Third Year Special Research Project

Project Title: An exploratory account of how young women negotiate agency and value within the service industry in Ireland.

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Date submitted: 27/4/2017

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Abstract

The following research project is an exploratory account of young women negotiate agency and value within the service industry in Ireland. My focus here was on young women between the ages of 18 and 30. I carried out 8 qualitative interviews with participants from the retail, hospitality and service sectors. These young women worked in shops, hotels, bars and care homes. My research question was to discover how young women negotiate agency and value through their interactions with colleagues and customers. I found that relationships to management as well as involvement with customers heavily influenced how these young women saw the nature of their work. Other topics that arose from the research included; gender division of labour within the workplace, gender segregation, gender inequality and the commodification of personal appearance. Underlying this research are various concepts that demonstrate how young women, especially those who work part time, are perceived as being weak and being of low status by customers and by management who will take advantage of this power imbalance. I have undertaken a feminist approach to this research project, so I have placed emphasis on various instances of gender socialisation, gender inequality and the mobilisation of femininity.

Key words: agency, gender inequality, gender segregation, harassment, part time work, service work.

Introduction:

My topic is on women's agency within the workforce in Ireland. More specifically, how women negotiate their agency within the workforce in Ireland. My goal is to focus on young women aged 18-30 who work in what are socially considered the lowest forms of employment within the labour market. These women are employed as cleaners, deli workers, cashiers, bartenders and carers. The organizations they work in include pubs, shops, off licenses and nursing homes. Therefore, my topic will highlight women's experience within the workforce in minimum wage, low skill jobs.

I want to explain how young women negotiate agency and value in their jobs, which often consist of zero hour contracts, minimum wage, low skilled work. This research project will focus particularly on the micro-political, repetitive, banal interactions between employees, customers and co-workers that happen within the retail and service industry daily. What I am concerned with in this research project, is the lived experience of these young women in their minimum wage jobs. In the retail and service industry, work is organized as a network of gendered social relations and social practices. I want to explore what it is like for these women who for whom work is a gendered institution that expects them to perform or over-exaggerate some aspects of their gender. I want to produce knowledge on how these women create or negotiate agency and value in their interactions with their co-workers as well as with the customers. My research question is how women negotiate agency and value in their jobs through their interactions with their co-workers and with customers. My sub questions will focus on how employees cope with customer harassment and how they handle situations where a customer has behaved inappropriately. I also want to discover how these participants feel about not being able to react to harassment, and whether they think it's good for their mental health in the long term.

My research will link to the seminar as it focuses on how women will negotiate agency and value in the labour market. I want to discover whether young women can negotiate power and agency from their interactions within the organization. Previous literature suggests that workers, both male and female, in the service and hospitality industries have suffered harassment which has a cumulative effect on the well-being of the individual employee and the work atmosphere. This is a consequence of the neo-liberal, self-policing customer. This is important because the proliferation of gender stereotypes and placing employees into gendered roles in the workplace helps to maintain unequal treatment of the sexes within the workplace. In Ireland, women are often paid less wages for working the same kind of jobs as men. In the retail and service industry in Ireland, the workforce is overwhelmingly female. This can increase the propagation of an unconscious gender bias, which believes that women are best suited to low skill, minimum wage, precarious emotional work with the public. Evidence has shown that while employees have orchestrated counter behaviours to negative or discourteous interactions, social and organizational norms may stop them from acting in a way that is perceived as being unsuitable for a work environment. That is, getting upset or angry. One thing I hope to discover is whether having their emotions kept under scrutiny and surveillance by peers, supervisors and customers, influences employees.

Literature Review:

Harassment:

I chose Good and Cooper's article because it examined how employees in the service and hospitality industry dealt with sexual harassment and whether these procedures had any significant effect on the individual's well-being, as well as any effect on the customer's propensity for abuse in the future (Good and Cooper:2016). The main research question was how employees responded to sexual harassment and attempted to explain why they reacted in

certain ways. The concept is that employees in part time jobs often dismiss harassment or unwanted behaviour because they don't think it is necessary to report it as it was only part time work (Good and Cooper:2016) Another concept is that employees dismiss this kind of behaviour by making excuses on behalf of the customer. The theory used was a collection of previous studies as well as ethnographies. The methodology was qualitative interviews with male and female employees who had experienced sexual harassment from customers at work. This piece of work is significant to my research project as it illustrates how employees defect sexual harassment and how interactions embedded in the organizations attitude towards customer satisfaction can have negative consequences for the employee.

Good and Cooper argue that employee responses to sexual harassment are heavily influenced by the norms of the working conditions of the organization (Good and Cooper:2016). They theorise that the reason why so many instances of harassment are ignored is because employees don't know the regulations surrounding the issue itself. Part time employees are often never informed about grievance procedures (Good and Cooper:2016). They state that the reason why many employees don't take the harassment case further is because the job is only temporary or part time. Good and Cooper argue that normative work behaviour and attitudes towards customers may blur the line between dealing with customer behaviour and dealing with sexual harassment (Good and Cooper:2016)

Korczynski and Evans suggest that the attitude of the management within an organisation can correlate to the employee's lack of ability to negotiate agency and value (2013). The main research question being asked is does customer abuse relate to the managements promotion of the norm of customer sovereignty? Authors draw on previous studies and ethnographies to highlight the theory surrounding the issue. The method used was fuzzy set qualitative data analysis. The concept explored was how management handles abuse accusations made by employees can often legitimize the abuse of the employees by the customers (Korczynski and

Evans:2013). There has been evidence from studies that the worker who challenges the abusive customer is demoted, which also is an example of the legitimization of abuse. The weak position of the employee is strongly embedded in the service industry. This weak position of labour and low status of service workers puts them at a disadvantaged position of deference when dealing with customers (Korczynski and Evans:2013). My reason for picking this article is because it makes the claim that workers can contest to the norm of employee deference because they are the most vulnerable party involved and are more aware of the illegitimacy.

Good and Cooper once again are relevant to my research project as they carried out interviews with students working part time in Australia. They examined what methods of coping with harassment are used by employees in the absence of 'employee voice' (LePine and Van Dyne:1998). They stated that 'informal' voice is widely used in the service industry as often employees have no union representation (Good and Cooper:2014). They state that despite there being a significant amount of research about employee harassment, especially sexual harassment, there has been a lack of data that focuses on the micro level (Good and Cooper:2014). The authors state that due to the perceived low status of service workers, employees have come to expect harassment as being a regular aspect of the job (Good and Cooper:2014). The silence surrounding harassment is perpetuated as there is ambiguity as to what qualifies as harassment (Good and Cooper:2014). They use the phrase 'non-voicing mechanism' to describe how employees deal with customer harassment. This is when employees don't complain to the management about the issue, but instead discuss it with their colleagues. They are coping with the harassment, but they are not contesting it (Good and Cooper:2014). Thus, the harassment can continue. They end the article by claiming that sexual harassment awareness should target customers and promote a zero-tolerance policy towards this kind of behaviour (Good and Cooper:2014).

Feminist Standpoint:

I have chosen Letherby's essay as it illustrates some of the methods used by feminist researchers and gives examples of how sociological research was focused on the male experience in the past. Letherby states that as a researcher, I must make sure that whatever work I create can stand in opposition and in criticism of other sociological research (2015). Quantitative research is for when we want to generalize about the wider population, which is not my end goal with my research project. Letherby insists that for a feminist researcher, it is imperative for all narratives collected from respondents to be context specific. For feminist researchers, our goal should be to create research knowledge for women, rather than about women (2015). The implications of this mean that as a feminist researcher, we cannot be separate and objective in our understandings of our respondents. Letherby's argument is significant to my research project as it highlights how sociological research has been skewed towards male experience in the past, and it has been called upon for social scientists to actively try and gather data on a wider range of respondents. My aim is to draw attention to the issue of young women and how their experiences within the service and hospitality industries in Ireland, which I feel has been mostly overlooked.

Aesthetic Labour:

I have chosen Wharhurst and Nickson's article because it explores the nature of emotional, aesthetic and sexualized labour at the organizational level in service and hospitality industries. In the article, they draw on previous literature that discusses emotional and aesthetic labour. They then make some arguments about how management uses employees aesthetic labour to enhance corporate profits (Wharhurst and Nickson:2009).The concept Wharhurst and Nickson promoted in the article was that employees often undertake aesthetic labour of their own accord as they perceive it to help them along their career path. They

believe that dressing well, having the 'right look' enabled them to earn higher wages and progress through the job hierarchy quicker. Aesthetic labour turned into sexualized labour, as management prescribes employees to behave in a certain way to promote the company's image overall (Wharhurst and Nickson:2009). This tactic is often employed through marketing and advertising, rather than through direct labour. This article relates to my research project as it explores how management can use their employee's physical appearance to enhance the success and profits of an organization.

<u>Emotional Labour:</u>

I chose Wharton's article because it encapsulates the theory on how individuals must organize their feelings and how emotional regulation affects these individuals (2009). Wharton draws heavily on Hochschild's work on emotional labour (1983). Wharton's main concept is that emotional work as well as caring work is highly feminized, therefore so is emotional labour. She writes that social structures and institutions impose certain restrictions and constraints on employees (Wharton:2009). One aspect of service work is that employees must manage their emotional state to recreate the desired emotional response in the customer. She speculates that in their interactions with customers, employees are expected to embrace company values that put the consumer above the worker in all aspects (Wharton:2009). Wharton's article is relevant to my special research topic as it provides critical theory on how service work is highly feminized. The employees that work here must keep any un-desirable emotions, like anger or sadness, under control. Wharton also asserts that deference has become a requirement for employees working in the service industry.

<u>Agency:</u>

LePine and Van Dyne define 'employee voice' as non-required behaviour of employees which emphasises the expression of constructive challenge, not just criticism or complaining

(LePine and Van Dyne:1998). They theorise that employee voice is distinct from affiliate behaviour which serves to improve relationships, whereas employee voice may challenge or upset personal relationships (LePine and Van Dyne:1998). This article is relevant to my research as it examines the reasons why employees do or don't exercise their voice within the workplace. Employees may have a positive outlook on their relationship with their manager, but still don't voice their concerns when something is awry within the work environment. LePine and Van Dyne suggest that employee voice is positively correlated with job satisfaction (1998). When employees feel that their work situation has meaning, they tend to personally engage (LePine and Van Dyne:1998). When they don't perceive positive returns on their physical, emotional and cognitive labour, employees may become withdrawn (LePine and Van Dyne:1998). My study relates to this work as I want to discover to what extent are my participants engaged in their work environments as this has a direct effect on how they negotiate agency and value.

Donaghey et al provide an alternate reading of employee silence that focuses on the role of management and not the motivation of the employee (Donaghey et al:2011). They argue that employee silence is perpetuated through non-union membership as well as agenda setting and institutional structures put in place by the management (Donaghey et al:2011). They state that the literature surrounding the concept of employee silence is relatively new. They argue that often it is to the benefit of management to perpetuate employee silence and keep the status quo (Donaghey et al:2011). Employees may remain silent as they are distrustful of their inferior position in the relationship with management and the frontier of control that exists (Donaghey et al:2011). Managers may view employee voice as a means of increasing productivity and efficiency, not necessarily about the representation of employee issues (Donaghey et al:2011). This article states that literature on employee silence is relatively

new, so it will be interesting to discover how my participants voice their concerns within the workplace, if they voice them at all.

Division of Labour:

Cranford's study dealt with the lived experiences of Latin American janitorial workers. She carried out this research through interviews and participant observation to explain the reasons behind gender solidarity within this work sector. Organizational structures allow workers to reinforce gender divisions (Cranford:2012). She states that there is no solidarity in workplaces where there are unequal gender organizations (Cranford:2012). Employers gender-type jobs by drawing on dominant ideals of masculinity and femininity (Cranford:2012). Cranford found in her study that employers use of gender segregation can lead to conflict and a lack of solidarity (Cranford:2012). She also found that employees would mobilize their masculinity or femininity to get out of doing certain jobs (Cranford:2012). This, in turn, reinforced gender segregation (Cranford:2012). Gender segregation lead to limited opportunities for social cohesion between men and women (Cranford:2012). This article will be of significant use in my analysis as one of my sub questions is about how men and women are treated differently within the workplace. I want to examine the perceived differences in 'men's jobs' and 'women's jobs' within the workplace and how the participants feel about it.

Methodology:

The methodology most suitable to my research question is qualitative research which I will carry out through conducting interviews with my participants. My preference for qualitative research for carrying out my research project because it will enable me to collect subjective, content rich data which is what my research topic focuses on. My research question is how young women negotiate agency and value through their interactions with co-workers and

customers in zero-hour contract, minimum wage, low skill jobs. The most effective way to gather this kind of data for analysis, is through qualitative research methods that will focus on the individual experiences of these participants. Semi structured, one on one interviews with the participants will build trust between researcher and participant and allow the participants to be comfortable in giving an account of their own experiences as young women at the bottom of the hierarchy of the Irish labour force "Methods, such as participant observation, intensive interviewing, and focus groups, that are designed to capture social life as participants experience it rather than in categories the researcher predetermines", (Chambliss and Schutt 200:2015). My ontological position is that I am a constructivist. I believe that there is no one definite scientific truth, but that there are many different interpretations of the social world in which we live. What I am concerned with in my research, is to understand how participants interpret their lives and create meaning (O'Leary 7:2014). My epistemological position is that I am an interpretivist. To gain understandings of the social world I must investigate different subjective understandings of that world. Therefore, qualitative data is my preferred method of data collection for my research topic, I am interested in the depths of subjective experience for these individuals. I will be taking a gender sensitive approach to this research (Letherby:2015).

Sampling:

I have drawn upon my own networks to gather up participants for my research project. I have gathered information from young women in my own networks. They are particularly relevant to my own research project as many of the research participants are working in jobs that are highly feminized such as retail and service work. I have written up a list of potential themes and topics relating to my research question that I have discussed with my participants, and attempt to structure the interview around these themes while trying to keep it as conversational as possible to get the most information from the participants.

I have carried out eight interviews with young women (aged 18-30), and have collected substantial data for my research project. I did not be carry out participant observation as the nature of the workplaces the research participants work were organized in such a way that I was not be able to sit and observe them for lengthy periods of time. I did not carry out data collection through surveys either because my research question focuses expressly on subjective experience so I believe that using interviews as my method of data collection is more suitable.

I allowed participants to choose where they wish to have the interview as their comfort in their surroundings is crucial. For the participants that I personally know very well, I either used my own home or the home of the participant as the site for the interview as it was quiet and created an atmosphere of comfort and informality for the participant. I gained access to these participants using my own kinship networks and through my own social networks. I interviewed some of my own co-workers who work alongside me in the service industry. I spoke to other young women who work in the service and retail industry. They work in places like shops, pubs, care homes and hotels.

Name	Age	Workplace
Nikki	20	Independent shop
Ginny	28	Franchised retail establishment
Ally	20	Bakery/Café
Eileen	21	Residents home
Niamh	20	Hotel
Kristin	19	Pub
Bonnie	19	Hotel
Chris	21	Hotel

Ethics:

Some ethical issues arose as I interviewed my own co-workers and they had apprehension towards telling me their experiences they previously kept private. Participants may experience fear or anxiety over expressing their dissatisfaction with their treatment at work by co-workers and customers. I assured all participants that any information they shared will be kept under strict observation. I informed them that they will be kept anonymous through every stage of the research project.

Subject Position:

My chosen methodology is of significant use as qualitative data allows for the study of in depth subjective experiences, rich in content (Chambliss and Schutt 232:2015). My methodology is also sensitive to the context of the participants. I am aware of how a participant's gender, social class, sexuality and ethnicity may affect how they interpret their subjective experiences (Chambliss and Schutt 232:2015). I have taken a feminist perspective to this research project, as I believe that gender and gender performance especially plays a crucial role in the organization of the retail and service industry (Letherby 2015). I acknowledge that my research is limited as I will only be interviewing eight participants at most as I am under time constraints. Therefore, my conclusions about young women in the labour force are not generalizable to a wider population. There is the possibility that my research project may contain some of my own values and interpretations about the precarious nature of work for young women in Ireland. My own position on the subject is that I believe service work to be especially draining on young women. As a feminist, I feel I am more aware of the gender expectations that are at play when I am working. As a young woman who works in the retail industry, this research project and its findings are very significant to me. However, I must keep my own subject position on the matter out of my research project to

the best of my ability. The fact that I am a young woman in a minimum wage job also means that participants may feel more comfortable speaking to me as there is a chance we may have some shared experiences.

<u>Conclusion:</u>

This research project is sociologically significant as it will be exploring gender stereotypes within the Irish workforce, mainly the retail and service industries. It will focus on how gender power relations are maintained and resisted against within the workplace. These gender inequalities are often maintained through the micro political interactions that occur on an everyday basis within the retail and service industry. Therefore, I will be paying close attention to how participants adhere to, and resist against gendered expectations of how they behave in conversations, especially with male customers.

I must carry out 8-10 interviews with women aged 18-30, who I know from my own workplace, are members of my own social networks, or who have been referred to me by another participant. All these women are employed in the retail and service industry, and are actively working in pubs, shops, hotels and care homes.

I will be using qualitative methods as I am interested in the context of each of the participant's subjective experiences of working as young women in industries where the workforce is highly feminized. One on one, semi structured interviews with each of the participants, will enable me to collect sufficient data to answer my research question. My concern within this research project will be with each of these participant's subjective experiences and how they contextualize their jobs within their lives. I hope to discover what methods are employed by young women in different factions of the retail and service industry to make their experience of work more bearable. They may need to undertake such measures when they are being harassed or discriminated against by customers or co-workers. Such

methods may be employed because participants feel they are have little emotional support in the workplace, and therefore they must create their own means of coping with negative experience or figuring out how to put a stop to harassment from customers who repeat unwanted or discriminatory behaviour towards them. I will be taking a feminist perspective as I believe that the lived experience of being a woman in these highly-feminized jobs is imperative to fully understanding the subjective experiences of these women.

I will try to focus on the intersectionality of gender and class within my research project. One interesting aspect may be to see how young women of a higher social class react to working in the retail and service industry, as these are generally socially perceived as being lower class jobs.

Findings and Discussion:

Gendered Division of Labour:

Most of the research participants are currently working in all female establishments. When questioned about the gendered nature of their work, some participants believed that the work was better suited to women. They believed that women were more social and had more patience and understanding as part of a long organic process wherein it was previously the duty of the wife to maintain social bonds while the husband acted as sole breadwinner. Nikki believes that her duties are better suited to females as males would lack the patience needed to do her job.

Nikki: Like… for instance, sometimes people don't come into the shop. Like, I have to get their paper or their milk and bring them out because the older person in the car hasn't got the energy to climb out and go into the shop…I don't think a man would have the patience like he'd get frustrated quicker.

Ally described how during the previous summer there was one male worker in the café, but he had left once college began in September. She saw his presence in the workplace differently, and didn't think him as capable as the other female workers.

Interviewer: So, tell me about how Michael was at work.

Ally: Well I mean he was a grand worker like he got the same training as the rest of us but…Well, I just don't think he was as good. Like watching him clean or sweep the floor or make sandwiches you'd just know it's not something he's used to doing. So, say someone would come in and they'd order a coffee and a sandwich. Michael would make the coffee and ring in the order on the till and one of us would make up the sandwich…We used him for messages as well.

Interviewer: Can you elaborate on that?

Ally: Well…the boss would be like "Oh just get Michael to tip down to the shop to pick up whatever". So, he'd go over the street like down to the shop when we needed milk or bread or butter. He would go to the bank on messages as well when we needed the money… We knew we could spare him. Even if the shop got mad we knew we could cope without him.

What is happening in this instance is that both the management and staff are perpetuating the division of labour between Michael and the rest of the female staff. In the unspoken arrangement between Michael and the female workers, they would attend the domestic task of making the sandwiches, while he carried out the more mechanical task of making the coffee at the coffee machine and the mathematical task of ringing in the order on the till. The managers used Michael as an errand boy, tasked with leaving the shop to go and buy supplies or make trips to the bank. The managers knew as well as their staff that Michael's work was expendable and the female workers could cope with his absence as they perceived themselves as being more efficient at their job. These are insidious methods carried out by both staff and management to perpetuate the gendered division of labour in the workplace so that females carry out the more domestic tasks of preparing food and cleaning while the solitary male worker does the more mechanical and mathematical tasks and becomes the errand boy.

By doing so, gender stereotypes and divisions of labour are being perpetuated. Through these methods, the workers are complicit in the gendered division of labour. They have essentialized the concept that women are naturally better suited to service and retail work and for these workers their own subordination within these jobs has become unproblematised.

More importantly however, this is an example of these women claiming agency in their jobs. By claiming expertise over male staff members, they are pulling back some gendered, feminine power. My argument is that this is a coping mechanism for these female workers as they try to pull back some gender power in positions that generally require women to be deferential. Unfortunately, this is a fallacy as even though they are claiming a sort of superiority the stereotype of women being better suited to service or retail work has not been challenged and remains firmly internalised. Hence, service and retail work remains both highly feminized and low paying.

When asked about whether there was a difference in men's jobs and women's jobs in the workplace, a significant number of participants responded that the heavy lifting is often left to the men. Setting up for weddings involved a lot of heavy lifting and moving around tables and chairs, and this was primarily done by male staff.

Niamh: Like the boys…they're handy cos there's a lot of heavy work involved in…the hospitality as well…Clearing the dancefloor at the end of the night…like they couldn't expect me to lift out tables. So, it's really handy to have the boys working there so they can, like, put the tables down, folding the legs, rolling them out the door and up the stairs. Which like, they couldn't really expect the girls to do that.

Kristin also preferred that her male co-workers do the heavy lifting.

Kristin: The only things that would be different for me like, I don't really like going out and doing the ice bucket and all that cos I do be struggling to carry it back like it does be heavy once its full. So, the lads would be like 'No, I'll do that', you know that kind of stuff. And then I find as well when people start to get rowdy…I kinda take a step back and let the lads interfere cos like I don't think I'd be able to stop them which isn't great like I should have the authority to be like "Right lads stop it" and they should like, stop… but really, but if people…when I start seeing them getting a bit rowdy I go and get one of the lads to sort it so. That would be the only two things, apart from that its general enough.

Interviewer: So, what was your reasoning for stepping back?

Kristin: I think that, it…they wouldn't take me seriously. If anything was happening like the lads could like get in and break it up or something like this. But then youd have little me be like "Now come on and stop please" and then I'd be younger than them as well. So…I don't think they'd listen to me as much as they'd listen to one of the lads who had been there longer.

Interviewer: And how does that make you feel? Not being taken seriously?

Kristin: It's kinda annoying like I'd love to be able to sort that stuff out myself. But that's in me, my own self. Like I don't think id have the confidence to kinda shout and be like "Right lads either take it

outside or…". Y'know? I don't think it has to do with the workplace cos like JJ said to me "Don't be afraid to put your foot down and tell them".

Good and Cooper state that getting a male colleague to intervene is a method used by employees when they are being harassed (Good and Cooper:311:2014). Kristin wasn't being harassed, but she needed to defer to her male colleagues as they were able to mobilize their masculinity (Cranford:157:2012) and intervene in these fights, which she herself is unable to do. She was mobilizing her femininity to avoid carrying out certain tasks she felt she was unable to do effectively (Cranford:157:2012).

What all these descriptions are demonstrating is how work is organised according to gender. Hence, the work in these organisations has become gender segregated. In Cranford's study of gender solidarity among Latin American janitorial workers (Cranford:2012), she found that management was often open to changes in work organization and that this could lead to instances where some workplaces have tasks that are gender segregated (Cranford:156:2012). Workers called upon ideals about essential gender differences to resist being assigned certain tasks (Cranford:157:2012). She named this process 'gender difference resistance' (Cranford:157:2012). These ideals about essential gender difference reinforced gender segregation and gender inequality (Cranford:157:2012). Female janitors resisted doing 'heavy working' by asserting that women were not as suitable for the task as men were (Cranford:157:2012).

This is precisely what is happening in the workplaces of the participants. Both management and staff perpetuated gender difference by asserting that women were not suited to heavy work, such as lifting and moving furniture as well as actively allocating tasks based on gender. Now, participants may see this gendered division of labour as beneficial to the workplace environment and to their own selves, but they are inscribing femininity onto domestic tasks. They see themselves as too small or not strong enough to engage in manual labour like lifting and rearranging furniture, or even breaking up fights between customers.

They are, whether they are aware of this or not, reasserting their feminine identity in the workplace, in opposition to more masculine traits, such as strength and courage (Cranford:157:2012). The participants engaged in practices of labelling feminine and masculine traits and allocated work tasks according to this. Cranford states that to resist certain jobs, males and females can mobilize masculinity and femininity, but that this reinforces gender segregation (Cranford:157:2012). This practice is evident in the accounts given of workplace organization by the participants, most clearly in the hospitality sector. While the participants agreed that most tasks are distributed equally, they were happy to let their male colleagues step in when more masculinity was required.

What is significant to my research is that while sometimes female members of staff can claim superiority and sovereignty in their jobs, this is limited to tasks that are domestic and already highly feminized such as cleaning and preparing food. Through the perpetuation of this gendered division of labour, gender inequality and gender segregation is permitted to continue without contest. Hence, the service and hospitality industry remains highly feminized.

The Aesthetics of Work:

Most of the participants interviewed were required to wear some form of uniform for their jobs. This was a combination of their own clothes as well as certain items supplies by their employers like hats, aprons, waistcoats and ties. One of the participants commented on how the uniform for men and women in the hotel where she worked was slightly different.

Chris: Black trousers, white shirt, have to have a neck tie tied in a bow for the girls, and a tie, just a normal tie for the boys. And…an apron.
Interviewer: A bow for girls, and a tie for boys…Why do you think that is?
Chris: I really don't know (laughs).
Interviewer: What if you went in, and you wore a tie?

Chris: Haven't tried it…I think if you're up in the house you can wear it or if you're working in the bar, if you're a female. But just for serving, for in the banquet, you have to have it in a bow. Like if you're up in the house during the day and you come down to do the banquet for the night you have to tie it up then at that stage.

Interviewer: Ok, and would you ever try going in with a tie?

Chris: I haven't because I don't wanna try it and I'm only new and I haven't been up in the house I wouldn't have worn a tie at all yet.

Interviewer: So that's just the way it is?

Chris: Yep just the way it is, haven't questioned it.

Wharhurst and Nickson state in their discussion of aesthetic labour that the sexualization of employees can equate to commercial benefit (2009:387). While I don't believe that the management are directly sexualizing the female employees, they are making a clear distinction between male and female staff members. This raises some issues as to what the protocol or consequences are if a member of staff identified as non-binary or trans or intersex. The bow ties on the female staff members also raise the image of the playboy bunny, whose uniform consisted of a corset, high heels, bunny ears and a bow tie. I admit I may be jumping ahead with the accusations, it must be acknowledged that management are prescribing a certain type of sexuality or femininity (Wharhurst and Nickson:393:2009), by making the women wear bow ties instead of the usual tie. They are emphasizing the role of the other (Wharhurst and Nickson:397:2009).

What is happening here is that management are policing employee bodies by making a clear distinction between the male and female uniforms and making the female uniform adhere to feminine norms by not wearing the tie. They are making the bodies of the female employees more acceptable for the workplace, and therefore commodifying their appearance. They are feeding in to the aestheticizing of employees by making the female uniform more feminine, more attractive, more socially acceptable. It is the young women here that are more likely to be sexualized than the male employees (Wharhurst and Nickson:395:2009). The aesthetic labour happening here is that the female staff members are becoming part of the aesthetics of

the organization (Wharhurst and Nickson:392:2009), they are the representatives of the organization to the public and need to project the right look (Wharhurst and Nickson:388:2009). Management can perpetuate this by getting their employees to act or to look a certain way to enhance the company's profits or image (Wharhurst and Nickson:386:2009).

Most of the participants interviewed wore makeup on a regular basis to work, but it was linked to the kind of work they were doing that day. When they experienced a significant amount of face to face contact with the public they would wear makeup. Niamh said that she didn't wear makeup for the morning shift as she was only setting up for weddings, but if she was working evenings serving at weddings she would always wear makeup. Ally stated that she felt wearing makeup made her look more presentable for work, and the more presentable she looked she believed that the public would assume she was more efficient at her job.

Interviewer: Ok, why do you wear makeup?

Ally: Because sometimes I feel when I don't have makeup on I look a bit less presentable. Ehmm… or maybe tired you know just to cover up any blemishes because I'm dealing with the general public. Maybe the way they see me…when I've no makeup on is different to how they see me when I do have makeup on so I suppose it's a self-conscious thing, wearing makeup.

Interviewer: Ok just about the public and how they see you, can you elaborate on that a little bit for me please?

Ally: Just maybe they might think…if you didn't have makeup on or d'yknow…that maybe you were putting no effort into doing for how you looked for work and that you didn't care if you were presentable or not. You maybe look unclean or something is what I sometimes think if I don't wear makeup.

Interviewer: Really? You think it has a knock-on effect?

Ally: Yeah that I don't care what I look like, I just go in and go home.

I argue that this is the commodification of the body in effect. The ability to do the job well becomes directly linked to how presentable you look at your job, which for these participants, makeup is nearly always necessary. There is a paradox here. While some of the participants wear makeup because they like wearing makeup, they like how it makes them feel, or they

wear makeup all the time, even when they're not at work, some feel like their natural appearance is not suitable for the workplace.

The participants who wear makeup said it wasn't a necessary requirement, but aesthetic labour can often be self-driven (Wharhurst and Nickson:393:2009). Employers demand aesthetic labour, and for an employee it is good to be perceived as good-looking because it benefits the business(Wharhurst and Nickson:389:2009). Makeup is used here to enhance attractiveness, as the participants feel their natural faces aren't suited to represent the corporate image when dealing with the public. As they choose to put on makeup to feel comfortable in representing the establishment, they are commodifying their appearance and carrying out aesthetic labour.

However, one of the participants strongly believed that the workplace was not a space for workers to present themselves as attractive or not. She stated that once she was at work, she was there to work, not worry about her appearance.

Nikki: I think if somebody would come to work with a full face of makeup…they're trying to look attractive like and I don't think there's anything wrong with trying to look attractive but I just don't think that's why you come to work. I think…yeah, I don't think there's anything wrong with a little bit of tinted moisturiser or whatever but I just think that for handiness and just it's nice to just have a nice fresh face. Obviously if you have a smile on your face I don't think you need makeup.

Both Nikki and Eileen believed that makeup was unnecessary in their jobs, as they were there to carry out their work, not to look nice. However, Nikki's comment about wearing a smile is a form of aesthetic labour. Employees need to have the right emotional aura to create the correct emotional state in the customer (Wharton:149:2009). Employees need to be passive, joyful and playful (Burns:240:1997). Hence, even without makeup, Nikki engages in aesthetic labour by attempting to cultivate the right response in customers by smiling at them. Smiling is perceived as friendliness, and open arms signifies openness (Wharhurst and Nickson:390:2009).

Relationships with management:

LePine and Van Dyne define the concept of 'employee voice' as non-required behaviour, with an emphasis on the expression of constructive challenge, not just criticism (109:1998). Employee voice is distinctive from affiliate behaviour, such as helping, which improves relationships, whereas employees exercising their voice may upset personal relationships (LePine and Van Dyne:854:1998). Voice behaviour is also distinct from complaining (LePine and Van Dyne:854:1998). Employee silence, on the other hand, is when management perpetuates the silence of employees through agenda setting and institutional structures (Donaghey et al:51:2011). When there is a significant 'power distance' within a culture, employees withhold opinions (Huang et al:475:2005). Thus, employee silence is perpetuated

Nikki, upon having a close relationship with her manager, who carried out the same tasks as the staff she employed, would regularly chat to her manager about customers behaviour. Ally would also tell her managers about how customers spoke to her, even if they were only being rude or obnoxious or annoying. Both Ally and Nikki's managers worked the same job as their staff. They acted as the supervisors, but also carried out the same tasks as the employees who dealt in the menial day to day running of the shop. The participants felt that because their managers knew what it was like to deal with the public, they were much more understanding of how the women felt about how customers treated them.

Some participants felt they had built a strong, personal relationship with the management. The participants felt like when they had a concern that needed to be addressed, they had no qualms with approaching their manager directly about the issue. These participants also said that they would openly discuss their lives outside of the workplace with their managers, often talking about families, friends, and college.

Having a relationship built on trust and understanding is another way these young women negotiated meaning and agency within their jobs. Ally, Nikki, Kristin and Chris also stated that management was very understanding about them needing to take time off work to meet other commitments. Exams, birthdays, college activities, sports events, compassionate leave and needing time off to study were all reasons these young women needed to take time off work, and they find that for the most part their employers do their best to accommodate them, but they must give notice in advance.

Chris: When my boyfriend's dad died, I had to, like they needed me in the house to do little things like washing up and even just being there like. I wouldn't have felt comfortable going into work knowing what was going on even and I just…I had told them he had the heart attack on the Sunday morning and I went into work that evening cos we weren't…sure what the story exactly was and I wasn't needed there so I may as well have been in work. I did go in but I explained at the start what had happened and I might need to leave or take a phone call. They told me to just go if I needed and to let them know, they said it was all fine. I did stay for the evening but I needed the following weekend off and that was no problem at all they did say. And even at one stage the following weekend I did say "ah sorry about that" and they said, "oh don't apologise for that at all that was completely the right thing to do" and everything so they were very understanding

In the case of these participants, employee silence is not an issue. My argument is that because there isn't such a significant difference between the role of the management and the role of the staff within the establishment, the relationship between employees and management can be cultivated to foster understanding and solidarity. In these instances, the participants worked in independently owned establishments, where the management carried out the same duties as the employees daily. Employees often remain silent due to cynicism, distrust or remain in a defensive position due to the frontier of control created by the relationship distance between them and the management (Donaghey et al:56:2011). I argue the frontier of control is not so severe in these establishments, so relationships are capable of becoming more personal.

Harassment:

Good and Cooper carry out their study of employee harassment with students working in part time jobs in Australia (2014, 2016). They theorise how students respond to harassment by

customers in the absence of 'employee voice' (LePine and Van Dyne:109:1998). Informal voice is the voice that is exercised by employees in the service sector (Good and Cooper:304:2014). For small independently owned businesses, informal voice is often the only option for employees (Good and Cooper:305:2014). As I have previously argued, several of the participants believed they had no problems approaching management and voicing any concerns if it directly affected them. However, there seems to be some ambiguity as to what is worth discussion. Hence, most participants engaged in exercising their informal voice, especially when dealing with harassment or even just when they had to deal with difficult customers. The participants agreed they would report inappropriate behaviour to their manager, but only one had ever spoken to their manager about any incidents that occurred.

None of the participants who worked in retail or the hospitality industry were part of a union, which is a structural factor which allows silence to be perpetuated (Good and Cooper:305:2014). Employees in these industries are framed as 'vulnerable' as they are on low pay and have no union representation (Good and Cooper:305:2014). Not only is this the case for the participants who are on minimum wage and have no union representation, but some of the young women believe they are portrayed as 'weak' because they are women, and that this makes them even more of a target. Korczynski and Evans drew on various ethnographies to frame their analysis on the nature of harassment within the service industry (773-774:2013). Employee abuse is strongly entrenched in the service industry, due to the perceived weak position of labour, the low status shield of service workers and the dis-embedded nature of interactions (Korczynski and Evans:772:2013). Due to women having to be 'nice' coupled with the low social status of the service industry, they are portrayed as being weak (Wharton:149:2009).

Nikki: Like I think if you…especially young women like I think sometimes they kinda laugh at ye if you try and take a stance...about something like say they were trying to get twenty cent off something. Like, for example, phone credit, we've a twenty cent charge on ten euro and they might say "Awh sure like, you're grand" and I'm like "No, it's actually not fine you have to go somewhere else if you don't want to pay…the charge"…I think if that was a man that probably wouldn't be the case. They think they can chance their arm with women.

Interviewer: They think they can chance their arm with…young women?

Nikki: Yeah young women particularly. They wouldn't do that to my boss.

Interviewer: And like, why do you think they chance their arm? Like with you rather than a bloke or even like the boss.

Nikki: I think that people think women are weak like a lot of the time. I don't-like I think a lot of the time when I stand up for myself they would be a little bit shocked, because they think that…They think that sure the money isn't mine anyways so why would it matter to me. You know what I mean? Its-it's the rules of the shop like you have to…I wouldn't be one for letting people off. Prices or anything.

The typical experience of harassment that Good and Cooper found, was exacted when young women had to serve older men (Good and Cooper:307:2014). The incidents where the participants were harassed, the perpetrator was always an older man. Only one participant spoke of an instance where a female guest invaded her personal space and laid hands on her.

Good and Cooper argue that many part time employees are unclear on how to define sexual harassment, and often focused on the personal characteristics of the perpetrator (466:2016). The nature of service work, the combination of emotional, aesthetic, sexualised labour, makes it difficult for employees to define what qualifies as sexual harassment (Good and Cooper:451:2016). The blurring of the personal and professional identity makes it even more difficult for employees to decide what qualifies as harassment (Good and Cooper:451:2016).

The participants interviewed who worked in the hospitality sector excused customers inappropriate behaviour when they had been drinking. They focused on the fact that these people were drunk or that they were only joking. Several participants didn't know what qualified as harassment. They either see it as slagging, or as someone trying to be funny or if they are just too drunk. Chris' job involved her taking the coats of guests. She stated that as she would take the coats off male guests they would make such comments as "Oh wait one

second 'til I take my trousers off as well". She saw this as a joke and brushed it off. Similarly,

with Kristin who worked in a pub, when her supervisors would make comments about her

body, she would laugh it off as she believes they are only trying to get a reaction out of her.

Kristin: Being the only girl like I don't think it even matters what you look like 'cos you're gonna get like the certain amount of like slagging. But I think you have to be able to take it like…Like, you have to be light hearted with it you can't take it too serious like because…In a way the people drinking are gonna slag ya, annoying the fellas do you know what I mean? […]

Interviewer: And what kinda slagging would you get?

Kristin: Just stuff like ehhh… Like say, if me and Smurf were over talking and you come back over and someone might just be like "Ohhh what's going on there" that kinda stuff and you're like "Ah would ye quit" and ye just kinda have a laugh about it. Or like, like sometimes you get them "Go on there and turn around and walk down the bar" or something and you just have to be like, like they're just slagging just making a joke they don't mean it. But then luckily I haven't come into a situation where I felt it was serious so…I've kinda been ok in that sense […]

Interviewer: Can you describe your relationship with your manager to me?

Kristin: I get on really well with both of them. Like it's kinda just, I have great laughs with them like…But again I think you have to be able to be light hearted and to take a joke y'know? 'Cos you get a lot of slagging off them as well but they're like that with the lads as well. You know that's just the kind of atmosphere that you have in the pub like. Only if you could take it though, if someone took things too seriously I'd say they wouldn't really last […]

Interviewer: What kinda slagging would you get off your managers? Not just you, but the rest of the staff as well.

Kristin: Well, with the lads. Smurf is short so he'd be slagged for being short. Same with Biggie, we do slag him for knocking things so we're like "Ah Biggie knocking-". This kinda stuff like, slagging for being deaf this kinda stuff. If you were too serious you could get thick about that kind of thing…And then with me I do just get stuff like… "Wear your tight jeans tomorrow to work" or something like that and you're like "Awh fuck off" and they're like "Ah you know I'm only joking and all this kinda stuff. You just have to be able to take things like that I think, if you took things too seriously you wouldn't really get on.

Interviewer: Does it bother you?

Kristin: No, 'cos I know them that well at this stage I know they don't mean anything by it. They don't mean it in any real way do you know what I mean? Like I know they're only slagging to get a reaction out of me.

She repeatedly said that to succeed and cope in this line of work, you couldn't take yourself

too seriously, and that she was told in her training to expect 'slagging' or 'jabs' as it was a

part of pub culture. However, there is a marked distinction between the comments that are

made to the male employees, and the comments that are made to her. The comments made to

Kristin were sexually suggestive and focused on her attractiveness and her body. These

comments objectified and sexualised her, but she does not see this as harassment. I argue that

by the management engaging in this kind of behaviour towards her, the ambiguity over what counts as sexual harassment is intensified. The issue of sexual harassment becomes un-problematised and normalised as being a part of pub culture. However, I cannot confidently label this as sexual harassment, as the banter between Kristin and the others appears both consensual and playful.

I argue that this is a method of negotiating value. By claiming strong emotional bonds with both colleagues and management, she negates the sexualised treatment she receives from both customers and management alike. Kristin believes that this banter is all in good fun, and solidifies her place within the work group.

Employees believed they were treated disrespectfully because they felt customers perceived them as being of lower status, this is how they rationalized the unwanted attention (Good and Cooper: 309: 2014) Here, the participants who worked in the hospitality industry felt that as part of their job, they had to put up with harassment and not react how they truly wanted to. Dealing with harassment is taken as just another part of the job (Good and Cooper: 311: 2014).

Chris: You'd get remarks like, from some of the men, like about looking after them and…just… awh what room are you staying in tonight and all this craic like…It's a bit…like what is your response to that? Just kinda haha and walk away.

Interviewer: How do you respond?

Chris: You can't really say much to them because its, you're at work you have to act professionally but…you just kinda have to walk away. I usually just walk away so…

Interviewer: Do you respond at all?

Chris: No, I don't respond because there's a level of customer service that, even if they are being… Like I've never had anyone who's openly rude or intentionally very rude it's just… After they get a few drinks in them they'll be a bit rude or a bit sexist…They're not doing it out of badness necessarily no one's been aggressive before…I think they don't…they see it as a bit of craic.

Niamh, who also works in the hospitality, had an experience where she had to deal with an extremely drunk, rude guest.

Niamh: Ehm…Well it was after midnight when we do be serving you know either fish and chips or goujons and chips y'know yourself…So I was just going 'round the tables seeing who had food and who didn't. Like, I wouldn't…I wasn't even looking at their faces so I guess maybe I approached this man before but like, I was just looking at hands to see who didn't have food so I could offer it to them…Well, I saw he had no food so I went up to him and asked if he wanted some food…and he turned around to me and said "If you ask me one more time if I want chips and chicken goujons I'm going to take it out of your hand and shove it up your arse".

Interviewer: And what did you do?

Niamh: I said nothing, I turned around and walked away.

She did not report him to her manager, but she discussed his behaviour with her co-workers.

This is how she negotiated the incident. This is a 'non-voicing mechanism', where the employee copes with the harassment rather than contesting it (Good and Cooper:311:2014). This doesn't directly challenge the issue; thus, the harassment can continue (Good and Cooper:311:2014).

Wharton's article draws on Hochschild's theory of emotional labour (1983). Emotional labour is the organization of feelings (Wharton:147:2009). Hochschild stated that emotions are regulated by employers and that employees must manage their feelings in accordance with employer defined rules and guidelines (Wharton:148:2009). There are appropriate and inappropriate feelings that can be expressed within the workplace (Wharton:148-149:2009). Chris stated that despite her receiving sexualised comments from guests, she had to "act professional" as she was there to provide a service. Despite being threatened, Niamh had to manage her emotions so that she gave the guest no response and walked away from him. Niamh had to manage her emotional state to meet the norms prescribed by the hotel management (Wharton: 149:2009). These participants were not allowed to be visibly upset, to cry or to shout or to insult these guests back. They had to maintain an exterior of calmness, despite what they felt inside. Emotional labour requires a change in one's inner feeling and one's outer display (Wharton: 149:2009). These participants had to remain calm as they attempted to cultivate the correct emotional response in the guest (Wharton:149:2009).

This management of emotions can create feelings of alienation, distress, self-estrangement, and identity issues (Wharton:149:2009). Emotional exhaustion and conflict of 'true' and 'false' emotions can also occur (Wharton:159:2009). This coupled with the fact that service work is highly feminized (Wharton:149:2009), and that customer sovereignty is highly entrenched in this line of work (Korczynski and Evans:772:2013), means that women will continue to be subjugated to this unfair treatment and subjugation unless changes are made. However, sometimes the balancing of emotions is a skill as it allows employees to gain the upper hand in interactions with customers (Wharton:150:2009). This demonstrates how employees negotiate agency through interactions where the power imbalance was exaggerated by the customer. Niamh demonstrates how she put a guest 'in her place'.

Niamh: Well…I was out on the floor handing out the fish and chips…And the way some people go on when they're drunk like it's ridiculous they think there's gonna be some food shortage so when they see you coming they all start calling and reaching out for the food…Like, we always put on more food than we need like…Ehhh well basically I saw the bride across the dancefloor and like the bride and groom always get the food first…So I made a beeline and this one woman sees me and she goes "I want some of that". And… Like I just ignored her like I was giving the food to the bride anyways so I keep walking and then she come up and grabs hold of my arm, and says "I said I want some of that". I just looked at her and said, "This is for the bride's table, the bride and groom need to be fed first". So, she lets go of me and says, "Oh right". Like…I was glad I had an excuse y'know? I mean it was like…I got to put her in her place because I had that reason. It's like…You need to get yourself off the hook by being as polite as possible.

This guest had expected Niamh to yield and give her the food. When her demand wasn't met, she laid hands on Niamh. Customers may harass employees to assert their superior status and control in the relationship (Good and Cooper:452:2016). Service work requires deference, and employees struggle to maintain their dignity and integrity (Wharton:152:2009). For those who are aware of the power imbalance between customer and employee, as Niamh and other participants were, customer sovereignty can exist as contended rather than hegemonic (Korczynski and Evans:780:2013). Employees who are perceived as being the most vulnerable contest customer sovereignty and are aware of its hegemony (Korczynski and Evans:780-781:2013). All participants, being young women, were keenly aware of the customers supposed superior position within the relationship. Niamh managed her emotional

response to give a cool retort, despite the shock she felt at this invasion of personal space. Good and Cooper found in their study of part time workers that even when they respond informally to inappropriate behaviour, they still act in deference to the customer (463:2016). Niamh's statement "You need to get yourself off the hook by being as polite as possible" exemplifies this.

Kristin had an encounter with a customer that she immediately reported to her manager. She was walking through the dancefloor carrying empty glasses in both her hands, when a young man who she knew to see, grabbed at her breasts. She told him to 'fuck off' and walked away. Employees can exercise their voice by informing the management of any incidents (Good and Cooper:308:2014). Kristin immediately told her boss what had happened, who insisted she point him out as he wanted the young man to be held accountable as had zero tolerance for that sort of behaviour in the workplace. Her managers' reaction is completely different to Korczynski and Evan's argument about managers promoting customer sovereignty (779:2013). They theorise that customer abuse relates to the managements promotion of the norm of customer sovereignty (Korczynski and Evans:779:2013). This, in turn, legitimises the abuse of the employee (Korczynski and Evans:779:2013). While I believe this theory of significant use, here we see the opposite in effect. The managements zero tolerance for this kind of behaviour enabled the possibility for the perpetrator to be kicked out of the pub. Her manager wanted to defend her, but she insisted he let it go. Kristin says she wasn't going to make a fuss as it was late and towards the end of her shift and she was tired. She stated that because she knew the man was so drunk, she wasn't as angry as she would have been if he had been sober. Again, we see the employee trying to excuse the inappropriate behaviour of the customer by focussing on the fact that he was drunk. One of the methods referred to by Good and Cooper, is that employees who are being harassed often

deal with the situation by deferring to a male colleague (Good and Cooper:310:2014). Kristin employed that method here.

Conclusion:

The goal of this research project was to discover how young women employed in the service, retail and hospitality industry negotiated agency and value through their interactions with colleagues and customers. Through carrying out in depth, semi structured interviews with young women aged 18-30, I believe I have found my answer.

For the gendered division of labour, these participants would mobilize their femininity to avoid doing certain tasks. These tasks were often 'heavy work' which involved moving and arranging furniture, hoisting large residents out of their beds or carrying heavy objects. This choice was not contested within the various workplaces, and the male staff were called upon when needed. This is a way that female employees negotiate agency, by mobilizing their femininity to get out of certain tasks they didn't want to do (Cranford:157:2012). The participants often acknowledged that they were 'too small' or that they lacked the strength to carry out heavy lifting, and often expressed indignation when instances occurred when they had to do heavy work.

Through the gendered division of labour, the participants could claim superiority over male colleagues. Through gender segregated tasks, participants felt as though they were better suited and more superior in their efficiency of carrying out these tasks as opposed to their male colleagues. Though they negotiated value through claiming superiority, it is a fallacy. They are claiming superiority in carrying out domestic tasks, like cooking and cleaning and preparing food, thus allowing the stereotype that women are naturally better suited to these tasks than men to continue. They have internalised gender norms and consider them essential within the workplace. Thinking of men as strong and women as weak, or that women are just

naturally better suited to domestic roles, are all gender ideals that these young women have normalised and see them as unproblematised. They are complicit in the reproduction of gender roles, though they are not explicitly aware of this. All the participants felt as though most tasks were shared equally between men and women and that there was no gender inequality within the workplace, but their actions told a different story.

For some of the participants, their physical appearance directly affected how comfortable they felt at work. These young women felt uncomfortable if they didn't have makeup on because they thought that their natural faces would give the public a negative impression of them. They believe that their natural faces made it seem that they are not clean enough, not enthusiastic enough, and not efficient enough at their jobs. Though they stated that they weren't forced to wear makeup by management, they still felt that it was a necessary requirement and wore makeup when they had the opportunity.

These participants are claiming value by doing this. By having an attractive appearance while at work, they feel as though they are more efficient at doing their jobs and dealing with the public. In truth, what they are doing is internalizing gender norms. They are objectifying and commodifying themselves for the benefit of the organization they work for. For them to represent the establishment, they need to look attractive. They are part of the brand, so they in turn brand themselves. This demonstrated gender socialisation that makeup is strictly for females and that it is a requirement for young women to wear makeup for them to be perceived as attractive. They have internalised this idea that how attractive they are correlates with how well they represent the establishment. They are carrying out aesthetic labour by becoming part of the establishments aesthetic (Wharhurst and Nickson:392:2009) By accepting this, they are feeding into gender ideologies and reproducing gender inequality.

These young women claimed value in their jobs by creating strong, personal relationships with the management. Through these relationships, young women negotiated their presence in the workplace not just as employees, but as individuals who had their own commitments outside of work. Through the cultivation of these bonds, the women felt at ease when negotiating time off as they knew their managers would understand that they had other commitments. This method was often employed when participants who were at college and needed time off for studying or for exams. These participants also felt that their managers cared about their well-being at work, and stated that they would have no issue with approaching their managers about any issues that may arise, but as I go on to discuss it's much more complex than this. By building relationships based on mutual understanding with the management, these participants negotiated value within their jobs. Those who got on well with their managers had a more positive outlook on their jobs than those whose relationship with their management was more distant.

All the participants who worked in the retail and hospitality industry had experienced some form of harassment at one stage in their jobs. However, there seems to be much ambiguity over what counts as harassment (Good and Cooper:308:2014). Only one participant had ever reported an incident to her manager, the rest of the participants found other methods of dealing with harassment. The most common method was to discuss the incident with colleagues, but this is coping with harassment, not contesting it (Good and Cooper:311:2014).

These young women would often focus on the customers behaviour rather than the nature of the abuse itself. They often made excuses for the customer by admitting that people who are drunk are much more likely to harass them. This is how these employees rationalise this inappropriate behaviour (Good and Cooper:309:2014). Participants who had been harassed stated that it was to be expected, as due to the nature of their work they are weak targets

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(Wharton:149:2009) unable to react because of norms placed upon them by the establishment. By making excuses, they are un-problematising this serious issue. They see harassment and 'slagging' as just another part of the job. 'Slagging' or 'banter' was how one participant described what I would sociologically refer to as harassment. This could be her trying to cope with her being sexualised by both customers and her superiors, but she appeared to truly believe there was no harm in this playfulness. While there is no direct abuse, by carrying on like this, the ambiguity surrounding what constitutes as sexual harassment becomes even more intense. All employees, male and female, should be made aware of the nature of harassment so they know it when they see it.

I argue that these young women have normalised and rationalised harassment as just another part of the job, as a means of coping with it. They may be able to even out the power balance by contesting this harassment, but often the nature of the service industry requires emotional labour that restricts employees from showing their true temperament (Wharton:151:2009). Discussing these incidents with colleagues is how these young women processed the customers behaviour. Still, the behaviour continues as no protest is made on behalf of the employee. This coping mechanism is internalised by the employee, and the customer realises they have the upper hand in the power imbalance. This gendered nature of abuse will continue, as it was most common for these young women to be harassed by older men, unless a change is made in employee policy.

To my surprise, all the participants believed that they were better persons for having been employed in their subsequent establishments. Despite the various shortcomings their jobs entailed, they stressed the point that they did not think of them as 'bad' jobs. As well as that, they focussed largely on all the aspects that made the job enjoyable, such as; building relationships with the management and other staff members and being financially independent. However, by accepting that harassment and gender segregation were everyday

occurrences, gender inequality and gender discrimination become essentialised and normalised.

After carrying out this research, I suggest that there is a lack of focus on interpersonal relationships within the workplace. The participants spoke of the sociability of work and the joy they received from building relationships with colleagues and staff alike. More research about the nature of work relationships with a focus on the positive aspects like increased satisfaction and productivity should be done to explore this aspect of workplace relationships further.

Also, the literature I found in relation to sexual harassment of employees was extensive, but this is not the only kind of harassment that happens in the workplace. Korczynski and Evans touch on this in their article however workplace bullying is another avenue that I think needs to be more fully explored, especially within the service industry as it would show how even in the low status jobs, hierarchies persist. In addition to this, employees can be harassed by customers in non-sexual ways. I struggled to find research on how employees dealt with difficult or rude customers, or even customers who refused to pay or threatened them with violence. The harassment of employees is an ongoing issue, but it is not unique to female employees.

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Appendices: