provide a way “for researchers to explore the spatial dimensions of a site” (p. 112). This was used to record important environmental features, specifically the location of all doors, furniture, where food was served, and the location of the restroom. The purpose of the map was to provide me with a clear reminder of the layout of each site when reflecting on fieldnotes, and also to assist in recalling where and how actors oriented to one another during interactions.

Another purpose of the site map was to record the components of each location that were constant (i.e., location of restroom, general location of furniture), while the coding sheet captured the components of each site that varied (i.e., instances of interaction involving work-like activities). One site map sufficed for the duration of participant observations, whereas a coding sheet was created for every site visit and used as quick reference when reflecting on and analyzing fieldnotes. Other than serving as a mnemonic device, the maps were not used for any additional analytical purpose.

Interviews

Solicitation of interviewees

The second methodological approach, interviews, was selected because conversations with informants would provide the opportunity to discuss experiences in-

depth, yielding richer data. This methodological approach occurred in three stages, namely solicitation of interviewees, scheduling of interviews, and conducting interviews.

As mentioned at the outset, throughout the course of participant observations, I also approached people about participating in an interview. My informants were solicited after focusing closely on all actors who were conducting work-like activities. This study included both those using technological devices as well as those employing low-tech methods to perform work-like activities, such as long handwriting and the reading of print material.

After selecting an actor to approach regarding an interview, I greeted the potential informant, and began by briefly and generally stating the purpose of the study and interview. I always had my student ID, and since several asked if I had “anything they can read” about the study in order to think about participating, I offered an informed consent form for their review, labeled as appendix E, referencing my contact information should they decide to be interviewed. If an actor agreed, contact information was exchanged in order to schedule an in-depth interview at a later time. I followed up with each potential interviewee, usually the day after exchanging contact information, and provided three different possible meeting times. Interviews were scheduled at a mutually convenient time and at the site where we met, and also consisted of one shadow interview and two telephone interviews.

Based on my initial observations and my planning for soliciting interviewees, I quickly learned that the most advantageous time to solicit informants was as they were packing up to leave. Since everyone at these sites was involved in some sort of task, it seemed appropriate not to interrupt them and to wait until they were preparing to depart.

This, of course, had its own challenge, in that some potential interviewees were usually rushing off to “somewhere [I] have to be,” but most were accommodating.

Interview procedures and sample

At the start of every interview, I thanked the informants for meeting and I purchased a cup of coffee as a thank you when the interviewee desired, but most were willing to talk without my doing so. The informed consent form was provided prior to the commencement of every interview. I retained the signed copy and provided a blank copy for the informants’ records. Each individual interview lasted approximately 30-45 minutes. No procedures were carried out that were disturbing emotionally, although discussing unemployment and personal issues was somewhat distressing for some.

The interviews obtained data on what informants consider to be work, where they usually work, why they work in public, and the nature of their activities and interactions when working in public. Demographic data were gathered, including gender, age range, employment status, and type of employment/field. Confidentiality was maintained, that is, no personally identifying information was collected, with the exception of the informed consent form. Following the interview, a code was assigned to each individual informant and used for the duration of the data analysis. Results are reported as individual and summary data, and will be used for academic research purposes only. The interview schedule included as appendix F provides a final version of the general guidelines that were followed for interviews. The interviews are best described as my conversations with informants. The questions served as a guide that was generally followed, with related tangents encouraged and explored. Not all questions were asked to every informant, as not every question was relevant. This provided the researcher “a

more informal, flexible approach” (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002, p. 195), allowing the researcher to “reshuffle topics and questions” (p. 195) in order to best relate to each informant.

In total, I approached 102 individuals, with 38 immediately declining an interview. Respondents generally expressed that “Now is not a good time since I have to be somewhere. Maybe we can talk more when we next see each other?” Regarding basic identifying data, of these 38, 14 were men and 24 were women. After verbally stating we could be in contact to arrange an interview, 23 others did not return my email request for an interview. Of these, 10 were men and 13 were women. 11 others scheduled an interview via email, but cancelled prior to the scheduled date and never rescheduled, labeled herein as cancelled. Of these 11, five were men and six were women. In order to identify who I previously approached and/or communicated with regarding an interview, I developed an informal notation system in a spiral bound notebook documenting identifiable characteristics of potential interviewees from each location. In order to avoid approaching someone who had previously declined, I quickly documented something of note about a potential interviewee to jog my memory (e.g., guy with red bike helmet; woman thick glasses) and the status of our interaction (e.g., no interest expressed, email him/her, took informed consent and email him/her) along with the date. If a potential interviewee provided an email address during our interaction, I wrote it in this notebook and stated that I would follow up to schedule our interview shortly. If I never heard back from a potential interviewee, this was also marked in the notebook. If an interview was scheduled and subsequently completed, it was marked on my personal calendar and then

highlighted in my spiral bound notebook as a way of keeping count of how many interviews were completed from each site.

It should be mentioned that after completion of site visits in February 2012, I returned to each site on several occasions to solicit additional informants. Since those who conducted work-like activities in these locations were suitable candidates for interviews, any actor doing such work was approached. These visits were not included in the final number of site visits, as I did not record fieldnotes or coding sheets on these occasions. These additional visits occurred between July 2012 and January 2013. Typically, I began soliciting informants upon arrival, and stayed until my visit was no longer fruitful. I made notations of those approached in my spiral bound notebook. These subtotals are included in the overall totals stated in the previous paragraph. From the highway location I solicited an additional three actors, resulting in one informant. At the middle shop, I approached an additional six actors, resulting in securing the remaining two informants. At the upper shop, I approached an additional seven actors, resulting in my remaining two informants.

The total sample of informants is 30, equally balanced among sites, with 10 informants from each site. 15 are men and 15 are women. The code for each informant begins with the letter M (middle shop), H (highway), or U (upper), corresponding to the site where the informant was interviewed. The format when referencing informants is M1, H1, etc. A table of all informants and documented traits is included as appendix G, but a few general components are noted here.

Regarding a breakdown of each site's informants by gender and employment status, the 10 informants from the middle shop location include four females and six

males; six are employed full-time, with one currently on medical leave from her place of full-time employment. One is employed part-time, and two are currently unemployed, with one informant retired. The 10 from the highway shop location include six females and four males; six are employed full-time, with three additionally working part-time. Three are students who are also employed part-time, and one is currently unemployed. The 10 from the upper shop location include five females and five males; three are employed full-time, two are students who are also employed part-time, four are currently unemployed, and one informant retired.

An examination of the composition of the types of informants provided both expected and unexpected results. Occupation by students was expected, with the preliminary assumption that observational data from the upper university location would confirm more students. An unexpected result was that the highway location had more student informants. A second unexpected result was that the upper location contained four unemployed informants, the largest number of all three sites. With five informants who were students and two informants who were retired, these classifications were added to the data analysis.

In summary, observational data provided me with first-hand knowledge of the work-like activities conducted in the sites, and the interaction that accompanies these activities. Interviews provided me with in-depth conversations regarding views of work, what activities are commonly performed when in these sites, why informants choose to work in these sites, and how they feel when they do. In fact, in a few instances, observational data regarding the behavior of an actor was very helpful during an interview. By mentioning a specific behavior that I witnessed actors doing during a prior

observation, it assisted interviewees in remembering, explaining, and clarifying why they did what they did in the moment being discussed. Limitations of the data collection process are discussed next.

Limitations of data collection

It should be acknowledged that while in the field, I was never able to determine with total accuracy what work-like activity an actor was performing. During field observations, I noted some actors who were customers solely for the sake of leisure, namely purchasing coffee and performing no discernable activity of explicit interest, such as reading a magazine. However, by focusing on the “work-like” behaviors of actors I was able to determine those that would comprise suitable interview candidates. Examples ranged from an actor reading and highlighting journal articles, to an actor answering sales phone calls prior to stepping into the foyer to complete his conversation, to an actor using a notebook, pen, and laptop, as she spoke on her phone briefly about “extending the deadline.” While I could not determine for certain the purpose of these activities, actors performing work-like activities such as these were considered suitable candidates and therefore approached regarding participation in an interview. Additionally, in retrospect, adding a timeline feature to each fieldnote would have allowed me to capture more accurately and specifically the arrivals, departures, and length of interactions between all actors present.

After site selection and throughout the data collection stage, I began to question how the nature of interaction in these spaces, and the scope of work-like activities conducted, would differ if actors performed other kinds of work-like activities. It is possible then for me to deduce that any work-like activity performed outside of the types

identified herein would most likely not be tolerated. By incorporating hypothetical examples of unacceptable behavior, as mentioned below, I am able to more clearly identify those behaviors that are normalized or tolerated in this space. This line of thinking, namely the incorporation of hypotheticals, developed throughout the data collection stage and continued to provide a useful perspective throughout the data analysis stage. For example, should a man attempt set up car motor parts in order to inspect and then clean them, my sense is that management would prohibit him from doing so. Likewise, should an individual set up a music stand and conduct singing lessons or bring in a basket of apples and begin selling, this would undoubtedly not be tolerated by the establishment. Garfinkel (1967) identified this process of disrupting ordinary situations as the previously mentioned breaching experiments, and in doing so he highlighted the processes that constitute ordinary social interactions. In the specific case herein, identifying the work-like activities found in these coffee shops in turn highlights the normalized “customer” activities.

Approach to data analysis

Once all observations were completed, each map, coding sheet, and fieldnote was analyzed for information pertaining to my research questions. The coding sheet was particularly helpful at this point, in that I could quickly scan the document to determine types of work-like behaviors, instances of interaction involving work-like activity, and type(s) of technology used as actors occupy these spaces.

In instances involving talk, I isolated within a fieldnote the relevant talk that was captured with a high degree of accuracy during an observation, and included it in the coding sheet. In the microanalysis of data that follows in chapter four, verbatim talk is

within quotes, with a description of nonverbal activities accompanying talk. Upon review of talk found in fieldnotes, I asked, “What are the actors trying to accomplish in terms of a work-like task? “What type of work is occurring in this interaction?” What do the actors consider meaningful or problematic in this interaction?” This analysis first resulted in the categories of work described in this dissertation, namely paid, personal, domestic and face. These categories often intersect, and how they do so will be illustrated in the next chapter, at times resulting in a “recognized” work versus “unrecognized” work blurred boundary.

I subsequently realized two additional recurring elements as a result of analyzing the data. In addition to the importance of the talk itself, three types of encounters emerged as they occurred in these sites in connection to work-like activities, namely unplanned, planned, and opportunistic. Secondly, the boundaries identified herein as blurred, namely “public” and “private,” “home” and “work,” and “customer” and “worker,” became apparent by the way actors interacted with others, specifically when discussing or completing work-like tasks. The analysis of these encounters and boundaries is included in the next chapter. My analysis reflects my position that all social life is a process, and therefore this fieldwork captured the social and interactional processes involved when actors interact with others regarding work-like tasks.

Subsequent to every interview, my notes were analyzed for recurring themes involving my core questions of the nature of work, why actors choose to work in public, and the nature of their interactions when in doing so. I did not audio record interviews, since I tried to create a casual environment with semi-structured conversation with the informants as much as possible. I utilized the interview schedule to guide my questions,

and I took notes with pen and paper during each interview, which was then typed up within two to three days following the completion of the interview.

Subsequent to the completion of interviews and the typing of notes, a textual analysis of each interview was conducted, with bracketed units referencing the following items: [what is considered work], [type of work actor does], [tasks work consists of], [location where usually work], [reasons for working in public spaces], [description of experiences working in public spaces], [activities performed in site], [create and maintain professional identity], and [social interaction when working in public]. These codes were utilized to categorize data appropriately in order to answer the research questions.

The analytic practices presented herein draw heavily upon the grounded theory approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1999). By making comparisons across data, I developed categories for further analysis. The analysis herein was far less clear cut than this approach suggests, however. The data contained layers of meaning, comprised of varying views of work, intersecting forms of work, and professional identities underlying that of “customer” identity. Therefore, this approach was applied without strict conventions in order to inductively identify recurring themes for analysis as presented in the following chapter.

Summarizing methodology

This chapter presented a methodology for examining instances involving work-like activities in three locations of a large scale coffee shop chain. A two-pronged methodological approach, including participant observations and interviews, was described, along with the site selection process, limitations of data collection, and the

approach to analyzing the data. The constitutive view is subsequently employed as a guiding lens, along with a microanalytic approach to analyzing the data collected for this study, capturing how self and work in various forms shape everyday interaction among actors who occupy such settings, demonstrating how identity, interaction, work, and place intersect. The blurring of the boundaries of “publicness” and “ privateness” is captured through the primary eroded boundary herein, that of “customer” and “worker,” and when examining the intersection of “home” and “work” and “recognized” and “unrecognized” work, capturing an interactional perspective on how work is accomplished in interaction. An analysis of data is presented next.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS

Overview

This chapter addresses the six research questions, exploring through two forms of observational and interview data the work-like activities both observed and reported (RQ1; RQ2), the challenges actors face when acting as a “customer” while working in these research sites (RQ3), along with face-work and the patterns of social interaction as they were observed and reported in interviews (RQ4). I also offer an analysis of why actors work in this location (RQ5), and the role that affordances play in shaping work-like practices (RQ6).

First, using Goffman’s (1959) term, I will describe the setting where these interactions and work-like activities occur. Fieldnotes will be used to provide a discussion of the setting, with a discussion of additional observational data to follow in the observations section of this chapter. Based on fieldnotes from observations, I then describe work-like activities and patterns of social interaction, referred to as encounters, found in these research sites, accompanied by extracts of interaction demonstrating how actors negotiate the process of social interaction. Goffman’s term scene (1959) is used prior to each interaction extract to describe the action taking place in a selected coffee shop in which each encounter occurs. Three major types of encounters occur that demonstrate how work and work-like activities surface in these coffee shops, and how work is accomplished in interaction. The first type is an unplanned encounter, that is, one that occurs by chance, and the second is a planned encounter, such as one that may be previously scheduled to accomplish a pre-planned work-related goal. Lastly, an

opportunistic encounter is one in which an actor seeks out others for a specific need in the moment, whereby a “customer” at times becomes a “worker” in interaction. Within the sections that include each type of encounter and extracts of interaction, I provide a discussion of the context in which these behaviors occur. At times, I participated in the social life of these coffee shops, and this is included where appropriate. I begin the discussion with a summary of the interview data in order to provide an overview of relevant and insightful responses from informants, which enhance the discussion of the observational data.

As will be demonstrated in the next section, the interview data indicate ways that informants view work, what work-like activities they perform in these coffee shops, why they choose to conduct work-like activities in public, informants’ thoughts in regard to creating and maintaining a professional work identity while in these coffee shops, what tools are required for accomplishing desired tasks, and whether or not informants make a purchase while in these coffee shops. Interview data also helped clarify the activities observed by informants as they act as “customers,” and why they frequent these research sites.

The section on the observations of blurred boundaries examines face-work, previously described as the impression given to others (Goffman, 1967). Goffman’s (1971) microanalytic approach to the study of routine, everyday relations in public, and the concepts of face-work, demeanor, and deference, are used to examine how these concepts come into play during encounters related to work-like activities. Demeanor, expressed through the giving (or withholding) of deference, is the foundation to interaction. It plays an important role when examining “customer” identity as it emerges

in interaction. The data analysis herein contributes to our understanding of both the patterns of interaction that occur and the work-like activities of customers of this coffee shop, since all acts involve demeanor, but only some also express due deference.

Observational data also reveal what work-like activities actors performed and the talk that accompanied these interactions, and what encouraged doing work-like activities in these coffee shops. The observational data indicate that when in the presence of others these actors are engaged in the work of face, and face-saving techniques. However, it was difficult at times to not only determine what type of work was performed, such as paid versus personal, but also to account for different types of work performed by different actors within the same extract of talk found in fieldnotes. Instances where I participated as a “customer” in these coffee shops are included herein.

As will be demonstrated in the following observational example and in the full discussion of observational data that follows, data also indicate that these coffee shops are collaborating with customers to sanction conduct that might otherwise be considered intrusive. This is illustrated in fieldnotes and extracts of interaction, and is indicative not only of the blurring of types of work performed in these research sites, but also of the behaviors that are tolerated. This study asserts that there is relevance in considering how various forms of work- paid work, personal work, face-work, and domestic work- interact or co-exist in the moment with one another. Therefore another major focus of this study is the broadening of the concept of “work.” By including everyday routines, the range of activities considered to be work is expanded to include the categories of not only paid work, but also domestic work, face-work, and personal work, all of which are relational

activities. The implications of these behaviors when coffee shops are used for these work-like activities are also discussed.

Setting: A day in the life of a coffee shop

Upon entering the front door of each of these research sites, it immediately becomes an oasis, both a welcoming and contained space, with light music playing in the background and the wonderful aroma of coffee. Routinely, I entered each site and walked to the restroom, located in the back of each location. This provided me the opportunity to survey the site prior to selecting a seat for myself. Upon exiting the restroom, I sat where I could most accurately and effectively capture the activities that were most pertinent.

Since all three research sites are part of the same large-scale coffeehouse chain, the presence of environmental affordances was expected to be constant. While the layout of each site differed, each of the sites offered comparable affordances, such as restroom access, similar type of furniture, variety of food, electrical outlets, wi-fi availability, and allowing cell phone use.

The type of furniture and the variety of available food offered in these sites seemed intentionally selected by management to make customers feel “at home.” The furniture in all sites included a few large armchairs arranged in a small circle, creating the feeling that customers were in the comfort of their own living rooms. In addition, every site also had at least one large rectangular table, which customers utilized for laptops, electronic tablets, and books. This table was most frequently occupied by customers who were using multiple books, piles of paperwork, or reviewing blueprints or other large documents.

The pace in these coffee shops is dynamic and ever changing. This was evidenced by customers constantly entering, exiting, and occasionally stepping outside to smoke a cigarette or hold a phone conversation. Also, from time to time, customers moved armchairs, wooden chairs, or small tables. Customers moved the large armchairs so that they were no longer in a circle, or pulled one table to join another, without objection from management. Also without any objection, customers relocated a wooden chair from one part of the coffee shop to another. However, once customers left, an employee, usually one with whom I had some sort of conversation while ordering a beverage, rearranged the armchairs to recreate a circle, and pulled tables apart. The placement of the wooden chairs was less important. As long as they were not obstructing the flow of foot traffic, they remained where customers left them, until the next customer pulled a chair closer for use. This occurred at each of the locations selected for this study.

All three sites provided the same variety of food, including sandwiches that can be purchased all times of the day, oatmeal, and snack items, and different types of beverages. This offered customers variety while maintaining standard items, providing consistency in terms of offerings. Some customers purchased items prior or after sitting down. Others entered, made their purchase “to go,” and immediately left. Still others never purchased any item.

While no site displayed any signs regarding cell phone use or duration of calls, customers exhibited quite similar patterns in how they answered calls and managed conversations. If customers answered a call, most would cover their mouths while speaking and would also step outside for lengthier conversations, leaving their belongings unattended. This behavior regarding phone calls is an indication of the blurring of public

and private space, and both are acts of respect for others. In other words, these actors are “working” to keep their personal interactions private while in these locations.

Electrical outlets and wi-fi availability indicate that outside work was accommodated in these sites. Every site had an area of electrical outlets, but never throughout the entire seating area. In most cases, informants knew exactly where the outlets were, a preferred seating location for their purposes, as almost all informants used a laptop or some other electronic device, such as a cell phone, which required outlet access.

At other times, the placement of electrical outlets led to “customers” draping cords across aisles and around chairs, perhaps not fully aware of the implications of their work-like and private practices when in this public space. An example from fieldnotes with dialogue follows:

Fieldnote and Interaction #1-U

I enter the crowded and hot coffee shop along with a steady stream of others. As I wait on line for coffee after using the restroom, I note that people exchange in some sort of check-in in the doorway with the person with which they arrived. This is either verbal (“You sure you still want coffee?,” or “I say forget it!”), or nonverbal (a look and a head shake of no, or a grab and pull of the hand back out the door). I remark to myself that entering the upper shop today is out of the question for people with baby carriages, as most walk in only far enough to turn the carriage around with difficulty and leave as quickly as they enter. I fix my coffee and squeeze into a seat at a table in the back of the shop.

Two women, late twenties, are sitting at a small table just beside me discussing their dating lives. The talking is constant, and I find this “chatter” distracting. I wonder how others are completing tasks despite the distraction. I then notice a woman seated at a small table in front of me.

[Scene: A woman has her lap top cord draped across the walkway, hardly acknowledging the imposition she has created in the upper coffee shop.]

R = Researcher
 AC = Annoyed Customer
 C = Customer

I can see the woman in front of me is working on a spreadsheet. She starts looking around, then moving around, her cord in her hand. I know where is best to sit for outlet access, but you need to frequent this place long enough to learn. Her closest outlet is going to be across the walkway, so she will have to drape her cord on the floor in order to reach the outlet.

Once she realizes this is the closest outlet, she drapes her black cord across the aisle. The floor is black as well. She also has another item charging in the outlet, which is white. This is good, since your eye catches the white so you know a cord is in the area, but no one will see the black cord, a potential trip hazard. Also her back is facing people as they walk down the aisle to use the restroom.

She makes a call on her phone and does not look up as people walk past. Several people step up, over, or around her cords, and she carries on her phone conversation. Workers squeeze packed boxes down the aisle and navigate around her cords. She still does not look up.

As I pack up, I decide to use the restroom, and almost collide with a girl who was returning from the restroom and tripped over the black cord before I had a chance to point it out to her.

1-R “Sorry!”

2-AC “Sorry, sorry!”

With this, the annoyed customer turns and gives the woman with the cords a look of frustration. As I walk past, the woman, still on her phone, whispers to me,

3-C “Watch your step.”

The “customer” hardly acknowledged the inconvenience she caused to those around her, perhaps since the loss of face when doing so would be too great, and therefore ignoring it was easier. This also illustrates how in this space the boundary between public and private can be blurred, as this “customer” was working in public as if she were in private, with only minimal recognition of those around her. As work-like activities are performed in these coffee shops, moments of privatized behavior occur

amidst the public robustness. Norms exist in these coffee shops as they are used for work-like activities, and can either be reproduced, or as in the instance above, breached. Additional instances of these types will be explored in the observations section of this chapter.

In addition to the physical aspects of the location, Mokros (2003) reminds us that the constitutive view goes beyond outcomes of communication “so as to consider how the doing of communication invariably produces and engenders social spaces within which issues of who we are, and how who we are, matter” (p. viii). Relatedly, the goal of this study is to better understand how “customerness” shapes every day interaction by focusing on the work-like activities that occur in these sites. As a way of creating a foundation for that discussion, I now provide a summary of the interview data, with examples from my conversations with informants provided as documentation. This data regarding affordances informed and helped guide interviews regarding the specific environmental factors that customers find useful and even required in order to conduct work-like activities. The availability of wi-fi and restroom access was mandatory, with available electrical outlets, comfortable furniture, and a variety of food, preferable. The categories discussed below include sub-sections of questions found in the interview guide.

Informant perspectives on blurred boundaries

The following section provides an overview of interview data related to informant perspectives regarding the work-like activities performed in these coffee shops and what they consider to be work, why these informants work in public, informants’ thoughts in regard to creating and maintaining a professional work identity while in these

coffee shops, the tools used for work-like tasks, and whether or not they make a purchase while in these coffee shops.

Work-like activities performed and what is work?

The first question I asked informants was what they considered to be work. While some informants described work as that which is performed for pay, others, while initially describing work as that which is performed for pay, in our conversations also described tasks performed without monetary compensation, such as relational “work.” Examples also provide insight into the types of work-like activities actors report conducting in these coffee shops. Hereafter, U represents the Upper shop, H represents the Highway shop, and M represents the Middle shop. Informant H9, a student who can accomplish more “here than at home,” answers this question.

Interview Extract #1 (Informant H9)

“Hmmm..money. Involves like how I make money, I guess.”

[Interviewer chuckles. Then responds, You guess? Why do you sound unsure?]

“Because I think this could sound weird, but for me a lot of other things are work.”

[Interviewer: Such as?]

“Again, maybe it’s just me, but my relationship with my father is a ton of work. Things have not been good for a long time, and the work that it could take to get it back on track...[sighs and shakes head no]. So, even though money comes to mind when I think of work, relationships do too.”

Informant H9 was not alone among interviewees in first mentioning compensation when discussing what they considered to be work. Often, they went on to include a relational component of work, as expressed by informant H5, who is employed full-time as a remote customer service representative for [company name], and as a clerk

elsewhere part-time. She conducts her [company name] tasks while in the highway coffee shop, and mentions the strain lack of income had on her marriage when she was previously unemployed.

Interview Extract #2 (Informant H5)

[Interviewer: Does your family mind that you work in this coffee shop?]

[Pause] “Oh, no.” [Pause] “My husband and I recently separated. The money, ugh...it was tough for us for awhile. So, keeping busy works for me. And working on a marriage? You asked about what comes to mind when I hear work...well, I think getting a marriage to “work” is the hardest work there is!”

Informants also had a tendency to first describe the tasks they do in response to what they considered to be work, leading to a discussion of relational “work.” For example, informant M1, a plumber whose business is located just around the corner from the middle shop, expresses this in the following manner.

Interview Extract #3 (Informant M1)

[Interviewer: What are examples of things you do here that are and are not work?]

“Hmm...okay, I just about always answer my phone, personal or work related. I feel like work related calls are work and personal are for the most part not.”

[Interviewer: For the most part?]

“Well, my son and I are working on rebuilding our relationship. That’s a ton of work and it’s been tough. So, while that’s personal, it’s a ton of work. I don’t know. Sometimes that’s harder than running my business.”

These examples illustrate relational work as revealed by informants when discussing work and the work-like tasks completed in these coffee shops. In the next example, informant U3, retired, identifies the volunteer tasks for her church that she does in this coffee shop as “work.”

Interview Extract #4 (Informant U3)

“Well, opening my mail is not work. Phone calls for personal reasons, not work, but sometimes if I need to schedule appointments, that feels like work to fit all of that in, and my church work, that is work but it is not paid. So, volunteer work?”

The addition of the term “work” while describing her volunteer duties illustrates how her definition of work was expanded to include tasks completed on a volunteer basis. Informant H3, employed in sales, also expressed volunteerism as a form of work. She discusses it in the following way.

Interview Extract #5 (Informant H3)

“Work is what I do for money....my job. But what’s interesting is that I recently had an experience where I was volunteering, but then they asked that I volunteer in a more formal capacity. Once it became more formal, I didn’t like it. Almost like my volunteering had become work...but work without pay.”

Informant U1, a student, also illustrates a broadened sense of what is work as she describes her school work as work, but without pay.

Interview Extract #6 (Informant U1)

“I don’t know if this confuses things, but I consider my school work to be work, but without pay. What else? What else? I do talk with friends and classmates. I do check [social networking site], like my friends and I will often go between that and studying. [Social networking site] and talking with friends is not work, but I guess that’s obvious.”

References to work that do not include financial compensation, such as school work, were also common among informants who were unemployed as they often remarked that looking for work was their current job. An example from a recently employed informant, H5, who now does paid work in the coffee shop, also reported her experiences of looking for work as a job.

Interview Extract #7 (Informant H5)

“Almost all of what I do here is work...like my [company name] stuff is work, and even when I was unemployed, looking for work was work. I would say I primarily come here to work, but to be able to do it in a friendly environment is nice.”

Informant U6 recently graduated from a university and uses his time in the coffee shop to look for work. In his interview he had trouble differentiating activities that are and are not work while at the coffee shop, another example of how informants broadened the notion of work beyond the activities that result in financial compensation.

Interview Extract #8 (Informant U6)

“I do so many kinds of things here. I am at a loss to categorize, but lemme try. [Pause]. I use my laptop to look for work online. I also search and read about graduate programs and then check out the website if it seems like an interesting program. I always listen to music with ear buds while doing either of these things. I feel like trying to figure out the rest of my life as I look for work is my work right now. Other things I do which I do not consider work. Let me see...check [social networking site], text with friends, play games on my phone. Talk to the occasional person I see here. I think that about covers it.”

[Interviewer: “Do you find you are able to blend work tasks with life tasks while here?”]

“I don’t really think of it like clearly separate. I dunno, maybe it is where I am at in life right now or something. But yeah, I can easily catch up on [social networking site] and search for a few schools I may have heard have good MBA programs or something.”

The blurring of work-like tasks is evident in Extract 8, and illustrates how informants report a broadened sense of what constitutes work. A phrase worth noting is how he can “catch up on [social networking site]” while in the coffee shop. The hidden “work” involved in this activity, while subtle, indicates a work component of which the informant is unaware, or an “unrecognized” form of work. The next informant, U7,

unemployed and using his time in this coffee shop to build a new business, considers what he does as work. Although unpaid, he considers it necessary to make money in the future.

Interview Extract #9 (Informant U7)

“Well, I will get most of my other stuff out of the way at home, like bills and mail. So, when I come here, I tend to mostly do work related things for my business. I am working on creating my own website, which is such a tedious process. So I find I can come here and get a little distracted by all that goes on, and it helps me work on building the site. At home in quiet, I would just go crazy.”

Informant U10, a recent stay-at-home mom who is “working” on creating a business while in this coffee shop, expresses a similar thought that expands the concept of work, with that of generating income the primary focus.

Interview Extract #10 (Informant U10)

“Well, I used to just read things about parenting online and [social networking site]. I know I said parenting is a lot of work, but reading about it to me is more like informative and enjoyable. But lately I have been reading about PR consulting and deciding about starting a business or not, taxes, business cards, expenses, reaching out to my contacts about the possibility of jobs. All of that is my work right now.”

[Interviewer: “So even though neither category is generating money for you right now, you make a distinction between them? What is that distinction to you?”]

“Well, my work is what I used to do for pay, and what I hope will generate pay in the future. The other stuff has no money incentive attached to it at all.”

Informant H7, a screenwriter, describes the work he does in the coffee shop as “idea work,” further illustrating the broadened sense of work that informants describe, providing a sense that it is not at all necessarily related to financial compensation in any

direct way.

Interview Extract #11 (Informant H7)

“Almost all of what I do here is related to my current screenplay. So that is all work. So when I come here I am working on creating the scenes, whereas at home I do the writing. So, I will check email every once in a while, but really I lay out my index cards and think through how the scenes fit into the broad idea I developed at home. I do ‘idea work’ here.” [Laughs]

[Interviewer (Stated to clarify): “So writing for you is work, then? You said in the beginning work involved money, but just now you referred to the process of having and developing ideas as work.”]

“Writing as work? Oh, yes. And developing ideas is some of the hardest work there is. A screenplay hinges on how you develop your idea. I was unclear in the beginning. You helped me articulate it better.”

Informant M3, previously an attorney who now writes short plays based on what she witnesses in the middle shop, also acknowledges the “work” of writing.

Interview Extract #12 (Informant M3)

[Interviewer: What do you consider to be work?]

“If you had asked me 3 years ago, I would have said whatever I can do to earn money. But now, I think I would also include anything you do that requires mental effort, like writing.”

Informant M3 was able to draw upon her previous experience and understanding of work, that of money being exchanged, in order to create a comparison from which to draw a conclusion. Now that she treats her writing short plays as her work without pay, her view of work has expanded.

Informant M9, on medical leave from her full-time place of employment,

discusses the medical research she does for her recently diagnosed breast cancer as work which she performs when in this coffee shop.

Interview Extract #13 (Informant M9)

“Since I am not teaching right now, I haven’t really done anything academic related here. I did help my colleague, which is work, but not mine, ya know what I mean? But despite my medical research not being paid, I would consider that work. It is draining, confusing, scary. Worse than work, actually. So, I do my needed research here.”

Throughout our interview, the above informant mentioned that the internet was down at her home, so she “had to find a place I could look into a few things related to my current illness. I have big decisions to make.” She met a colleague at the middle shop a few days prior to our interview to assist him with an on-line task, and then stayed to read about her type of cancer on-line. She avoids the breast cancer blogs, as they are “often the worse case scenario.” She describes herself as “very open,” and remarked that she found “comfort reading something and then calling a friend to run an idea for treatment past them (sic)” while in the middle shop. While informant M9 clarifies that her illness research is unpaid, she considers it work due to the emotional strain, leading her to describe it as “worse than work, actually.”

Summarizing the above interviews, the concept of work that informants revealed included a range of activities: working on a difficult relationship, volunteer work, school work, looking for work, work that will make money in the future, idea work, and the work of taking care of one’s health. The interviews illustrate a broad sense of work that can include, yet is not at all restricted, to financial compensation for tasks performed.

Although 25 of the 30 informants told me they have some sort of “area” at home where they work, they like to break up their day by spending time at the coffee shop, which they chose over other types of public work spaces, since these sites are not only comfortable and convenient, but also offer opportunities for social interaction. The other types of public spaces occasionally used for work mentioned by informants included the university library, Panera Bread, and a small local coffee shop. However, informants felt that since they could eat, drink, and socialize with others if desired, the coffee shop locations that served as my research sites, as informant U7 expressed, “is like the best office I have ever worked in or been a part of,” and remained their top choice for a work location. Lastly, informants were also very certain about having “their table” while in these sites for specific reasons, as will be discussed more in the next section.

Why work in public?

The above paragraph prompted my next question to informants. I asked them to reflect on why they work in public spaces. They predominately mentioned being around others without the pressure of having to interact with them, as well as the potential for social interaction. Most commonly, however, informants responded with comments that “they can” work in public, so they do. Probing further into this response, I also asked informants to describe their experiences, with responses generally falling into three categories, with productivity mentioned most frequently, followed by comfort, and lastly, convenience.

The first category of productivity included responses such as: meets my needs, can get done what I need to, can get work related things done, can stay connected to work, inspiration for my writing, and can stay connected to the internet to educate

myself. Informant U1, a student, expresses her motivation for frequenting the upper coffee shop in the following manner.

Interview Extract #14 (Informant U1)

“I think the working more around others thing works for me. Almost like the gym...chances are you would not show up and stand around, you would feel so silly. So, you workout where others are working out. I study best where others are studying. I’m such a conformist!” [Laughs]

The above informant expresses her reason for working in public as a motivation for studying, and also speaks to the desire to have purpose while in the presence of others, saying one “would not show up and stand around.” She also compares the “work” involved in exercising with that of completing school work. In doing so, she also acknowledges the psycho-social benefits found when working in this coffee shop. Additional psycho-social benefits will be explored further in the section of this chapter regarding observations of blurred boundaries. Informant M3, a writer, expresses her motivation, using the conversations she overhears for inspiration while at the middle coffee shop, in the following manner.

Interview Extract #15 (Informant M3)

“Since I am a writer, sometimes overhearing conversations inspires my writing. Like a few days ago I was here, and these two guys were talking. One guy, who seems like a total jerk, says “Man, she keeps calling and calling. I figure as long as I ignore her she will go away, eventually.” And then they laugh. Now I am writing a short play about a guy and a girl with a deadline at the end of the month. So, if I need a fresh start, I come here and I overhear things, start with one of those thoughts, and see where my writing goes. I started writing three days ago and almost have a draft completed. Wait...lemme find it here. [Pause]. I have been working on this one section a lot. I want it to come off more as funny than mean, but I keep tinkering around with it to try to get it right. This exchange...read this. But, I dunno...things get quiet at home and this helps me get out of my own head, so to speak.”

As our conversation continued, the above informant described a time in this coffee shop when she witnessed “a guy breaking up with a girl,” which was “awkward, to say the least.” Noteworthy about the above interaction is that the informant asked for me to provide assistance and feedback, thereby making me a “worker” in interaction. Also, with the informant sharing her writing, implicit trust was granted regarding the privacy of her work. The informant relies on actual conversations to inspire her writing, which she describes as a “solitary effort and experience,” and explains that she is not inclined to talk to others much while in this coffee shop, since “if I am talking, I cannot overhear others.” Also citing productivity, Informant H6, employed in IT, expresses his motivation for conducting work-like activities in the highway coffee shop in the following way.

Interview Extract #16 (Informant H6)

“I can be productive. Listen, I have always worked like crazy. My dad worked seven days a week. I grew up seeing that as my role model for how a man should be. You work your tail off to support your family. So, that’s what I do. And even when I was unemployed, I found something productive to do, like build my company, and in three months I made a sale. So, work is worth it, I think.”

In the above extract, the informant connects his motivation, that of productivity, with a domestic message regarding work, also productivity. This example points out the relational component of work and work choices, and how these choices function as an underlying dynamic, similar to the actors’ views of work previously discussed, when actors conduct work-like activities in this coffee shop.

The second category of reasons expressed for frequenting these coffee shops fall under the general category of comfortable, and included such responses as: never overcrowded, feel less alone, friendly environment, sometimes like being around people, relaxing, can stay for as long as I like, can talk with friends, feels like home, and being

around others is nice. Informant M4, an IT consultant, expresses his motivation for frequenting the middle coffee shop in the following manner.

Interview Extract #17 (Informant M4)

“Mostly to get away from others, but at the same time be around others so I don’t get too lonely. It is a nice option, since it is comforting to be around others but not need to interact with them.”

Informant M4 was not alone in expressing appreciation for the comfort of being around others without the need to interact with them, providing anonymity without relational demands. As mentioned previously, a discussion of the social benefits of these coffee shops will be explored further in the section of this chapter regarding observations of blurred boundaries.

Informants mentioned that they like that visits to these coffee shops are unrestricted in terms of the length of time they are able to spend in the location. Informants struggled to quantify how long a typical visit lasts, expressing this as “a few hours,” or “as long as I need” or “as long as I like.” Informants stated a few specific behaviors that they would not do, such as online bill paying or banking, or viewing illicit material, such as pornography, because they felt these behaviors required the highest degree of privacy, which is not an affordance of these sites.

The final category, convenience, included responses such as: gives me a place to go when leaving the house, good meeting place to study, and the location is good.

Informant H2, a sales representative for a construction company, expresses his attraction to the highway coffee shop in the following manner.

Interview Extract #18 (Informant H2)

“It started out as somewhere to go when I was learning my job and figuring out my next stop. Sometimes my appointments would be spaced out throughout a day,

and to go back home (pause) seemed pointless and time consuming. So, I thought, “Oh, I will pop into -----, buy a cup of coffee, and touch base with Sal.” Then I can easily go to my next appointment from there. That is still pretty much the idea, except now I also come here when I am done with my day, just to relax and wrap up a few things.”

Professional work identity

I next asked informants about their desire to create and maintain a professional work identity when working in public. Most found this question confusing, so I re-worded it after the first three interviews. I found asking about specific behaviors, such as how they answer their cell phone while in the coffee shop, helped to clarify the question and elicit responses regarding how they identify with what they do in a professional capacity. A financial consultant, U4, does not think “consciously” of his professional work identity, explaining it this way:

Interview Extract #19 (Informant U4)

“Work identity? I am not sure I even think of that consciously. It is like all these things are me...financial consultant, father, husband, and in the appropriate moment, that is who I am the most.”

Another informant, H2, discusses “switching on” his professional demeanor as needed when working in the highway coffee shop. He describes it in the following manner.

Interview Extract #20 (Informant H2)

“Ya know what it is? I am a sales guy who from time to time does some work here. I might switch to a more “professional guy” if I think it is a client calling. But, for the most part no one knows the things I do, like working on estimates, so it is not on my mind to worry about being professional while doing that. But yes, if a client calls, I do switch into a more professional way of dealing.”

These two extracts (19 and 20) illustrate how professional work identity is

thought to be expressed through interaction. Other informants expressed an emotional and relational component that is elicited when interacting with clients, illustrating how Mokros's (2003) concept of personhood is revealed in interaction. As stated previously, personhood "refers to a practitioner's (in the general sense of someone performing a practice) relational expectations as revealed through the doing of practice" (Mokros, 2003, p. 14). In this study, the application of the concept of personhood not only highlights the various work-like tasks actors perform under the mask of "customer," but also how it unfolds in the context of professional practice as recounted by informants.

Informant M1, the owner of a plumbing company, expressed the following frustration regarding his profession when asked if he feels it is necessary to be viewed as a professional while working in the middle coffee shop, while acknowledging the necessity of maintaining a professional demeanor when in this coffee shop.

Interview Extract #21 (Informant M1)

"Well, times are tough right now. I mean, no one is putting their money into big plumbing jobs right now. So we have a bunch of small jobs, which is fine, trust me, a job is a job, but the clientele in this area thinks a small job deserves big time. So lately we have been joking about how our clients are pains in the asses...so I just need to be careful. People that hang out here might hire me for a job tomorrow, so I try to be professional."

By disclosing this frustration and information during our interview, informant M1 also described how personhood (Mokros, 2003) unfolds in interaction. Personhood is dynamic, and therefore is demonstrated through professional practice in interaction. This recounting of the informant's professional work experiences revealed aspects of his professional work identity and demeanor, illustrating the dynamism of personhood. Also, the expression of trust from informant M1 through disclosing this information indicates a

comfort level.

Informant U1, a student who also tutors English Composition part-time in the upper coffee shop, expresses a relational component as essential to establishing a comfort level with those she tutors.

Interview Extract #22 (Informant U1)

“I think it works better if the student and I have a comfort level, so that they don’t not feel picked on or self-conscious or anything. So, I start there, build on it, and let a friendship develop. A friendship is not the most important thing, them becoming a better writer is, but the relationship part can help the other part, if that makes sense.”

Informant U1 states that by developing a relational bond with her clients, the paid part of her job, tutoring, and more specifically the improvement of her clients’ skill set, can become enhanced. This reflection and recounting of her intentional efforts to establish and cultivate relational bonds with her clients describes how personhood unfolds in interaction. Informant H5 expresses when she recently identified with “moonlighters,” a term used to describe those who often complete work for one job while at a different job.

Interview Extract #23 (Informant H5)

“People hear that I work remotely and think I work mostly from home. I work there the least, actually. I work here a good amount, and now I work for my [company name] job at my part-time job. If it’s slow, they have no problem with it, and it allows me to pick up extra money. It’s funny, on the radio the other day they were discussing the term “moonlighting,” and they said due to the current economy it has become more common for people to work one job while at another one. I was like, “That’s me!” [Laughs]

Informant H5 recounts the moment of identifying as a “moonlighter,” a term used to describe her professional work identity. Further discussion in the observations of

blurred boundaries section of this chapter will illustrate that “professional face” is an identifiable aspect of professional identity, as is personhood (Mokros, 2003). This discussion includes actors assuming the identity of “customer” to justify being a “worker” in this location, and the relational component identified as personhood unfolds in interaction. This is an indication that professional identity is embedded within “customer,” which will be explored later in the analysis of observed blurred boundaries.

“Tools” for work-like tasks

The next issue I explored with informants was what “tools” they felt to be necessary to accomplish desired tasks. “Tools” was an intentionally ambiguous term used so as not to limit responses to electronic devices. Answers provide a perspective on how a variety of “tools,” and specifically electronic devices, are used in practice, bringing to the forefront the element of choice regarding tool and technology use.

Interview data revealed that informants simultaneously used the two types of “tools” identified herein, namely technological, or electronic, and non-technological, defined herein as those without an on-off switch and not in need of electrical power, to complete work-like tasks. These types can be further classified as advanced, or electronic, and simple, or non-electronic. Specifically, informants mentioned the need for both advanced and simple “tools” in order to complete desired tasks while in these coffee shops. Informant U1, a student, responded in the following manner when asked what “tools” are required for her to work in this location:

Interview Extract #24 (Informant U1)

[Interviewer: What kinds of tools are necessary for you to complete desired tasks while here?]

“Tools?” Lemme see...”

[Interviewer: This can be anything you regularly use while you are here, and can include things you use that need to be plugged in, like technological devices, or things that don't require power.”

“I know what you mean by technology, but what I rely on in order to complete what I need to are my books for classes that day, a notebook since I prefer writing notes in class, and a pen. Oh, and I have my net book, but I usually study here, so I use the books more.”

Numerous informants expressed non-electronic, or simple, “tools” as needed in order to complete work-like tasks in these sites, including a magnifying glass, a binder which contains a legal notebook, two pencils, a folder containing recent sales appointments, a planner in case future appointments are scheduled, highlighters, and flashcards.

When discussing these “tools,” informants also remarked that they often use electronic, or advanced, and non-electronic, or simple, “tools” simultaneously and as needed in order to accomplish their tasks while in these coffee shops. Another informant, M3, a writer, describes working with both types of “tools” as follows.

Interview Extract #25 (Informant M3)

“I always bring my phone, laptop, journal, and a pen. If I am in the process of writing a draft, I will use my laptop. But if I am using conversations I have overheard as inspiration, I usually jot thoughts or comments in my journal, like here [shows me notes in journal]. If I overhear something and I am afraid I will forget it, I will stop typing to jot it down, then back to typing. If it is a good day, I go back and forth a lot [laughs].”

At times, the use of both electronic and non-electronic “tools” contributed to informants being able to seamlessly move back and forth between tasks, as they are often completing more than one task at a time. This was discussed by the recently unemployed informant, H4.

Interview Extract #26 (Informant H4)

“Hmm...okay, well...nowadays I feel like looking for work is my job. So, I would consider anything I do here regarding looking for work my work. I go back and forth between newspapers and looking on-line. Sometimes I will click over to [social networking site] to check on a friend’s birthday or to see pictures of my nieces or something, which I consider therapeutic since it breaks up the monotony and stress of looking for a job.”

In the above extract, the use of both types of “tools” allows the informant to accomplish the work of “looking for work” in both online and print form. Informant U2, an administrative assistant at a university, uses this space to study for her upcoming GRE test, and states the following regarding her simple and advanced “tool” use when in the upper coffee shop.

Interview Extract #27 (Informant U2)

“I like to get set up at my table with my flashcards after purchasing my coffee with my ipod and my cell phone. My ear buds and ipod are essential, otherwise I have trouble zoning out and focusing on studying.”

The above informant mentioned the use of ear buds to assist with “zoning out and focusing on studying.” Ear buds is one of many simple “tools” that shields customers from interaction with others, oftentimes facilitating the completion of work. Other forms of these types of “tools” include, but are not limited to, blueprints, books, and journal articles. Data also revealed, as was the case with informant M3 as she writes in the coffee shop, that informants seamlessly alternate between tasks in a virtually indistinguishable way, making it difficult for them to decipher and describe a specific task. In short, in this space actors can interact with others or refrain from doing so, use electronic or non-electronic devices, and complete various work-like tasks seemingly at the same time. This underscores the blurred boundary between public and private identified in this

environment, as these devices, particularly the electronic ones, act as props in Goffman's setting (1959). These props used by actors as they perform "work-like" tasks involving electronic devices provide symbolic value to these coffee shops, as their presence is attractive for onlookers. However, as will be explored throughout the following observational analysis, the choice to use electronic devices places constraints upon actors, since laptops often require maneuvering power cords around others to secure outlets, and answering calls when cell phones ring require stepping outside or risk being perceived as out of face (Goffman, 1967).

Whether or not to make a purchase

The last issue I explored with informants was a tendency, noted during initial observations, of some actors who occupied this space but did not make a purchase. This resulted in the inclusion of questions regarding this practice in the interview guide to determine the extent to which this practice occurs. When asked during their interviews, most informants responded that they do not see themselves occupying a table and using the affordances of these shops without purchasing something at some point during their visit. Since a purchase was the expected behavior, with an acknowledgment that this location is a business, 26 out of 30 informants felt it only fair to contribute to the successful functioning of the location with monetary support. Two of these 26 referred to the purchasing of something as "a rule." Informant H10 expressed it in the following manner.

Interview Extract #28 (Informant H10)

"It's the rule, or a rule, that my mom told me to follow. If you use something somewhere, you should buy something."

Similarly, informant H1 referenced “the rule” in the same manner.

Interview Extract #29 (Informant H1)

“Maria [her study partner] and I always buy something. Isn’t that like the rule, or something? Buy something if you occupy space somewhere? Or was that if you use the gas station bathroom?”

[Interviewer and informant laugh].

Interview data also provide an example of how the issue of making a purchase is related to the previously discussed professional work identity of actors while occupying these coffee shops. It also sheds light on the techniques that one informant, a tutor, M7, employs to save face and manage the challenge of tutoring when in the middle coffee shop. For example, she expresses her tutoring in the following way:

Interview Extract #30 (Informant M7)

“I can’t say I really think too much about my professional work identity. If people notice I am working with a student, I do want them to think I take what I do seriously, and I do want my students to perform better in class. But, on the other hand, I think it is okay if we laugh if a student misunderstands me or vice versa. In fact, that’s usually what happens, since we are in public and we know people might overhear us and our mistakes sometimes.”

The informant demonstrates the awareness of being in public while doing private paid work. She is also aware of how her interaction with the students may be perceived, an indication of her desire to create positive face, contributing to her demeanor. Also of interest is that this actor uses the middle shop to tutor students on a weekly basis. She refers to the students coming to her, instead of vice versa, as “the new wave of tutoring” and explains that students coming to her maximizes her time, and in turn, her weekly income. By saving money on gas, and time on not commuting from home to home for each appointment, she feels indebted to the middle shop, and expresses this gratitude by

partaking in the “customer” behavior of purchasing a cup of coffee prior to the start of every tutoring session.

Two informants from the middle shop, M4 and M5, mentioned feeling “more comfortable” and “less self-conscious” subsequent to making a purchase, so they also always did. The four remaining informants mentioned that they usually would make a purchase, but if they “decided against it after getting set-up and working for a bit” (H5), they would not.

Observational fieldnotes captured actors who occupied this space without purchasing anything during my period of observation. As mentioned earlier, based on observations, actors that wanted to purchase something would enter, use their belongings to mark their seating spot, and then obtain their order from the counter. At other times, actors would enter, set up and conduct activities, such as typing on a laptop, and shortly after, obtain their order from the counter. And other times, actors would enter, set up, and never purchase anything.

To investigate if the practice of not purchasing an item was noted or acknowledged by the staff, I would at times intentionally not make a purchase while occupying these spaces. Despite the coffee shop’s wi-fi announcement window on my laptop stating that it is for the use of customers who enjoy food and beverages that are available for purchase, I was never approached by the staff, even though I violated this notice at each site twice during observations. It seemed that I was still considered a “customer” by other customers and the staff.

Even though some actors did not make a purchase, everyone is normalized in this setting, and granted the identity of “customer” regardless of whether or not they choose

to do so. In fact, the establishment enables customer identity by participating in face-saving for all customers, even those who do not make a purchase. This, however, is qualified by my previous discussion of hypotheticals in chapter three, wherein I envisioned potential “customers” whose activities would be problematic, if not disallowed, in this environment. This thereby frames (Goffman, 1974) or identifies “the principles of organization that govern events” (p. 10), which highlight the sanctioned behaviors of “customerness” and “customer” work-like activities as they occur in these coffee shops.

Another informant, currently an IT tech, H6, tied in making a purchase in his discussion of the way in which he converted the highway coffee shop into his work space when he was building a real estate business. Prior to his current job, he frequented this coffee shop, always keeping in mind the importance of remaining on friendly terms with the staff, purposefully demonstrating deference in order to retain his status as a customer in good standing. Of specific note in the following extract is how this “customer” offered coffee provided for purchase from the coffee shop to those he would meet in his makeshift office.

Interview Extract #31 (Informant H6)

“Work identity? Let’s see...I am not sure if this is what you mean, but I would only make calls when it was less populated and hopefully not so loud. Just to cut down on background noise. I knew the slower times throughout the day, so I would schedule conference calls for those times. And I would have meetings, and I would arrive at my usual time and be sure and save seats and clean the area up and all. People would arrive and I would treat it like my office...offer them coffee, see if they needed the restroom. It worked really well.”

[Interviewer: Did any staff member say anything to you about this practice?]

“Never. I made sure to become friendly with the staff, and it seemed to me, as long as I was respectful, all was good.”

This informant data on purchasing (or not) will be complemented by additional data in the observational analysis that follows. Next, I provide an analysis of observational data from the three research sites, labeled herein as upper (U), middle (M), and highway (H). This is performed as a way of illustrating how the concepts of interaction, identity, work, and place are produced and reproduced in interaction, creating the blurring of “publicness” and “privateness.” The analysis of observational data result in the identification of encounters of three types regarding work-like activities: unplanned, planned, and opportunistic. These encounters and the setting in which these encounters occur yield data that provide insight into the intersection of forms of work, since the blurring of a traditional understanding of “customer” to justify “worker” occurs in these sites. Now, the three types of encounters identified provide a perspective on how “customers” perform work-like activities in interaction.

Observations of blurred boundaries

When conducting work-like tasks in these coffee shops, an observed tendency is that actors employ both “awayness” (Goffman, 1967), or privatizing their experience when in public in order to accomplish work, and also interaction with others when desired. When people are in one another’s presence, subtle behavioral adjustments are employed to maintain a comfort level. Goffman (1971) discussed “civil inattention” as a way of accomplishing this. This occurs, for example, when actors recognize the presence of another individual with a brief glance, then look away to show that they are not concerned with the other person or want to respect the individual’s privacy. The

adjustment of actors to maintain a comfort level with those around them in a public space is a consequence of privatizing the experience of being in public, and is common as actors occupy these coffee shops and conduct work-like activities.

At times, the exchange of glances can lead to breaking the “ice,” usually in the form of a question about some environmental affordance, such as outlet or chair availability, or how to access wi-fi. I even participated in this practice, since every conversation I had with another actor was used as an entry point to engage in further conversation and to solicit an interview, either immediately or during a later conversation. Once the initial “ice” was broken, I stated my purpose for frequenting the location, and then I inquired about what brought the actor to the location. Throughout this conversation, and particularly the discussion of my study, actors were cooperative. In fact, a high degree of cooperation characterizes interaction in these coffee shops, with exceptions that will be explored herein. I now analyze the three types of encounters, unplanned, planned, and opportunistic, identified in this study. Notably, these three types of encounters are found across sites, and indicate the differing motivations actors have for conducting work-like activities in these spaces. The presence of work-like behaviors unites these encounters, and demonstrates how work and work-like activities surface in these coffee shops. Fieldnotes, of which each encounter is a part, will also illustrate types of work-like activities conducted by “customers” in these coffee shops, including but not limited to activities such as scrolling through job openings, sending email, reading questions and selecting answers on a scantron, reviewing flashcards, and writing in a notebook. The larger implications of these work-like activities performed in these coffee shops, and the encounters identified throughout, are included in the analysis.

In the discussion of unplanned encounters that follows, the blurred boundary between “publicness” and “privateness” is identifiable as actors interact in unplanned ways, namely through the completion of co-customer work, as “customers.” In the analysis of planned encounters, the completion of work-like activities in these coffee shops is primary. Lastly, in opportunistic encounters a collaborative work space is demonstrated as “customers” become “workers” to assist in the completion of work-like activities.

Unplanned encounters

One type of encounter is the unplanned, described herein as an encounter that is not preplanned, but rather occurs by chance. The example below occurred in this highway coffee shop between customers regarding their professions, without any indication they knew one another previously, creating a relational bond. As stated previously, the constitutive view of identity (Mokros, 2003) holds that communication expresses meaning, with communication viewed as a way to understand identity. By focusing on identity construction and emergence in and through communication, the use of the term identity follows Mokros’s (2003) conceptualization, whereby identity is co-created by individuals as they interact with others. The following interaction #2 is an example of professional identity embedded within “customer” identity, previously explored through informant responses in the prior section. This extends our understanding of how individuals define and manage different aspects of self in relation to work, with specific emphasis on how people manage public, or professional selves, versus private selves, while working in a public space. As these actors talk about work while in the highway coffee shop, professional identity as embedded within “customer”

identity is apparent. The observational fieldnote is included below prior to the dialogue from this interaction.

Fieldnote and Interaction #2-H

I am seated at a small round table just beside the beverage counter. I see one man reading the newspaper, another completing the sudoku section of his newspaper, and a woman working on her lap top. A man to my left has his lap top facing me, so I am able to see him scroll through job openings.

A worker returns with food from a store nearby and a two other workers move a few boxes off of the large table so as to make room for everyone to sit and eat. The majority of the workers take a break at the same time and eat, talk, and pass around their phones between one another as they laugh. Having become a bit bored by the food offerings, I remark to myself that I shouldn't have a problem eating food here that I purchased from a different location.

This seating location is a good one, as I can see most of the coffee shop, yet overhear conversations that occur between "customers" as they fix their beverages.

[Scene: Two middle-aged men talk while fixing beverages at the counter.]

C= Cop

F= Financial Representative

1-C "What line of work are you in?"

2-F "Finance. I worked for Morgan Stanley for about 25 years. Retired now. You?"

3-C "Oh, cop. It's tough man, tough...I am in Hillside. The schedule, the people, the crap."
(They step away from the counter).

4-F "Oh yeah? I know Hillside."

(They exchange stories and laughs, most of which cannot be deciphered verbatim, but seem to revolve around the cop's experiences).

In this encounter, the interactants "broke the ice" and connected first through professional identity by discussing employment, which was a "calling card," or a form of entry to begin conversation. They then exchanged stories, at times stifling their laughter,

a technique used to minimize drawing attention to themselves in order to remain “in face” (Goffman, 1967) while in public. Deference was also evident in this encounter, particularly when they stepped away from the counter so others could fix their beverages and in the moments of stifled laughter when the actors obviously did not wish to be a distraction. What is also present is the way in which these interactants revealed themselves through a discussion regarding profession. This sheds light not only on the human social practices of actors in this space, but also illustrates the interaction that can occur when strangers (Simmel, 1908) share a public space. In this case, a “customer” interacted with another “customer” to have a conversation about their professions. Here a question could be asked about how the interaction would have differed if these interactants did not converse regarding profession, or perhaps did not converse at all. This hypothetical instance highlights how the interaction, and the talk found in this interaction, demonstrate professional identity as embedded within the identity of “customer.”

Also captured in this fieldnote were the workers of this coffee shop. The coffee shop “workers” provide a different dimension to the binary of “customer” and “worker” explored in this study. While the analysis herein focuses on the intersection of this binary as “customers” perform work-like tasks and at times take on the role of “worker” while doing so, the coffee shop “workers” are the backdrop of this study. Their paid work, specifically the opening, operation, and closing of the coffee shop, is essential for “customers” to perform their “work-like” tasks, and for the data of this study to be collected.

As mentioned earlier, my conversations with informants included several who remarked that they derive a sense of satisfaction from having an unexpected, or unplanned, encounter with someone while in the coffee shop. An informant, M10, from the middle shop expresses this during our interview, recounted below.

Interview Extract #32 (Informant M10)

“I like putting myself in this environment sometimes. I like that I can bring things to do to keep busy and that need to get done, but that I can also maybe have a conversation with someone. Like the day you and I chatted about the food place next door. And that led to this conversation.”

[Interviewer: “So would you say that you derive satisfaction from fleeting interactions with people?”]

“Yeah, I guess. Yes...that is probably a bit of an overstatement, but right.”

The above informant discusses unplanned or “fleeting” encounters as attractive when conducting work-like activities in the middle shop. In the case above, prior to the scheduling of the interview, the informant and I talked briefly when he asked if he could use my outlet. I happily moved my cord, plugging his cord into an outlet that was closer to him. He then asked if I could assist him with accessing wi-fi, and after I did so, by the way of thanks, he offered to buy me a cup of coffee. Over that cup of coffee, he agreed to be interviewed at a later date. The shuffling of cords in these coffee shops to allow those around you to share an outlet is a subtle form of co-customer work. Another form of co-customer work is the monitoring of the belongings of others. Both of these forms of co-customer work involving actors’ personal belongings at times create unplanned encounters in these sites.

As has been stated, these coffee shops are designed to make actors feel as though they are relaxing at home, and informants mentioned that they often felt as if they were in

the comfort of their own home, at ease enough to leave their belongings unsupervised as they stepped outside to answer a phone call or use the restroom. The presence of others no doubt leads actors to go outside to continue phone calls either because they need privacy, or they wanted to pay due deference to others by not intruding into their share of this public space. Goffman discusses the notion of “mutual monitoring” (1959), and says, “persons must sense that they are close enough to be perceived in whatever they are doing, including their experiencing of others, and close enough to be perceived in this sensing of being perceived” (p. 18). Indeed one might reasonably assume that both demeanor to maximize personal privacy and deference out of respect for others may account for the actor’s exit. When actors are in one another’s presence, subtle behavioral adjustments, resulting in civil inattention (Goffman, 1971), are employed to maintain a comfort level with those in their company. This adjustment is a consequence of privatizing the experience of being in public. With this in mind, an identifiable “home” and “work” blurred boundary is revealed below through observational data as an actor actively works to balance completing his work-like task while in public view. Dialogue is captured within the fieldnote below.

Fieldnote and Interaction #3-M

It is freezing outside tonight, so I rush to get inside the middle coffee shop. Not too packed, I remark to myself as I get settled in. A man, speaking loudly, catches my ear from across the coffee shop.

[Scene: On the actor’s table, he has his laptop open, and his keys, a pen, and calculator placed beside him. He stands shortly after I sit down, talking at a volume which fills the coffee shop, to the person on the other end of the phone.]

MR=Mortgage Representative

1-MR “Hey Mike. How are you? This is Manny Gonzalez.”
(He walks outside, leaving his belongings behind, returning shortly, still on the phone.)

2-MR “I know, I know, I know, but it is a closing thing and I am remote. It never ends! I swear to God. Lemme go deal with this and see if I can grab someone in my office. Yeah, bye.”

(He sits and remains typing on his laptop for a while, until he places another call on his cell phone. The beginning of his phone conversation is inaudible due to a drink being made behind the counter.)

3-MR “What is your address? 140 ----- Court, North Plainfield. What is your household annual income? Oh, okay..about \$120,000. Any existing debt? Nah, that should be fine.”

(He ends the call, indicated by his placing his cell phone on the table. After a few minutes he picks up his cell phone, presses a few buttons with his thumb, and begins speaking, loud enough that again, his voice fills the coffee shop.)

4-MR “Hey Mike. Yeah, yeah...I think I have all I need to wrap this up.
(He stands, walks outside, leaving his belongings behind, returning shortly, still on the phone.)

5-MR “You realize it just so happens that I am at -----, right?” “It is a good thing that I just happen to still be at -----, I swear. Can you help me on your end?”

This interaction demonstrates that the coffee shop is used as a work space, along with one type of work-like activity, that of paid work, as it occurs in this space. Just after the actor begins speaking, he leaves his belongings behind and steps outside to hold his phone conversation, an act of deference found in this coffee shop. Upon returning (turn 2-MR), he continues speaking about his business matter, but only briefly prior to stepping outside again. Not all behavior is acceptable in these coffee shops, just as not all types of “work,” such as conducting singing lessons. This actor conducted private work in public,

but he attempted to accomplish his work without disrupting others, as evidenced by his stepping outside to have portions of his phone conversation. This example demonstrates a convergence of the public and private realms, as actors attempt to navigate this intersection as they accomplish work-like tasks, demonstrating Kreiner, Hollensbe, and Sheep's (2009) assertion that "the workplace is no longer a discrete physical location" (p. 704).

On the one hand, actors feel comfortable enough in this space to create markers of territoriality, such as arranging furniture to meet their needs and placing belongings on and around adjacent furniture to appear occupied. Table preferences are common, with informants mentioning insider knowledge of the location and its affordances. Informant M4, for example, stated his table is "away from the front door draft" but "close to a few outlets." If an actor steps away from his or her laptop, they typically lower their laptop screen three-quarters before doing so, an indication of adapting to the environment. Most, but not all, partake in the deferential behavior of lowering their voices when speaking to another person, and covering their mouths if they answer the phone before stepping outside to conduct the conversation. Voices carry easily in this location, and most actors seem aware of this and attempt to have in-person conversations in lowered voices. Since electrical outlets are always in demand, it is commonplace for actors to plug devices into an outlet that might not be near to them. They trust others not to touch their devices as they charge in the nearest available outlet, at times 10 feet away, as they socialize or use their laptops. This practice is tolerated, as devices are never stolen or moved. Those in the area surrounding the charging device may sit near it, but never touch it. I never witnessed anyone commenting about this specific practice, or acting annoyed or frustrated. The

practice of claiming space through placement of belongings was typically tolerated, since no unattended belongings were ever touched or stolen in the absence of the owner during my period of observations. The shuffling of seats, inserting plugs in outlets, and the placement of belongings are ongoing activities in these sites.

Other times, it is the management of personal belongings that creates unplanned encounters, requiring cooperative co-customer “work.” For example, there were instances where I was asked to monitor the belongings of others while they used the restroom or stepped outside for a phone call or cigarette. I also witnessed actors asking others to monitor their belongings, with no one ever declining to do so. Worth considering is how interaction in these coffee shops would differ if cooperation were not usually extended to others. With cooperation routinely given, the practice of watching the belongings of another is tolerated, in stark contrast to the practices in other spaces, such as an airport, where such an action is potentially criminal. The observation of sanctioned and permissible practices in this space illustrates the ways in which people manage their space and belongings, thereby contributing to the understanding of allowable practices. While in these coffee shops, I often felt that it was my responsibility as a customer to assist others with customer behaviors, much like when I am in the supermarket and ask a taller person to provide assistance by “grabbing me a box of cereal” from the top shelf. In an effort to appear cooperative, I generally would not ask others to move their belongings, unless the space was simply too crowded. I preferred to avoid such requests, along with the implication that someone has over-claimed space, thus also avoiding any possibility of an unpleasant exchange and loss of face. When I asked actors if the seat next to them was available, most responded positively, “offering” me license to sit down.

Both the providing and receiving of assistance creates cooperation in these coffee shops, and at times facilitates unplanned encounters involving personal belongings.

In summarizing the unplanned encounters of actors in this coffee shop through both observational and interview data, challenges emerge as actors conduct private activities in public. These challenges are best managed by actors through their use of belongings for territorial purposes, civil inattention (Goffman, 1971), and also “awayness” (Goffman, 1967). However, cooperation, trust, and deference are foundational to interaction within this space, and the data point out the social gratification of actors when having interaction in this coffee shop. This indicates aspects of both “home” and “work,” and thus the blurring of the boundaries which commonly separate these two realms. Data also demonstrated interaction and cooperation between co-present, but unfamiliar, others. It is possible that this social gratification not only attracts actors to this coffee shop, but the interactional potential may be a contributing factor for repeated visits. This attraction, comfort, and familiarity of the space create place for actors, since they feel “at home” enough while conducting work-like activities to do so. This finding is consistent with Mokros and Deetz’s (1996) constitutive perspective of communication, in that the sense of connecting to others and experiencing a sense of belonging while occupying this space is in turn what connects each actor to another, fostering the creation of place within this space. The finding that actors feel “at home” enough to act in this manner is indicative of this space as “flexible” to foster the convergence of the “public” and “private” realms.

Also, while professional identities are at times referenced in the encounters I observed, they are embedded within a “customer” identity, highlighting Mokros’ (2003)

concept of personhood as it emerges in interaction. The management of one's identity as first and foremost a "customer" while conducting work in the extended sense discussed here is an ongoing challenge for "customers" of these coffee shops, as they "work" to balance completing private work-like tasks while in this public space.

Planned encounters

Observations in this study also indicate that actors meet in this coffee shop for pre-planned purposes to accomplish work-like or work-oriented tasks. The use of the labels client and service provider are useful in this context of business interactions. The following examples illustrate such a planned encounter.

Fieldnote and Interaction #4-M

The man seated next to me stands and picks up the newspaper left behind on the vacated table next to him. I wonder if the leaving behind of print materials is a common practice in this coffee shop. I will take note of this practice during future visits. Another man, older, is seated to my right, and a high school aged boy enters and sits across from him.

[Scene: Both the high school aged boy, the service provider, and the older man, the client, set up their laptops. The older man also powers up an electronic tablet. The cell phone of the older man rings and he answers it.]

C=Client

SP=Service Provider

1-C "Hi. Yes...No...lemme go. Talk later."
(He ends his call).

2-C "Sorry. So, what did you think of my last idea I emailed to you?"

3-SP "Uhhh, it's doable. I think there was a configuration issue, but lemme bring it up and show you. By accessing the master server I was able to resize the content, so I was able to access it and now you can see it presents itself clearer. I just was not sure what you wanted over here with this section. If you can story board this section, I can take a closer look and see what I can do as far as translating it into usable app content. But right now it is a mess."

(His cell phone rings).

4-SP “Oh, sorry. This is my dad.”
(He steps away).

5-SP “Hi. Yeah. About 6:30? Good. Yeah, thanks.”

6-SP “Sorry.”
(He returns to the table).

7-C “No problem.”

(The older man and high school student resume their business discussion).

The older man, the client, and the high school student, the service provider, demonstrate cooperation by participating in focused interaction when required in order to facilitate interaction (turn 3-SP), and privacy when needed (turn 4-SP, younger boy stepping away). Goffman (1967) points out that cooperation is typically a joint project, since it requires others in the interaction to follow expected social norms. Through their cooperation, positive face is established and maintained. Also, embedded within this business meeting, the service provider engages in relational or domestic “work” (turn 5-SP) as he arranges a time for his pick-up on the phone with his father. The cooperation granted by the client allowed for the phone call between the service provider and his father to occur seamlessly in this interaction. Should cooperation not have been granted, the interaction would have become more problematic for interactants, and the face (Goffman, 1967) of those involved would have been questioned. Important to note in the above interaction is that the client not providing cooperation is not truly feasible in this encounter. This planned meeting shows how face-work comes into play in the course of a planned encounter for conducting business. In the above interaction, both “customers”

meet to accomplish work, with the service provider taking on the role of “worker,” as what appears to be paid work is accomplished in this encounter.

As this example demonstrates, this coffee shop is often a meeting location for business purposes, with it becoming more common to hear in daily life that a meeting was held at “a coffee shop.” This practice is indicative of both coffee shops increasing in their likelihood of being used as a meeting location, and also for the purpose of accomplishing privatized work and work-like activities. This example, and the following instance, represents the convergence of the “public” and “private” realms in this coffee shop.

Interaction in this coffee shop also included business encounters which became personal. Interaction #5 below is an example of actors moving from professional roles to more personalized interaction to create a relational connection. By noting when work-related talk changes to personal talk (turn 9-SP), the intersection of public and private selves is captured, along with the intersection of paid work for the service provider, and possibly personal work for the client.

Fieldnote and Interaction #5-M

It is quiet in the middle shop today. It is 11am. This must be after the mid-morning rush and before the lunchtime crowd. A handful of people are here, with only a light stream entering, purchasing something, and exiting.

[Scene: As a male, the client, purchases a beverage in the middle location, he turns and acknowledges a female, the service provider, who just entered the location. They enter into an encounter].

C=Client

SP=Service Provider

1-C “Hi. How are you?”

2-SP “Good. How about over here?”

3-C “Yes, yes.”
(He follows her to a table)

4-SP “I just have a few quick questions.”
(They sit down).

5-C “Sure.”
(The woman lowers her voice to just above a whisper and asks something about how long he has been out of work).

6-SP “I doubt they will ask, but it is best if I know.”

7-C “Oh yeah, I would rather be upfront about it. It has been a long seven months.”

8-SP “Okay, good. Fine. I will need you to sign these.”
(He signs documents that she has brought for him. She continues).

9-SP “Great. I will get all of this out today. Hopefully you will hear something soon. Are you open to friends? Dinner? I wasn’t going to ask, but...”

10-C “Oh, yeah.” (Pause).

11-SP “Okay, well, you have my number. I will leave it at that.”
(They both stand and begin to gather their belongings. As they walk out they discuss how “beautiful [the] day is.” They talk briefly in front of the coffee shop and then walk off in different directions.)

Turn 9 marks a move from work-related talk to a desire to make the relationship personal. Both actors kept their voices low, an indication of how they managed being private in public. This example demonstrates one type of work-like activity, personal work, or meeting to resolve business paperwork, intersecting with presumably paid work performed by the woman in the encounter, the service provider. However, this interaction also demonstrates relational work, that of a social invitation, as embedded within paid work, acting as an underlying layer of work performed in this coffee shop within the

broader context of work. This is also an example of cooperation between interactants that promotes the interaction.

Goffman (1967) states that the goal of an encounter, such as the one above, is to participate and exit the encounter without disturbing the expected trajectory of the relationship. This creates and maintains positive face until the parties meet again. This occurred at turn 9-SP, when a potential face-threatening offer was extended by the woman towards the man (that of a dinner invitation). The positive and cooperative response by the man (turn 10-C) allowed the parties to maintain face successfully, and was carried out until the conclusion of the encounter outside the coffee shop. The possibility exists, however, that the man cooperated in the above interaction to save his own face, which in turn allowed the woman to save face. This interaction demonstrates the highly cooperative nature of social interaction when there is possible loss of face or threat to face. The behavior of purchasing goods sold by the establishment, by one actor in the encounter, is performed in order to justify the actors using this space as a meeting point for work-like activity. The “flexible” nature of this coffee shop, found in the variety of acceptable tasks performed and types of meetings held, is also found in the above example as “customers” accomplish both work-like and personal tasks, such as a potential dinner date.

Yet there were planned encounters in this coffee shop that were somewhat confrontational in nature, challenging the ability of parties to remain “in face” (Goffman, 1967). The meeting detailed below took place between the father of a girl and a man who owns the training company where the girl does gymnastics.

Fieldnote and Interaction #6-H

A woman sits in an armchair by the windows with her back towards me, and I can see her lap top screen. She is drafting and sending email and working on what looks like a system of some sort. Her beverage rests at her side.

Behind me sit three working professionals, each at their own table. A guy works on his lap top while wearing headphones. A woman works on her lap top and leaves her belongings behind as she uses the restroom and purchases a beverage. I look in her direction as she is standing on line, and our eyes meet. Keeping on eye on her belongings, I assume. I quickly look away. The remaining woman has been concentrating on her lap top while wearing ear buds since I arrived. She has yet to leave her table.

An older man enters and takes a seat at an open table in front of me. Not long after, a younger man joins him. They exchange “hellos” and both sit down.

[Scene: The client, a father trying not to raise his voice, expresses concern regarding his daughter’s training while in the highway coffee shop. The training company manager, the service provider, takes notes every once in a while using a napkin from the beverage counter and a pen that was left behind on their table.]

SP=Service Provider

C=Client

1-SP “Listen, I am an experienced training manager. I know what my guys are doing, who they are pushing, and why. Your daughter is talented, but in time. Joe told me not yet.” (Pause).

2-C “I tried talking to Joe, but he told me to call you. So, this is it?”

3-SP “Yes. For right now, she is where she should be, and to push her before she is ready would be bad.”

(They shake hands, thank each other for meeting, and exit in separate directions.)

In terms of dealing not only with children but also parents, this example demonstrates the relational nature of the gymnastics training manager’s job. In addition, the confrontational tone of the meeting led the manager to verbalize his credentials and

professional identity to reassure the father that he had his daughter's best interest in mind, and to establish professional face. Since the meeting was conducted in this coffee shop, both actors were aware that they could be overheard, so they often spoke to each other in a talk-like whisper, an act of deference respectful of others present. By lowering their voices, the actors confirm the existence of an implied norm of not disrupting others, or calling attention to themselves, while in this coffee shop.

This encounter was a result of both parties' commitment to their respective lines, or upholding role expectations (Goffman, 1967). Balance was ultimately achieved and face remained intact as indicated by the handshake at the end of the encounter. This encounter is also indicative of the relational aspect of the training manager's line of paid work. In the above extract, he was justifying the quality of his paid work through the doing of his relational work, an interactional example of personhood emerging in interaction (Mokros, 2003). The relational work, possibly problematic at times, is necessary in order for him to continue to be paid. The intersection of the ongoing dimensions of work, namely paid and relational, as demonstrated above also illustrates the coffee shop as it is used for planned, or previously scheduled, encounters, with forms of work blurring in this interaction.

At times, the coffee shops feel like a library, with the exception that snacks and beverages are permissible. In fact, informant H1 mentioned that she prefers meeting with her friend and study partner in the highway shop as opposed to the school library, since "you can eat, talk, and drink coffee, but you can also study. It's almost like people understand you are working, just like in a library. But, you don't need to be in the

library.” It seems as though the coffee shops selected as research sites for this study have the appeal of a modern day library.

Other students met to resolve personal work related matters, such as those in the fieldnote below, using the coffee shop as a location to complete school work. However, the students’ loud talking and laughter provoked a “look” from another customer, an indication these students had breached the norm of speaking in lowered voices while in this coffee shop.

Fieldnote and Interaction #7-M

The man to my left has a workbook open, and I can see the page which says Practice Questions. He moves back and forth between reading and entering his answers onto a scantron on his left side with a pencil in hand. A beverage rests on our table in front of him. He will only occasionally check his phone which also rests on the table in front of him. Seated to my right is a middle-aged man focused on his lap top. His belongings surround him, with no purchase in plain sight. His screen includes information for a company that designs websites. At last glance, he was reading the Frequently Asked Questions.

[Scene: Two college-aged girls decide to sit at the other end of my large table.

They talk as they get settled in, not lowering their voices. One starts up her lap top, and begins attempting to draw an image that she has brought up on her screen. She then says loudly and in frustration:]

Student 1=S1

Student 2=S2

1-S1 “See, here is where you can really see how heart shaped her face is, and that’s what I really want to highlight in my drawing. Otherwise, you won’t even know it’s her. Ugh, I have tried it like 55 million times and can’t get it right.”

2-S2 “Maybe try something else for a bit. Sometimes you just need to move away from it and come back later. [Loud laughter]. Oh god, this [social media outlet] feed you told me about is hilarious.”

(A man, late twenties, is seated in a large armchair next their table. He looks up, looks over at them, and a few minutes later places ear buds in his ears).

This fieldnote demonstrates that while most actors who conduct work-like activities in these coffee shops reproduce certain norms, like that of lowering voices, not all do so. Some may try to indicate to those violating such norms an annoyance, as the man seated in the armchair conveyed, as I perceived his “look” in their direction and placement of ear buds in his ears. The recognition of violating a norm in these coffee shops is subtle, most often indicated by “looks” in the direction of the violators. Despite their subtlety, these “looks” confirm the existence of a preferred manner of behavior in this coffee shop, that of acting in ways that indicate a respect for those around you.

The following interaction is an example of how actors conduct other private matters in this public space, indicating that actors feel “at home” enough to do so. Interaction #8 also demonstrates the broadening of work as found in the work-like activities conducted in these coffee shops.

Fieldnote and Interaction #8-M

A high school aged girl walks into the middle shop with her bag and a textbook and has trouble deciding where to sit. She leaves her bag and book at the end of the large work table and heads to the counter. I notice this is common practice in these locations, but never do so myself.

A man sits down against the far wall with a small boy and begins reviewing flashcards as they eat pound cake. The girl returns to her textbook with a large coffee, checks her phone, starts up her laptop and opens her textbook.

[Scene: Two men walk in and sit right in front of me. I adjust my seat to indicate willingness to give them additional space.]

C= Client

SP=Service Provider

- 1-C “Trouble finding the place?”
(He takes papers out of his folder.)
- 2-SP “No, I know the area, a bit, I mean, so, no, no trouble.”
- 3-C “Here’s my Chase...you needed that one, right?”
- 4-SP “Yup...good, good. Let’s see...”
(Multiple papers exchange hands and are signed.)
- 5-C “What bank is this?”
- 6-SP “Huh? It’s me.”
- 7-C “I know, but who is that, that, that...you work for. I am asking.”
- 8-SP “Oh, Residential.”
- 9-C “Uh-huh...how long does all this take?”
- 10-SP “About 35 days.”
- 11-C “What about home equities?”
- 12-SP “I don’t know. We don’t do home equities.”
- 13-C “Alright, Chris, nice meeting you.”
- 14-SP “Yes, and send me All State’s insurance.”
- 15-C “Will do. Good seeing you. Thanks.”
(They leave without either party buying anything, which is not atypical, as discussed below).

This meeting demonstrates face-work as a cooperative effort of those involved in the encounter, and that this coffee shop serves as a meeting place for personal and work related matters, such as this discussion of realtor and mortgage related issues. The choice to meet the service provider in this coffee shop demonstrates personal and presumably paid work occurring here, only made possible though the coffee shop sanctioning these types of work-like activities and encounters. Noted in the above example, “customers” at

times occupied the coffee shop without making a purchase during my period of observation. Actors who use the coffee shop as a meeting place for work-like activities is identifiable in the next planned encounter that occurred at the table where I sat while at the middle shop.

Fieldnote and Interaction #9-M

A high school aged girl sits at the table across from me, and a woman in her twenties joins her. It turns out to be her tutor.

Two middle-aged men are focused on their lap tops in different locations of the store. I notice an older couple from the other night talking with another man as they pass an electronic tablet back and forth. A newer version of a newspaper, I remark to myself.

[Scene: I am reviewing information in a spiral bound notebook when two men sit down right in front of me. I look up to see who is sitting down, still in thought, and continue reviewing my notebook.]

SP=Service Provider
R=Researcher
C=Client

1- SP “May we join you?” (Pause).

2-R “Oh, um...yes, yes. Sure.”

3-SP “Can I ask you to plug me in?”

4-R “Of course.
(I stand, grab his cord, plug it in behind me, and sit back down).

5-SP “Thanks so much.”

6-R “No trouble. You’re welcome.”

7-C “I am really interested to see what you have in terms of bulk. We’re close to being ready enough to get the, the permits, but I will feel much better once the food is ordered.”

8-SP “Oh, I, I, I understand. Ya know...it’s...lemme get this thing started up and sign into the system real quick.”

9-C (He pulls blue prints out of his bag and begins taking off the rubber band. He slips it onto his wrist, and unrolls the blueprints, resting them halfway unrolled on the table using one hand).

10-SP “Okay. We should be good to go over here. Oh...you brought your blueprints.”

11-C “Yeah. Maybe we should look at the food first. Then I want you to take a look and give me your opinion on the layout. I think it’s gonna be really nice.”

12-SP “Sure. Yeah...umm...okay I just need to sign back in real quick. Okay. What’s first?”

13-C “I’m wondering how you sell your sausages. Like...I mean, if we are talking bulk.”

14-SP “Okay, so let’s assume we are talking bulk here, right? Until we aren’t, I mean. So let me set this on bulk so we can see what we can get you and the prices.”

15-SP “And also when. Like, I’ll need these things somewhat soon. So if it’s a rush, then ya know, like, it’s a rush. ”

In the above encounter, the service provider, who initiated the interaction with coffee in hand, interacted with me using deference, indicated by his asking if they could join me and share the space I was occupying prior to sitting down (turn 1-SP). Co-customer work occurred immediately following this exchange (turn 3-SP) when I plugged his cord into the electrical outlet nearest to us, but located in the wall behind where I was sitting. This encounter is representative of what appeared to be paid work for both the client and the service provider, who was likely making income on the transaction, with the client, who did not purchase anything during my period of observation, hoping to generate income when his business opens. By the coffee shop sanctioning use of technological devices, this location was selected as suitable. In other

words, should this type of work-like activity not be allowed in these coffee shops, this encounter would likely not have occurred, nor would the “passing back and forth of an electronic tablet” as noted in the fieldnote. The broader implications of this observation will be discussed in the findings and contributions. Interaction #10 is similar, in that the upper shop is used as a meeting location for a planned encounter, with the intent of generating income for interactants.

Fieldnote and Interaction 10-U

I enter the upper location and immediately notice the congestion. This includes students studying, a man holding a screenplay seated at the window, and a mother with her baby in the carriage. I then notice a man enters and drops his bag on a small table by the front door and walks up to the counter. Leaving belongings unattended surprises me, as it is not what I would have thought to do. A second younger guy enters and does the same, but he uses his helmet to mark a large comfy, armchair.

After using the restroom and waiting on line to buy a \$3.00 cup of coffee, I decide to sit at the back of the coffee shop. The guy next to me uses the extra chair at his table to hold his bag, with his lap top on his table. I decide this is a smart territorial move and do the same.

An older man two tables in front of me is busy studying his lap top while heavily involved in a business phone call of sorts. He lowers his head and covers his mouth while speaking, presumably in an effort to avoid attention being drawn to him. Noise travels in this location pretty easily, as the young girl talking across the coffee shop from me is also somewhat audible.

[Scene: As I entered the upper site, I noticed that the man seated in the front window is holding what appears to be a screenplay. Another man enters, he greets the man holding the screenplay, and they relocate to a table in front of me.]

C=Client

P=Service Provider

1-C “I wanna get a cup of coffee. You?”

- 2-SP “Nah man, I’m good.”
- 3-C “I’ll be right back.”
(There is a bit of a line, so he returns after a few minutes).
- 4-SP “So, hopefully you thought the edits weren’t a big deal?”
- 5-C “Nah, they were small. Where are we at with financing?”
- 6-SP “I have been talking to several possibilities. Just getting in to see them this coming week has been tough. But, I’m staying positive.”
- 7-C “Sure, sure...what type of shooting schedule do you have in mind?”
- 8-SP “Yeah, I mean we can probably do all of your stuff on Mondays and Wednesdays, if that, that will work for you.”
- 9-C “Yeah, like right now, I think that works. I think I can plan on that.”
(He flips through the screenplay on the table, finds a page, and points to something as he leans in to say something. At the same time, the whirling of a drink being made behind the counter makes the remainder of their conversation inaudible.)

In the above encounter, the two actors used the coffee shop as a meeting place to discuss an ongoing project which presumably provides both interactants with the potential for generating income upon completion. The hidden, or “unrecognized” work involved in securing financial support for this line of paid work is addressed by C at turn 5 and referred to by SP during turn 6. Additional forms of hidden work, such as writing (turn 4-SP), scheduling (turns 7-C and 8-SP), and casting and shooting (turn 9-C) are also referenced throughout this encounter. This example captures “customers” as “workers,” and additional forms of work, including that of “hidden” labor, as this planned meeting occurred in this coffee shop.

This fieldnote also captures my voice as I acknowledge and note patterns, or norms, of this coffee shop. They include trust as evidenced in the leaving behind of belongings, actors using belongings to claim space, and actors lowering voices so as not

to disrupt those around them. These norms, representative of the privatized “moments” found in these coffee shops, are a consequence of both these coffee shops allowing private work-like activities to be performed, and “customers” performing work-like activities in these coffee shops.

In interaction #11, a mother is dealing with a financial matter on her cell phone while attempting to occupy her son when in the middle shop.

Fieldnote and Interaction #11-M

Across from me are two women with five children between them. They provide a constant stream of crying, screaming, laughing, running, falling, and “mommy said no.” They prepare to leave, and once gone, a lovely silence, devoid of music or beverages being prepared, fills the coffee shop.

A girl, in her early twenties, that I recognize from prior visits sits in the center of the section with outlets. I will approach her to request an interview, I remark to myself. I just hope she is approachable.

A man working on his laptop sits to my right, offering the occasional sigh and expression of disbelief, most commonly in the form of grumble where the words cannot be deciphered verbatim. An older man I have also seen here before sits in an armchair, as he checks his phone and talks about current events with an older man who sits next to him, who occasionally reads the paper.

[Scene: A woman enters the middle shop and sets up her son, about 2 years old, with a portable dvd player. She also gives him a snack from her bag. She sets up her laptop, checks her phone, counts money in her wallet but does not make a purchase during my period of observation, and tries to have a phone conversation to clarify the terms of a loan through the service provider. The boy tries to talk to her.]

M=Mother/Client
S=Son

1-M “Honey, I love when you talk to me, but not right now. Watch your movie, okay?”

(She has a brief phone conversation, with only some of her questions audible.)

2-M “I am just trying to understand this. What happens if I have trouble in a class in the middle of the semester?”

(Pause.)

3-M “So, if I take a class and fail, I would need to repay all the money I was given, right?”

4-B “Noooooooo...yeah!”

(The boy exclaims as he watches his movie.)

This is an example of personal work, and includes a mother conducting private matters, indicating that she feels “at home” enough to do so. This form of personal work, that of clarifying the terms of a loan for education, occurring in this coffee shop is also a form of work, that of securing an education and degree, that could be used to generate income in the future. Relational or domestic work, an underlying layer of personal work throughout this interaction, is also occurring throughout this interaction, as the mother “works” to distract the boy so that she can have a successful phone conversation.

Embedded in the robustness of this coffee shop is the privatized “moment” of the mother on her cell phone, breaching the norm in this coffee shop of stepping outside to hold a phone conversation. This interaction, involving both personal and relational work, captures what Hochschild (2001) refers to as people becoming “more attached to the world of work, its deadlines, its cycles, its pauses, and its disruptions,” so that work even more “shapes our lives, and the more family time is forced to accommodate to the pressures of work” (p. 45), simultaneously capturing the intersection of “customer,” and “mother.” As mentioned earlier, it is the “flexibility” of this coffee shop that not only allows for this type of personal work to be performed, but also that this actor can not make a purchase and still be granted the status of “customer.”

The fieldnote also includes a man sighing and grumbling while using his laptop. No one present, myself included, addressed the self-talk (Goffman, 1981) of the male, either verbally or nonverbally. This “customer” was granted a “privatized” moment without reprimand in this coffee shop.

Summarizing the examination of these planned encounters of actors, challenges emerge as they conduct work-like activities in public. These challenges are best managed through the use of cooperation, deference, positive face, and seeking balance, or equilibrium, when in an encounter. Professional identity is demonstrated as it is embedded in “customer” identity, and traditional understandings of “customer” are challenged as they intersect with “worker.” Additionally, the types of work identified in this study become blurred, or intersect, broadening our understanding of the work-like activities that are conducted in these coffee shops.

Opportunistic encounters

Upon occasion, these coffee shops provided the opportunity for encounters between actors who do not already know each other, in order to resolve issues they were experiencing or to obtain needed information. These types of encounters, sometimes intrusive in nature, demonstrate when “customers” become service providers for other “customers” who are requesting assistance with a work-like activity. This demonstrates an additional dimension of the blurred boundary between “customer” and “worker,” as “customers” become “workers” in interaction. These interactions, like interaction #12, were normalized in this space.

Fieldnote and Interaction #12-M

I enter the side door and use the restroom first thing. I am feeling a bit distracted today, so I remind myself as I am getting set-up that I will need to work a bit

harder to take careful and detailed notes. I decide not to purchase anything today and to see what happens. This makes me feel a bit self-conscious. Maybe today I will make progress on my interviews.

It is fairly well populated, at least for a rainy Tuesday early afternoon. Three men sit at the large table, having a discussion that lasts for ten minutes after I arrive and while they pack up and leave.

An older woman sits in a comfy chair across from me as she completes a crossword puzzle. She greets me, and we talk for a bit. She agrees to be interviewed at a later time. Likely not a perfect candidate for my study, but the practice of approaching someone, pitching my study, and asking if I can interview them is welcomed. I mark her down in my spiral notebook.

A woman in her twenties sits in the far corner typing rapidly on her lap top, while a man in his late twenties steps away from his lap top to take a call on his cell phone outside the store. A woman in her forties sits down and starts up her lap top, directly in my view. She eats, drinks, and goes back and forth between her lap top and phone.

A man in his forties enters with a bag from the supermarket next door. He buys water from the coffee shop counter and occupies a small table while he eats. Soon after he sits down, he picks up the newspaper left behind on the seat next to him. I have noticed this practice of leaving print materials behind, and of others picking them up and reading. It reminds of those “need a penny, take a penny” holders by cash registers. If everyone gives a bit, everyone gets a bit. I like it. With that, a woman enters the coffee shop and places her lap top on the table beside me.

[Scene: A woman enters the middle shop, places her laptop and bag on a table and makes her way to the counter. She returns, beverage in hand, sits, opens and starts up her laptop, and just as she begins typing, the man on her left asks a question that results in a more extended turn of talk, opportunistic in nature, initiating a collaborative activity, which could also be interpreted as intrusive:]

C=Customer as Client

SP=Customer as Service Provider

1-C “Do you know how to fix this? It’s a margin thing.”
(She leans in slightly and takes a look from afar).

2-SP “Hmmm...sorry, I was involved in something here. That? (points to his laptop). No, not really. I am just going to back away now.”

(They both chuckle and she continues typing on her laptop. A short period of time passes, and he says,)

3-C “I am so close, but just can’t get it.”
(She looks up, pauses, and then says,)

4-SP “Can I show you something? I mean, if you want. Ya know what? Save it first and then I can show you, if, if, you want.”

5-C “Yeah, yeah...that would be great.”
(She tries to lean over on his laptop, and then says,)

6-SP “Ya know, I’ll show you on mine. Lemme bring up a document to show you.”
(She hums while she brings up a document on her laptop).

“Here.”
(She turns her laptop to face him).

7-C (He watches, tries it on his laptop while she looks around the coffee shop, and after a bit, says,)
“Got it.”

8-SP “Glad I could help.”
(She says without looking at him, but notably she slightly turns herself away from him).

As this interaction unfolds, it becomes apparent that the two actors, notably a man, the “customer” as client, and a woman, the “customer” as service provider, do not know each other. However, the man treated the woman next to him as a valuable resource, with her ultimately becoming a client or “worker” in this interaction, and in turn resolving his issue. This example of a coffee shop used as a collaborative work space demonstrates the way in which actors assume and legitimize this space as a location where collaboration, and as a result, intrusion, for the completion of work-like activities is tolerated. By assuming the woman was willing to assist, he treated her as a willing affordance, and she obliged by assisting. It is possible that the woman did not want to

challenge the man's demeanor or question his presentation of self, and despite being surprised by his directness (turn 2-P), she still attempted to assist him, in which she was ultimately successful. Thus the encounter, with a gendered layer embedded within this interaction, achieved a state of equilibrium (Goffman, 1959) that seemed acceptable to both parties. The completion of work-like activities in this coffee shop leads actors to use other actors as resources when solving "problems." Actors relying on other actors as affordances seems to be a consequence of the convergence of the public and private realms while in these coffee shops.

As previously stated, throughout my interviews, when asked why they frequent this coffee shop, informants expressed a clear reason or motivation, most commonly productivity, convenience, and comfort, including sociality. The informant below, U10, a new mother starting her own public relations company, mentions the possibility for social interaction with others as a reason for spending time in this coffee shop.

Interview Extract #33 (Informant U10)

"It breaks up my day. To give me somewhere to go. To give me opportunities to interact with people. I found that getting out of the house was very good for me, so I try to do it most weekdays."

This woman frequents the coffee shop since it offers the possibility of interaction, which she finds satisfying. This speaks to social interaction as a fundamental human need. However, several informants had a difficult time describing their behavior, expressing it as something "that is not thought about very much" (U6), describing stopping in this coffee shop as very "simple, natural" (U6). These coffee shops provide a setting in which actors consider their own behavior normal, further legitimizing it while in this space. Another informant, M4, who is currently unemployed and frequents this

location to search on-line for work, expresses when and why he uses or does not use his ear buds. The informant describes an opportunistic motivation behind using ear buds while searching for work in this coffee shop, but also uses technology to display availability for a possible encounter with a female.

Interview Extract #34 (Informant M4)

“If I am searching on-line for a job, I like to listen to music, always actually. It makes the process more enjoyable, and I just tune everyone and everything else out. But if a female sits down close to me, and I am just being honest here, I am inclined to remove my ear buds so that maybe I will have an excuse or chance or something to talk to her. So I use it how I want in the moment, I guess. I like that about technology.”

Ear buds, also mentioned in the informant perspectives on blurred boundaries section, when inserted into electronic devices enable actors to behave as if they are not mentally present, “cocooning” (Bull, 2000) themselves in what they are doing as a private activity that occurs in this public space. The online streaming media provided by these sites, which include music and a job search bank, encourage the use of ear buds or headphones that are oftentimes plugged into laptops, mobile phones, and electronic tablets, thereby privatizing or creating “awayness” (Goffman, 1967) which assists in the completion of work-like activities. Electronic devices are used, then, as a way of managing the challenge of being around others while conducting work-like activities.

However, as the above extract points put, actors use the simple “tool” of ear buds and advanced “tools” of electronic devices, to fit their needs in a particular situation, in turn creating both an interaction shield (Goffman, 1963) and consequently, avoidance when desired, but also using it to create interaction upon occasion. This coffee shop can then be viewed as a location where actors “work” at meeting potential mates. This work is not recognized in the above conversation, much like the earlier informant who “caught

up on [social networking site]” (U6), creating an additional “unrecognized” form of work included in this study.

There are also those who occupy these coffee shops, seizing the opportunity to talk to others about what they do for a living, or what they “sell.” The fieldnote below captures a woman overhearing a conversation between a couple and subsequently introducing herself.

Fieldnote and Interaction #13-M

An older man sits at the large table across from me, flipping through a stack of papers as he sips a beverage and checks his phone. A man in his late twenties sits to my right, beverage beside him as he writes in a small notebook. He stares down at the table for long stretches when not writing. I know this process, since I do it when I am deep in thought and trying to write clearly. A middle-aged man and woman sit to his right, talking about a home in the area they just looked at by attending an open house.

[Scene: A woman, about forty, sits down at the large table next to the couple that was talking about the house.]

R=Realtor

M=Man

1-R “Sorry to overhear your conversation, but I’m, I’m Kathy. I’m a realtor. Here is my card if it can ever be of help.”

2-M “Oh, oh..no problem. Thank you very much.”

(She mentions she has just started, so word of mouth is really helpful. The couple nods, listens, and say they will certainly pass her information along. I wonder if they are just being polite, as “passing information along” is different from “I will call you to discuss homes you have for sale.”)

This coffee shop provided a chance for the realtor to create potential business, and the overture, rather forward in nature, appeared to be well received by the couple. In this instance, the realtor was a “customer” of the coffee shop, while also a “worker”

attempting to secure clients in order to increase revenue, and in turn, assist the couple in resolving their “problem.” This type of opportunistic interaction is an example of how this coffee shop can foster opportunistic connections.

Also in these coffee shops, coordinating the use of seats can become a shared “problem” between customers that requires cooperation. Interaction #14 occurred between apparent strangers below, and demonstrates the shuffling of seats, a literal game of musical chairs, that occurs in this upper coffee shop. Actors often ask other actors questions regarding the availability of a nearby chair, and “hover” as they wait for a vacating customer to leave. A commonplace opportunistic behavior in these coffee shops is the identification of more preferable seats, and then quickly moving to claim a preferred seat while an actor is vacating it. Customers are often overheard strategizing how to secure more preferable seats, remarking that they are ready to move. Interaction #14 below from the upper shop captures a customer seizing the opportunity to upgrade his seat to a more preferable location, prior to holding a conference call.

Fieldnote and Interaction #14-U

I enter the upper coffee shop and instantly feel completely overwhelmed. It is literally packed, with every seat occupied. I also notice a very long line as I walk past the counter to the restroom.

Upon exiting the restroom, I get on line to purchase coffee, which seems a bit shorter now. I buy a coffee, nuts, and a protein pack, and since my hands are full, I ask that they put it in a bag. They do. Far too expensive, but getting hungry.

As I pick up my coffee from the counter, I step towards the back of the coffee shop and I notice an open seat at a small table by the outlets! Prime spot, I think. So as not to lose it, I decide to walk over and drop my bag of food on the table, my place marker. Not too comfortable with this, so I move as quickly as I can while fixing my coffee. I start to wonder if either I am distrustful of others, or others are too trustful.

When I return to the table, I try to sit on the side of the table facing the front door, but I literally cannot fit between tables to do so. I luck out since the couple behind me leaves as I am trying to get settled. I quickly move to the side of the table facing the door. Perfect spot, I note.

Two middle-aged women are talking up a storm to my left. They discuss work, health, and therapy, pausing only briefly to type on their phones or to silence an incoming call, addressing this distraction by looking at the phone and remarking, “Oh..ah..I’ll just call him back later.” They leave not long after I arrive. A man holding a lap top on the other side of the coffee shop begins speaking with a woman, and catches my eye and ear.

[Scene: A man in the upper location attempts to relocate to a preferred seat prior to participating in a conference call.]

M=Man

W=Woman

1-M “Oh, are you leaving?”

2-F “Yes.”

3-M “I think I prefer your seat to this one here...the natural light. But, of course, take your time.”

(He balances his laptop on his knee while reading as she packs up. He then gets situated in his new seat and makes a call using his cell phone).

4-M “Hey Mike...I am taking a look at those spreadsheets you sent and I need you to clarify one thing. Please call me back when you have the chance. Thanks.”

(He disconnects the call by pressing a button by his ear and focuses back on his laptop. He then places ear buds in, stands from his chair, and faces the wall behind him. Soon after he says,)

5-M “Good afternoon guys...I am doing great. Yes, I looked over everything and have a few questions regarding the social mobile space. Why don’t you first take me through your presentation in the intended order and we can cover any questions after that? Great. Perfect.”

(He sits down, facing other customers.)

6-M “I am muting my phone on my side so that should help with any background noise over here.”

Not only does this interaction demonstrate how the male actor uses the space for work-like behavior, but also his use of deference when doing so. The man wanted the seat the woman was about to vacate, and the verbal expression of deference created a more pleasant interaction. The shuffling of seats is common in this space, often accompanied by the use of deferential behavior. The man hovering closely to the woman as she was preparing to leave viewed her leaving as an opportunity for a preferred seat. It is possible he realized (turn 3-M) he was intrusive, since he attempted to repair the equilibrium in this interaction (Goffman, 1959) by encouraging the woman to take her time to exit (turn 3-M). This specific moment is indicative of an actor creating and maintaining positive face when interacting with another actor. Also, within the transitional space between turn 3-M and 4-M, the man engaged in civil inattention as he told her to “take her time” packing up and leaving. Consequently, he provided her the privacy to pack up her belongings and leave at her own pace. During this transition, he occupied himself by reading his laptop, balanced on one knee as he stood by the table waiting for her to leave, indicating that he was going to take her seat. He then assumed a “worker” identity while acting as a “customer” in order to hold his conference call in this coffee shop, at times managing his phone conversation (turn 4-M, facing wall behind him), demonstrating deference to both those present and later to those on the other end of the phone (turn 6-M, mute button to decrease background noise). In this encounter, first face-work (Goffman, 1967) was used to secure a preferred seat, followed by the male “customer” conducting paid work, with professional identity identifiable.

The fieldnote also includes my remarks regarding trust as I spent time in this coffee shop. This was first referenced in chapter three, when during the site selection

process I took note of the presence of trust in these coffee shops as actors left their belongings unattended as if they were at home. Trust, a recurring identifiable characteristic of these coffee shops, was subsequently explored in this chapter, and will be analyzed in connection to privacy in the concluding chapter.

In summarizing the opportunistic encounters of actors in this coffee shop through both observational and interview data, the challenges presented are best managed by actors through their use of other actors in this space, in turn creating a collaborative work space. Cooperation, trust, and deference continue to be foundational to interaction, and the data point out the social gratification both desired and experienced by actors. Data also demonstrated actors using technology as an opportunity both to interact and to create distance from others. Also, the blurring of a traditional understanding of “customer” to justify “worker,” as found in interaction #12-M, where a customer provided assistance to another customer, adds a dimension of complexity to our understanding of both “customer” and “worker,” since in this coffee shop actors working for other actors is normalized.

Interview and observational data were explored herein. By providing a summary of interview data, an analysis of three types of encounters, unplanned, planned, and opportunistic, and the behaviors which are commonly found across these coffee shops, these locations are identified as sites where interaction, identity, work, and place intersect, wherein one witnesses an erosion or blurring of the boundaries between “home” and “work,” and “recognized” and “unrecognized” work. These findings illustrate that actors are doing much more than dropping in for a quick cup of coffee, challenging the stereotypic view that “customers” in coffee shops are merely having a cup of coffee.

What we have here is a location that is itself a blended environment which by its very nature and design, encouraging the blurring of boundaries on all levels, from identity to the nature of work and that of space. These sites function as spaces where encounters with others occur commonly in three forms, unplanned or accidental, planned or purposeful, and opportunistic, or goal seeking, in which an actor seeks out others for a specific need in the moment, whereby a “customer” at times becomes a “worker” in interaction. A discussion of the micro-level findings, and the macro-level implications of these findings, are addressed in the findings and the contributions of this analysis that follows.

Discussion of findings and contributions

When applying the constitutive perspective of communication (Mokros and Deetz (1996) as a primary theoretical lens through which to view the data, it is first noted that work is in fact multi-faceted, and more than solely what actors do for pay, resulting in a broadening of the concept of work. The multiple forms of work observed in this study illustrate that work is both “recognized” and “unrecognized,” resulting in four intersecting types: paid, domestic, personal, and face. Relatedly, actors use technology not only to accomplish work-like tasks at hand, but also to both avoid and facilitate interaction. This is consistent with the idea that actors are “active participants rather than passive recipients” (Oudshoorn & Pinch, 2003, p. 5) when employing technology to meet their needs when in these coffee shops.

It also becomes apparent, however, that technology poses constraints to actors, identified herein in the form of responsibility to answer cell phones and partake in the relational work demonstrated by both the high school aged boy, the service provider, and

the older man, the client, in fieldnote and interaction 4-M. Also noted in fieldnote and interaction #9-M was the passing of an electronic tablet, and my referring to it in the fieldnote as a “newer version of a newspaper.” As data demonstrated, newspapers and various print materials are very common in these coffee shops, along with the leaving behind and sharing of such. Despite the electronic tablet being considered a “new” technology, data herein also demonstrate that it can at times serve the same function as an “older” newspaper. This not so new function of technology is also captured in the data explored herein, as “customers” with laptops often closed the screen three quarters prior to stepping away. This “privatized” behavior is a new version of covering paperwork and other print materials in an effort to maintain privacy while in these coffee shops.

When examining the work-like activities both observed and reported in this space (RQ1, RQ2), a range of behaviors emerged as what people consider work. Based on interviews, the best illustrations of which were discussed earlier, work has multiple, co-existing definitions: working on a difficult relationship, a volunteer basis, looking for work, work that will make money in the future, idea work, work for pay, and the work of taking care of one’s health. The analysis indicates that the boundaries between these categories of work are artificial, similar to the false dichotomy between labor which is paid and that which is not. The conclusions herein confirm the reality of multiple, co-existing types and definitions of work that are blurred, transcending the traditional boundaries between paid and unpaid work. Interestingly, informants initially described work as those activities performed for pay, but throughout the course of the interviews most found that they had contradicted themselves by mentioning some aspect of their lives that requires a significant amount of work, such as rebuilding an important

relationship, or writing screenplays or stage scripts without compensation. When this was pointed out to informants, they acknowledged that they had overlooked the significant amount of effort involved in such uncompensated tasks.

When exploring reported work-like activities, interview data included the following: scheduling appointments, school work, looking for work, searching for and reading about graduate programs, follow-up on leads for purchasing homes, reading trade newspapers, tutoring students, reviewing job estimates, reviewing client financials, organize/calculate business receipts, creating a website for business, reading about starting a public relations business, holding business meetings, holding conference calls, reaching out to contacts regarding job possibilities, resolving business matters on phone, “idea” work, writing, checking email, and medical research. Another way these activities were examined was through actors’ use of technology. When asked what “tools” are required in order to complete desired tasks, informants stated multiple “tools,” both electronic and non-electronic, to complete work-like tasks. Specifically, informants mentioned non-electronic items, classified as those without an on-off switch and which did not need electrical power, in addition to electronic items, required to complete desired tasks. While the previously mentioned symbolic value to the coffee shops is at times relevant when “customers” use advanced electronic “tools,” the findings herein support the ease of the completion of the task while in the coffee shop as primary, regardless of how “new” the “tool” may be.

When examining the face-work used when actors are challenged while in these coffee shops (RQ3), data indicated that deference is demonstrated by cooperation between co-present, but unfamiliar, others. This is additional confirmation that this public

space, a coffee shop, is, to a significant extent, fundamentally social in nature. Most notably, this extends Mokros and Deetz's (1996) constitutive perspective of communication, in that the sense of connecting to others and experiencing a sense of belonging while working in this space is in turn what links each actor to another, transforming space into place. This demonstrates the interactional and social character of these coffee shops. The constitutive view also brought out the micro-level occurrences as actors interact and use this coffee shop for work-like tasks. In doing so, the norms of "customers" who occupied these coffee shops were examined, and subsequently captured as they were reproduced and maintained, and at other times, breached.

The three observed social interaction patterns (RQ4), namely unplanned, planned, and opportunistic, reflect the patterns of interaction regarding work-like activities found in this coffee shop. An additional finding is the expressed need by informants for sociality, including but not limited to, being around others without having to interact with them, and the affordance of such in this coffee shop (RQ5, RQ6). In addition to the need for socialization as a frequently mentioned affordance, electrical outlets, wi-fi, and restrooms were expressed as the most conducive to outside work performed in this coffee shop.

By exploring the erosion and blurring of the boundary between home and work space, this coffee shop is designed to make actors feel as though they are relaxing at home, creating a sense of place (Geiryn, 2000). This contributes to our understanding of how actors feel when working in this coffee shop, which speaks to the fundamental need to experience, while not necessarily engage in, social interaction. Additionally, another affordance is that actors are granted the mask of "customer," whether or not they make a

purchase. As discussed in this section, actors who do not purchase anything from the establishment is an additional dimension to “customer” in this context. This adds complexity to the traditional understanding of “customer,” since nothing has been purchased from the establishment, yet all visitors are granted the status of “customer.” As mentioned earlier, this is a facet of the design of the “flexibility” of this space. In addition to demonstrating the sociality of this coffee shop, the types of observed social interaction patterns capture the “moments” of privatized behavior that are embedded in the robust and dynamic social life of these coffee shops.

When examining the blurred boundaries of “publicness” and “privateness” that occur within this coffee shop, several contributions of this study, namely the broadening of what we think of as work, and the identity of “customer,” are consistent with Goffman’s (1959) assertion that “social establishments” (p. 238) are the back drop for informal interactions, and in this study, a coffee shop is replete with social interaction, demonstrating the fundamental social nature of this public space. By examining the intersection, or convergence of the public and private realms in this coffee shop, paid work is identified as “flexible” in terms of where it can be performed, with sociality remaining a consistent fundamental need.

The boundaries identified in this study, namely the boundary between “public” and “private” and the boundary between “home” and “work,” are demonstrated to be blurred, rather than distinct and specific. Data also challenge traditional understandings of “customer” by demonstrating “customers” as “workers” in interaction. As the data demonstrated, the blurring of these boundaries operates on all levels, from paid work to face-work, rendering work as complex and relational. The discussion related to the

research questions herein leads to a broadened appreciation of what we think of as work, and that “customer” identity is a mask for a variety of ways actors work while in these coffee shops, which at times also reveals personhood (Mokros, 2003). The sociality that occurs in these coffee shops shapes work-like activities, creating satisfying encounters that transform space into place. The interplay of identity, interaction, place, and work is discussed further in the next chapter where the framework of the constitutive view is presented. This framework utilizes all of the findings herein to present a contribution to the study of both these concepts and the nature of the constitutive view.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS

Overview

This dissertation examined the erosion between “publicness” and “ privateness” and the blurred boundaries produced by this erosion, as it occurred in three coffee shops. Specifically, the study analyzed the blurred boundaries between “customer” and “worker,” “home” and “work,” and “recognized” and “unrecognized” work, as the distinction between them becomes eroded. In the process, four elements were examined: views of work, the kinds of work-like activities performed, what encourages doing work-like activities in the selected coffee shops, and the nature of interaction between social actors.

The goal was to achieve a better understanding of how “customerness” shapes everyday interaction by providing an interactional approach to the daily activities of “customers” as they navigate challenges and create place (Geiryn, 2000), when occupying a coffee shop to accomplish work-like activities. The analysis of the four elements examined herein, namely views of work, the kinds of work-like activities performed, what encourages doing work-like activities in the selected coffee shops, and the nature of interaction between social actors, informs our understanding of the blurred boundaries identified. The constitutive perspective (Mokros, 2003) was most useful for identifying not only the norms that are reproduced and breached in these coffee shops, but also how the four communicative concepts in this study, namely interaction, identity, work, and place, are produced and reproduced in interaction. This interaction resulted in the blurring of the boundaries between these concepts, and more notably, an identifiable

emergent “customer” identity (Mokros, 2003), as “customers” interacted regarding work-like tasks.

This research utilizing the constitutive view (Mokros & Deetz, 1996) and interpretive microanalysis (Mokros, 2003) produced three overarching contributions. First, I identified the boundaries that were blurred, or eroded, when “customers” perform work-like activities in these coffee shops. This blurring of boundaries was most evident in my second overarching contribution, the identification of three specific patterns of communicative interaction, namely the encounters that occurred in unplanned, planned, and opportunistic interaction for the completion of work-like tasks. Thirdly, “customerness” was identified as emergent in interaction as “customers” performed work-like behaviors and at times interacted with others. Taken together, these contributions indicate the relational nature of work-like activities as they occur in interaction in these coffee shops.

I will now discuss the application of the constitutive view to these blurred boundaries and the four communicative concepts identified, along with the related norms. This framework is also represented in schematic form as appendix H. Following this discussion, I will review the limitations and ethical considerations of the study. Then the implications and agenda for future research are discussed, followed by the conclusion of the study.

Blurred boundaries and the constitutive view

The constitutive view integrates the four communicative concepts in this study, interaction, identity, work, and place. The interrelationship of these four concepts illustrates what might be called a kaleidoscope of interaction. A kalideoscope, defined as

“a constantly changing pattern or sequence of objects or elements”

(oxfordictionaries.com), is a useful metaphor for an understanding of the reciprocally influential nature of these concepts. In other words, as one concept attains meaning through interaction, changes are created in the remaining concepts, since all concepts are inextricably linked to one another. Therefore, these concepts, which are relational, are continuously produced and reproduced in interaction. This dynamic conceptual interaction creates the blurring of boundaries identified in this study.

The overarching context of this study was the blurred boundary of “public” and “private,” which then influenced the boundaries of all four communicative concepts within this environment: interaction, identity, work, and place. In other words, the concepts of “publicness” and “ privateness” function on a continuum, like that of the light spectrum, where the boundaries between red, yellow, and blue are porous or blurred, without clear demarcation between colors. First, regarding interaction, the constitutive view revealed that the boundaries identified in this study are blurred when “customers” conduct work-like tasks and at times interact with others, and the resultant problematic and potentially problematic interactions were also identified. Also, norms that were affirmed and reproduced, along with breaches of norms, were captured through the application of this theoretical lens. Second, regarding identity, the blurring of boundaries between “customer” and “worker” were also identified. Thirdly, the concept of work was broadened through the application of the constitutive view. This broadening of the concept of work was identified in the blurring between public and private. The application of the constitutive view revealed that the boundaries in these coffee shops between “home” and “work,” and forms of “recognized” and “unrecognized” work were

blurred, rather than clear and distinct. This led to a reconstitution of the concept of work. Fourthly, based on the reciprocal nature of the previous three concepts, interaction, identity, and work, space was transformed into place, capturing both interaction and “moments” of privatized behavior.

In applying the constitutive view, this study provides an additional theoretical contribution by capturing the norms that are identified through the microanalysis of interaction obtained from observational fieldnotes. Guided by researcher awareness and reflexivity, the fieldnotes provided data regarding the micro practices that are indicative of macro practices with broader societal implications. The micro-level occurrences that produce norms in these coffee shops are both reproduced and breached. Norms that are reproduced include speaking in lowered voices and stepping outside to have phone conversations leaving belongings behind unattended, and those that are breached, such as when actors’ work-like practices obstruct those around them, reveal several dualisms relevant to this study. The identified dualisms bridge the micro-level occurrences in these coffee shops with broader macro-level implications, and are discussed next.

First, when examining micro-level interaction and macro-level implications, the affirmed and breached norms herein capture the dualism of conformity and individuality. In order to not become out of face (Goffman, 1967), “customers,” myself included, learned and followed, or reproduced, the norms of these coffee shops. However, those that breached these norms, such as draping a power cord in such a way that it created a hazardous situation for others, demonstrate individuality by those occupying these coffee shops. Yet, as both these reproduced and breached norms indicate, this coffee shop is not a place that is home, not one that is work, and not quite a third place as defined by

Oldenburg (1999), since “the first and most important function of third places is that of uniting the neighborhood” (xvii). It appears we are on the cusp of seeing the creation of a fourth place, one where the performance of sanctioned “private” work-like activities is primary, while actors navigate the new social environment and challenges that result.

This first dualism of conformity and individuality is also indicative of another in this study, that of stability and change. This is captured throughout this study through “customers” occupying these coffee shops to conduct work-like activities, some of whom are conducting paid work in the consulting and freelance capacity. These forms of paid work serve as an example of the changing nature of work and the flexibility with how and where it is conducted. Although how and where paid work is performed is changing in today’s society, the findings of this study indicate that the desire for social interaction remains stable, or unchanged. As this study explored and will also be discussed below, this desire comes in a few forms, including “liking to be around others without the need to interact with them” (M4), and those who expressed the enjoyment of “fleeting” socialization (M10) with others. It seems that while paid work allows actors to work outside of a distinct work place, with the assistance of technological advancements, some choose a location that provides the company of others.

This brings the third dualism to the fore, that of choice and control. The choice for actors to conduct work-like activities in this coffee shop was apparent, and in doing so, the trade off of losing some control over their environment, such as loud talking, music playing, or the surrender of space, was exchanged. Yet, these actors willfully and willingly situate themselves in this coffee shop, experiencing, and at times using, social

interaction shields to control both “moments” of privatized behavior and socialization when conducting work-like activities in a coffee shop.

These dualisms fit within the larger framework of the four blurred boundaries of this study, “public” and “private,” “customer” and “worker,” “home” and “work,” and “recognized” and “unrecognized” work, enhancing the theoretical contribution herein. I will now discuss my findings in regard to the constitutive view as it relates to these blurred boundaries that were identified and the four communicative concepts of interaction, identity, work, and place.

Blurred boundaries and interaction

The application of the constitutive view to the first communicative concept identified in my study, interaction, demonstrates my contribution with the finding that interaction creates the blurring of the boundaries between all four communicative concepts, which will be discussed throughout this section. These concepts are relational in nature and are foundational to the construction of meaning from the constitutive perspective (Mokros, 1996).

Bridging micro and macro perspectives, the constitutive view assists in the examination of contextualized, everyday interactions. Face-work reveals the relational component of social actors, and demonstrates how they attempt to understand their experiences through interaction and reflection. The application of the constitutive view captures the blurring of concepts, such as “publicness” and “ privateness,” and demonstrates not only the tension that exists between these concepts, but it also problematizes these concepts, not as opposites, but rather on a continuum. This facilitates an examination of how actors reflect on, and make sense of, these tensions in their

everyday lives, and how they respond to challenges when at these sites, as they “work” to manage the impression made upon others (Goffman, 1959) while acting at times as if they are in private, at home.

The finding herein regarding views of work contributed by informants, which will be discussed in a following section more fully, provides a relational and interactional perspective of work. This contribution broadens our understanding of how work is traditionally understood. The intersection and overlapping of work and interaction is a major illustration of my contribution of blurred boundaries. The three types of encounters that were identified, unplanned, planned, and opportunistic, indicate the inherent social affordance of these sites for actors who were attracted to them for the potential of social interaction and to accomplish work-like tasks. The observed tendency of actors to use other actors as resources when resolving issues created a collaborative work space and a sense of place (Geiryn, 2000), which will be discussed in a following section. This also confirms actors as social beings. I will now explore the blurred boundary between “customer” and “worker,” which leads to my next discussion of the blurred boundaries of identity.

Blurred boundaries and identity

The application of the constitutive view also substantiated the blurring of boundaries between “customer” and “worker,” demonstrating that these identities emerge and are produced in interaction. This interaction highlights how the concept of identity, and at times personhood (Mokros, 2003), are produced by actors as they create and recreate their realities and identities (Mokros, 2003). The identities of “customer” and

“worker” arose through communicative engagement with others. This indicated that both identity and the blurred boundaries that were identified are fluid and overlapping.

In this study, “customerness” was identified as both granted by the coffee shop and as emerging out of interaction with others. “Customerness” was evident in the various forms of co-customer work identified herein, such as the plugging and unplugging of power cords and monitoring the belongings of another actor. Customers seeking assistance regarding work-like activities from other customers not only challenged traditional understandings of “customer” behavior, but also demonstrated that this space is at times a collaborative environment. Again, the blurring of “customer” and “worker” when actors are engaged in collaborative work also demonstrates that these identities emerge and are produced in interaction when involved in work-like activities. Thus, social interaction and the blurring of identity are identifiable aspects of this environment that attract “customers” to these coffee shops to perform work-like activities, which I now discuss.

Blurred boundaries and work

The constitutive perspective guided the analysis of views of work reported by informants, highlighting the relational component of “work.” The range of allowable work-like activities that were both observed and reported in these coffee shops identified work, at times, as an interactional accomplishment. This range of allowable activities also indicated that symbolic analytic work, a major form of work performed in these sites, was expanded beyond that which is done solely for compensation. This identifies a further broadening of the traditional understanding of work.

The application of the constitutive view also revealed that actors performed both face-work and “unrecognized” work, namely co-customer work, indicating that work is much more than just paid labor. During interviews, unemployed informants attempted to specifically categorize their employment status, and often struggled to find a label which accurately represented their situation. These individuals considered themselves to be working, but it was clear that their work did not fit into traditional categories. This captures and highlights my contribution of the identification of additional blurred boundaries relating to work as found in this study, namely the blurring of employment and occupational status, providing additional depth to these categories. Since all of these interactions occurred in these locations, I now turn to a discussion of my findings regarding the creation of place in these coffee shops.

Blurred boundaries and place

This study demonstrated that place (Geiryn, 2000), previously summarized as the personification of space, is created and recreated in interaction between actors. Space becomes place through social interaction. Space facilitates interaction, with interaction heavily influenced by the environment. Place is continually reconstituted by “customers” through collaborative work-like activities, a form of interaction. This study also provides insights regarding how electronic devices create place in these spaces, another contribution of my research.

I previously noted that electronic devices shape and facilitate social interaction, namely through such unplanned encounters as the plugging and unplugging of power cords. However, it was also used to create awayness. Informants use electronic and non-electronic devices to meet their needs in the moment, indicating that actors utilize these

“tools” to create what Goffman (1963) describes as “social interaction shields” (p. 38), to facilitate the completion of work-like activities. Taken together, this indicates that actors not only use these “tools” to create awayness, but also to interact, creating place. While the shaping of interaction through the use of electronic devices results in the creation and recreation of place in these coffee shops, “new” electronic devices are not all that different from “older” non-electronic forms of technology, namely print materials, in being used to establish some personal privacy.

In summary, this study applies the constitutive view (Mokros & Deetz, 1996) and by doing so, demonstrates that it is a useful theoretical lens through which to examine the various blurred boundaries identified in these coffee shops. In addition, the application of this framework resulted in another contribution of my study: it also extends Mokros’ constitutive view of identity (2003) by providing an interactional approach to the daily activities of “customers” as they navigate challenges and create place (Geiryn, 2000), when occupying a coffee shop to accomplish work-like activities. The overlap of identity, particularly that of “customer” and “worker,” and interaction, work, and place, provide fertile grounds for future research, which will be explored further in a following section. I will now address the limitations and ethical considerations of this study.

Limitations and ethical considerations of the study

Methods for gathering and analyzing data typically have limitations. As stated previously, one limitation to the first method, participant observation, was that I could not always decipher the exact work-like activity that individuals were doing in these coffee shops. However, I could include and discuss a variety of work-like activities, such as the use of various electronic and non-electronic devices, in these public spaces. To quote

John Van Maanen (1988), my goal as a result of this fieldwork was to provide an ethnography that is “empirical enough to be credible, and analytical enough to be interesting” (p. 29). This first methodological component of participant observation helped to inform the second methodological component, which was interviews with actors that conduct work-like activities in these coffee shops. Not only did pairing participant observation with interviews resolve uncertainty regarding the activities that actors performed in these coffee shops, I was then able to probe regarding how they felt when they conducted work-like activities in these spaces.

Ethical considerations arose regarding both the role of the researcher and the actors who were the focus of the study. An ethical consideration of the study itself is my use of the participant observation approach. Since what I observe can never be recreated or “checked,” it was my responsibility to be accurate, detailed, and precise regarding all that I experienced in the field. Multiple moments in the observations discussed herein highlight the notion of researcher reflexivity when conducting fieldwork. As a researcher who both witnessed and was involved in events as they occurred in these coffee shops, I must acknowledge the inherent tension of the qualitative researcher: not affecting that which is observed, yet seeking to be immersed in what is studied in order to fully understand it (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995). This is further complicated by the fact that the researcher’s presence affects people’s lives.

In response to these ethical considerations, I worked diligently to perform detailed observation of actors, without appearing intrusive. This was salient during an interview when I mentioned the behavior of an informant I witnessed during an observation. While this process of member checking assisted in clarifying a question I was asking or to “jog”

the informants' memories, it was also a sensitive moment. Most mentioned how "I really watched what was going on," and then continued speaking to answer the question. Using observation to clarify interview data was very helpful, but required delicacy in practice.

A second consideration related to the ethics of this study involves actors who occupy these sites while using the affordances, but who never make a purchase. This provides both an additional dimension to our understanding of "customer," and an area for future research. Interview data revealed that a few informants admitted to never purchasing anything while occupying these sites, with most stating a face-saving rationale as to why they make a purchase. Further research, which is discussed next, could highlight how face is used when handling the ethical quandary of being a "customer," but avoiding the traditional expected customer behaviors where the success of the business depends upon customers making purchases.

Implications and agenda for future research

My contribution through observations and interviews, based on work-like activities and types of encounters, provides a foundation for ongoing ethnographic research. A productive agenda for future research could include further investigation of the communicative concepts identified in this study: interaction, identity, work, and place, and their blurred boundaries. Suggestions for additional research based upon both micro and macro findings of this study, follow in the order of the discussion of the communicative concepts.

Regarding interaction, the psychological benefits that these sites provide informants were noted in this study. Not only did actors derive satisfaction from the social affordances of this environment, but interview data provide implications for

today's changing economic landscape during a specific time of distress, namely an economic downturn. With seven informants unemployed and using this coffee shop as a location to either look for work or to begin building a new career path, it is an indication of the current state of the economy, and how actors are coping. Self-described unemployed informants mentioned that their respective coffee shop "provides a change of scenery" (M1) or, as one informant said, who frequented the coffee shop when employed and continued even after she became unemployed, it "makes [me] feel purposeful" (H4). An additional aspect of interaction relates to the invasiveness of others when conducting work-like activities in public. With these coffee shops at times becoming collaborative work spaces, an area worthy of future exploration is how actors feel when they are asked to "assist" others with work-like activities while in these sites, which would contribute additional knowledge regarding how the concepts of "privacy" and "trust" are understood in these coffee shops. Both these psycho-social benefits and consequences of interaction facilitated by such an environment are fertile areas for future research.

Regarding identity, further examination of the blurring of the identities of "customer" and "worker" could yield additional insights into both customer behaviors and the flexibility of where work is performed. This may be especially relevant and useful during an economic downturn, such as we are currently experiencing, since "unemployed" actors were also considered to be working in these sites. By continued investigation of the practice of using affordances, such as actors utilizing the coffee shop as a makeshift office, both "customer" and "worker" identity can be explored, contributing to our understanding of a transformation of traditional "customer" and

“worker” behaviors. A related area for future research pertains to management’s insights regarding the practice of “customers” not making a purchase but utilizing affordances. In other words, to what extent is it considered acceptable for “customers” not to make a purchase? Exploring the ethics of this practice from management’s perspective is a worthy area for future exploration.

Further investigation of the types of “customers” that frequent these particular coffee shops for work-like activities, an important issue of professional identity, could explore if this chain attracts a certain type of worker, and the reasons for it. The interview data also illustrate that accomplishing various work-like tasks in these sites is an attractive affordance, regardless of employment type. Notably, only two of the informants were working in a consulting capacity. One informant was unemployed and used the coffee shop to look for work, and the second consultant used the coffee shop to conduct paid work. This was an unexpected finding, with the anticipation during the data collection stage that as a result of the economic downturn, more informants would be working in freelance and consulting capacities. In addition, those who are employed full-time, such as owners of electrical and plumbing companies, both of whom were interviewed for this study, used this coffee shop for work-like activities. Further exploration regarding the types of actors that occupy coffee shops for work-like activities is an area worthy of future investigation.

Regarding work, the work-like activities that occur in these coffee shops are indicative of a transformation of behavioral routines, extending Barker’s (1963) work regarding behavior settings. A study of this transformation in behavioral routines resulted in another contribution, an interactional perspective on “customerness,” (Mokros, 2003)

as indicated by the three types of encounters identified, on how work-like activities are accomplished in interaction. This indicates that the interplay of the rapid pace with which technology is advancing, and how actors use technology to facilitate work-like tasks, provide rich and ongoing areas for future exploration as the boundaries between “publicness” and “ privateness” continue to erode. Additional exploration of the transformation of behavioral routines of “customers” in coffee shops could be accomplished by including a diary component whereby those included in this study document their work-like activities, the ‘tools’ used, and any interaction with others and how they felt about the interaction, as they occupy this space. Using the completed diaries as an entry point to clarify activities performed, interviews could be conducted with those who occupy this space. This also provides an opportunity to gather additional data regarding the emotional benefits of why actors occupy this coffee shop.

In respect to the blurring of boundaries, based upon the finding that working in a social environment is especially attractive to customers, future research should also explore work settings which provide blurred, or porous, environments where both work-like tasks and social interaction can occur. Since all informants, regardless of employment status, identified sociality as a satisfying aspect of frequenting this coffee shop, it indicates that interacting with, or being around others, is a major source of satisfaction for all actors. It points out that social satisfaction is appealing regardless of profession, characterizing the coffee shop as a sanctuary and an oasis, even for those with less of a preference for interacting with others but who nevertheless derive satisfaction from being around them, confirming the concept of place in this study. From a business perspective, other public spaces should continue to explore the benefits of this blurred

environment for both management and customers, as this could lead to benefits for businesses and customers alike. Lastly, while the blurred boundary between “customer” and “worker” in this study provided one perspective regarding the question asked at the outset, “How is work accomplished in interaction?,” future research utilizing the constitutive view could provide additional insight into work as a collaborative and interactional accomplishment. These areas for future research would be logical outgrowths generated by this study.

Concluding summary

In conclusion, this dissertation examined the interaction between “publicness” and “privateness” and the blurred boundaries produced by this interaction, as it occurred in three coffee shops. Within this context of the blurred boundaries between public and private, and the activities of those who utilize these spaces, it identified and analyzed the blurred boundaries of “customer” and “worker,” “home” and “work,” and “recognized” and “unrecognized” work.

A microanalysis of observational and interview data produced my three overarching contributions, namely the identification of the boundaries that are blurred in these coffee shops when “customers” perform work-like activities, and secondly, the identification of three types of encounters as “customers” interact regarding work-like activities, as they navigate challenges and create place. This analysis informed an understanding of how “customerness” shapes everyday interaction in these coffee shops, providing insights regarding interaction through the use of electronic devices as it creates and recreates place in these coffee shops, my third contribution.

This study also examined the reproduced and breached norms of these coffee shops, and connections and reciprocity between the concepts of interaction, identity, work, and place, and the blurred boundaries identified. This was accomplished throughout by the application of the constitutive view, whereby the blurred boundaries were identified and their significance substantiated through the emergence of “customer” identity when involved in unplanned, planned, and opportunistic encounters. The limitations and ethical considerations were also reviewed, and the implications and agenda for future research were suggested. Through the analysis of “customerness,” this dissertation demonstrated that we are evolving toward blurred realms of “publicness” and “privateness” facilitated by technological affordances, providing macro-level implications, resulting in another notable contribution, that of dualisms, based on the micro-level findings herein. The application of the constitutive view can be a useful lens for continued exploration of these evolving realms.

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<http://www.state.nj.us/education/finance/rda/dfg.shtml>

Oxforddictionaries.com

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Coding sheet for participant observations

Location _____

Observation # _____

Examples of work-like behaviors:

Instances of interaction involving work-like activities:

Type(s) of electronic devices used (e. g., laptops, mobile phones, portable music players, electronic tablets, ear buds):

Instances regarding how actors worked around “problems” (e.g., environmental constraints) in acceptable ways:

Policies**Formal polices (e.g., posted; enforced):**

Violations of formal polices:

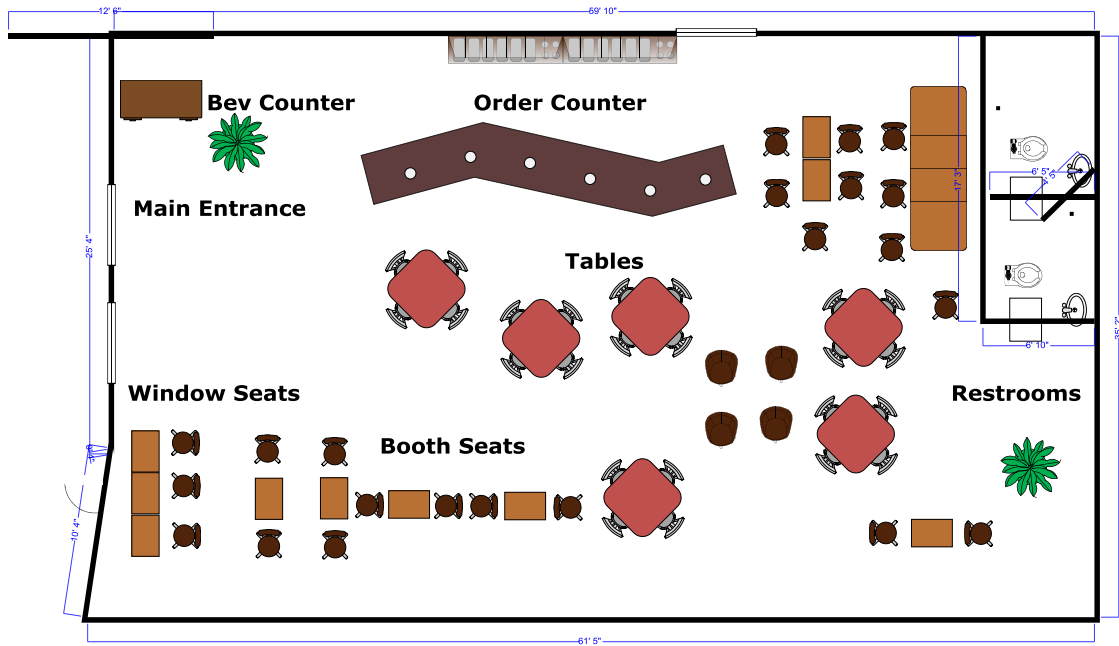
Informal polices:

Violations of informal polices:

APPENDIX B

Figure 1.1

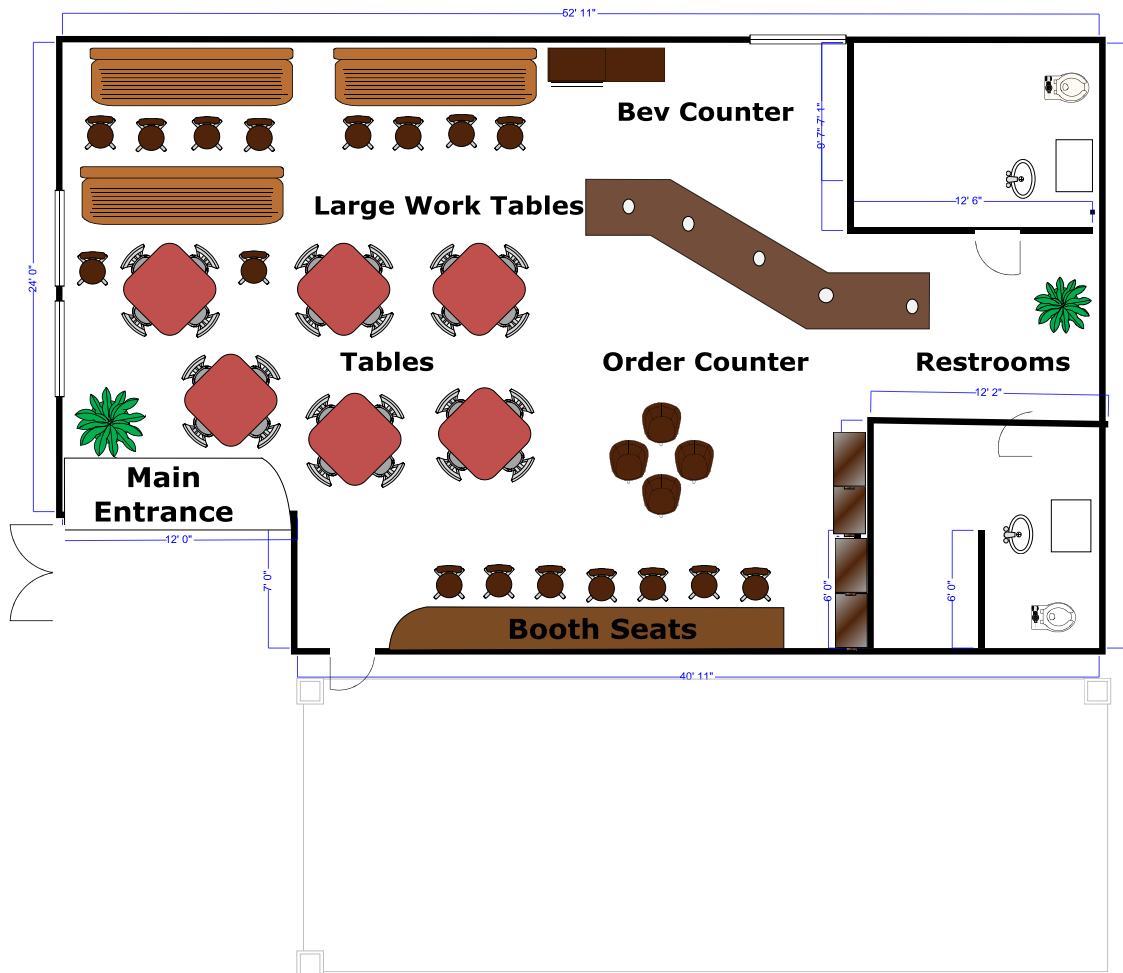
Map of Upper Shop *not an exact rendering



APPENDIX C

Figure 1.2

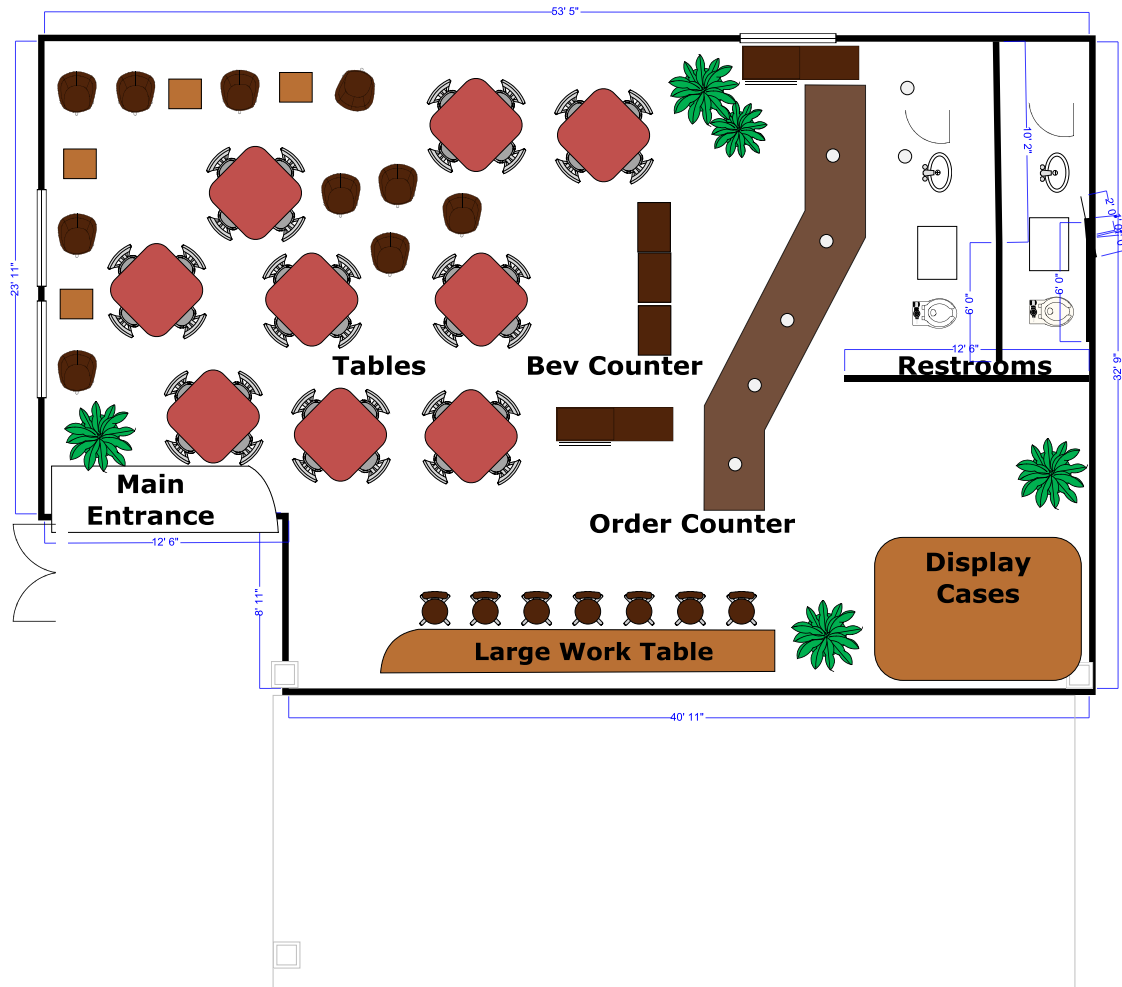
Map of Middle Shop *not an exact rendering



APPENDIX D

Figure 1.3

Map of Highway Shop *not an exact rendering



APPENDIX E

Informed consent letter for interviews Blurred boundaries in contemporary work spaces

Purpose of Study

I am conducting research for my doctoral dissertation at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey. My research examines what type of work people do in public spaces, and why they choose to work where they do. I am also interested in how people feel when working where they do.

I am collecting information through interviews. I hope you will sign this document in order to participate in an interview that will discuss where you do work. The interview should last from 30 to 45 minutes. I plan to interview 20-30 people altogether.

Participation in this interview is voluntary, and you are free to terminate your participation at any time. I am only interested in what you wish to share with me. Should you at any point decide not to participate in this interview, simply inform me of your decision.

Potential Benefit to Participants and/or to Society

I hope that you will enjoy the interview, and perhaps gain a better sense of where, when, what, and why you perform work where you do.

Confidentiality

Your identity and responses will be kept confidential; you will not be personally identified in the research report. Also, since all of your comments are confidential, nothing you report to me will have any effect on your employment. Most results will be reported as summary data, and any individual responses reported will not be linked to your personal identity. Results will be used for academic research purposes only.

Permission

If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact the IRB Administrator at Rutgers University, the State University of New Jersey, Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, Office of Research and Sponsored Program, 3 Rutgers Plaza, New Brunswick, NJ 08901-8559. Phone: 732-932-0150 ext. 2104, Email: humansubjects@orsp.rutgers.edu.

Signing this form acknowledges that your participation is voluntary and that you grant your permission to use your interview for analysis:

Participant's Name _____

Participant's Signature _____ Date _____

Thank you for your interest and participation in this research project. A copy of the research results will be available to you at your request. If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact me at the Department of Communication, SC&I.

Participant's Initials _____

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APPENDIX F

Interview Schedule

Pre-interview discussion: 5 minutes.

- Informal introduction
- Consent forms (confidentiality, change of names in the final report)

Introduction:

I am conducting research for my doctoral dissertation at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey. My research examines what type of work people do in public spaces, and why they choose to work where they do. I am also interested in how people feel when working where they do. I will take notes as we talk, later typing up our conversation for analysis. What questions do you have about the purpose of the research and the procedure?

General Semi-Structured Interview Schedule

General:

1. **Primary question:** What do you consider to be work?
2. **Primary question:** What kind of work do you do?

Follow-up questions:

- a. Are you employed full or part-time?
- b. Self-employed?
- c. How long have you been in your line of work?
- d. Did your line of work require specific academic training? If so, what?
- e. Do you have another job? If so, what is it?

3. **Primary question:** What specific tasks does your work consist of?

Follow-up question:

- a. Aspects of job relational oriented? (e.g., lunches, dinners, drinks, networking)

Work Location

4. **Primary question:** Where do you usually work?

Follow-up questions:

- a. Work at home? If so, how often?
- b. Family mind?

- c. Employer okay with your working other than in office?
- d. Kinds of public spaces? Ask for specific names, if not provided. If so, how often?

Motivations

5. Primary Question: Why do you work in public spaces?

Follow-up Questions:

- a.. Was this your decision/idea or someone else's?
- b. What makes the places you have worked in attractive?
- c. Does working in public spaces provide you with specific benefits that other locations do not?
- d. Do you have a home office and yet you still choose to work in public? How about a work office?

6. Primary Question: How would you best describe your experiences when working in the public spaces you mentioned?

Follow-up Questions:

- a. What are examples of things you do here that are and are not work?
- b. Do you find you are able to blend work tasks with life tasks while in these public spaces?
- c. Think of the public space that you most frequently occupy, and complete this sentence. I choose to work in this location because....
- d. Is there any environmental factor that would make you choose to work in one location over another?
- e. Would you like to work in public more than you are able to at present? If so, why?

Face-work

7. Primary Question: When working in public, are there specific things you do to create and maintain a professional work identity?

Follow-up Questions:

- a. Do you feel it necessary to be viewed by others as a professional who is working in a public space?
- b. Do you answer your cell phone in a specific way when receiving a work call in public?

Patterns

8. Primary Question: How do others react when you tell them you often work in public spaces?

Follow-up Questions:

- a. Are you comfortable in these locations?
- b. Are you inclined to talk to others?
- c. Is there anything that you would not do in these locations? If so, why?
- d. Do you always purchase something if you are occupying space in a location?
- e. Would you ever work in a location and use the restroom but never purchase anything?
- f. Do you find it important to have a specific table or location where you like to work?
- g. Do environmental factors, such as talking or music, bother you when working in public?
- h. Do you feel it is acceptable to work in this location for as long or as briefly as you need?
- i. What kinds of tools are necessary for you to complete desired tasks?
- j. Is there a tool or device that you would use in public but not in your home or work office?

Closing:

Thank you for your time. Your input has been extremely helpful.

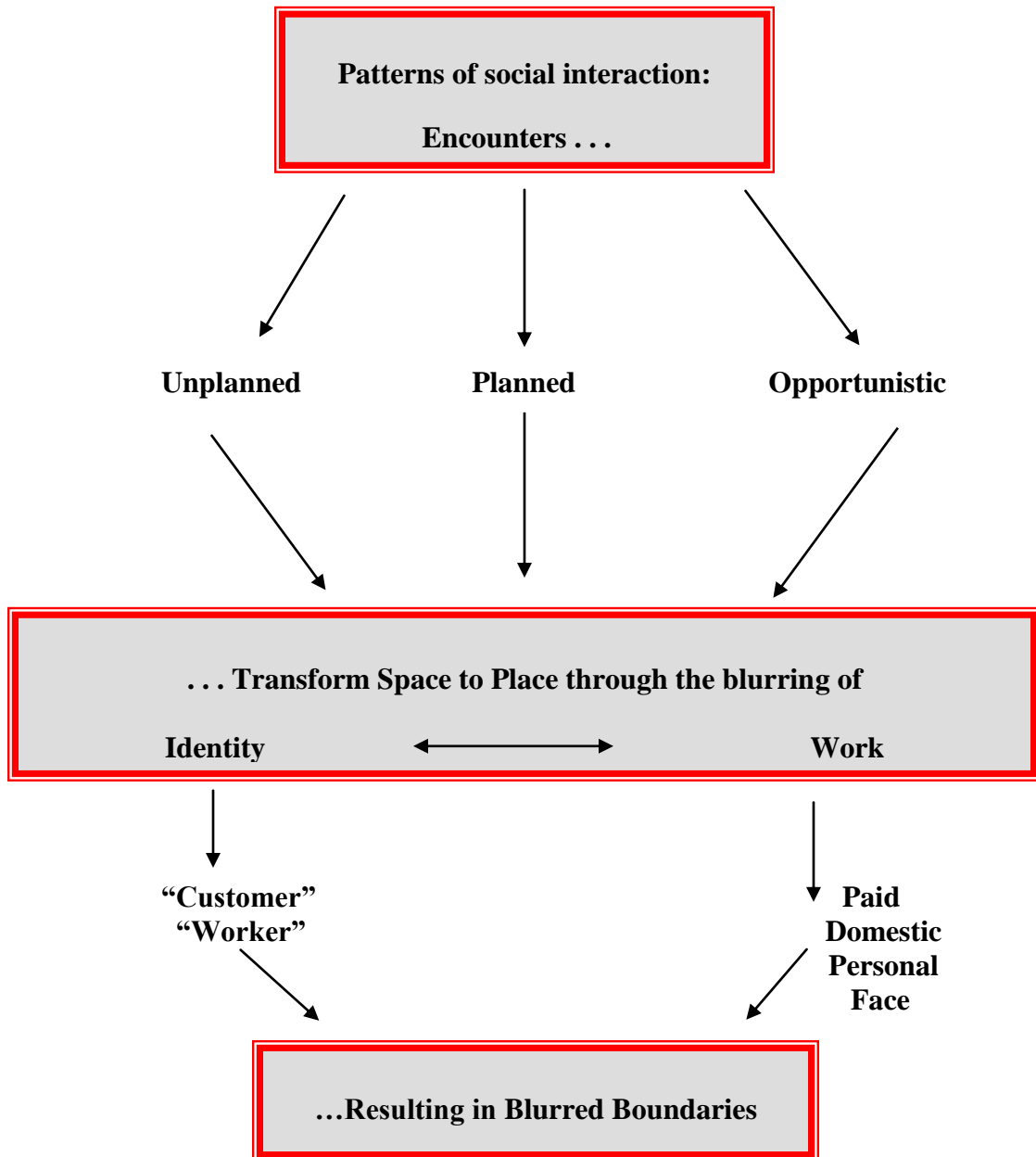
APPENDIX G Table 1
Demographic data of informants

Location	Informant Code	Gender	Age Range	Employment Status	Type of Employment/Field
Middle	M1	M	50s	FT/SELF	Owner, Plumbing
	M2	M	30s	FT	Sales, Real Estate
	M3	F	30s	UN	Writer, Short Plays
	M4	M	40s	UN	IT Consultant
	M5	F	60s	RET	N/A
	M6	M	60s	FT/SELF	Sales, Men's Clothing
	M7	F	20s	PT	Tutor
	M8	M	60s	FT	College Professor
	M9	F	50s	FT/LEAVE	College Professor
	M10	M	60s	FT/SELF	Owner, Dentist
Upper	U1	F	20s	PT/STU	Tutor
	U2	F	30s	FT	Administrative Asst.
	U3	F	60s	RET	N/A
	U4	M	40s	FT/SELF	Financial Consultant
	U5	M	20s	PT/STU	Clerk, Bookstore
	U6	M	20s	UN	Business
	U7	M	60s	UN	Sales, Acquisitions
	U8	M	30s	UN	Sales, Products
	U9	F	30s	FT	Sales, Tech Products
	U10	F	30s	UN	Public Relations
Highway	H1	F	20s	PT/STU	Service, Food
	H2	M	30s	FT	Sales, Construction
	H3	F	40s	FT	Sales, Products
	H4	F	40s	UN	Sales, Products
	H5	F	30s	FT	Service, Tech Products
				PT	Clerk
	H6	M	40s	FT	IT
				PT	IT
	H7	M	40s	FT/SELF	Writer, Screenplays
				PT	Clerical
	H8	M	50s	FT/SELF	Owner, Electrical
	H9	F	20s	PT/STU	Sales, Products
	H10	F	20s	PT/STU	Service, Food
					Total Informants: 30

APPENDIX H-Figure 2.1

The dynamics of blurred boundaries

Patterns of social interaction, identified through three types of encounters regarding work-like activities, transform space into place through the blurring of identity and work. This results in the blurring of boundaries between “publicness” and “ privateness,” explored through the erosion of the boundaries between “customer” and “worker,” “home” and “work,” and “recognized” and “unrecognized” work. These dynamics are represented in the flow chart below.



“Public” and “Private” “Customer” and “Worker” “Home” and “Work”
“Recognized” work and “Unrecognized” work