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Understanding space and time through the exploration of a café as a workplace

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This paper examines a café as a workplace. Data was obtained from thirteen ethnographic participant-observations, two hours each in length, conducted over a two-month period. It argues that the environment provides a “sense of place” that normalizes patrons’ use of space and time, resulting in the typology of a leisure time-space worker. Themes include: rules for interaction, rules for use of space, norms for use of time, and lastly, defining a multi-functional environment by examining work, family, and leisure, as they intersect in a café. This project contributes to existing research by showing how, in subtle ways, people behave in public spaces, thereby informing our understanding of the norms underlying social behavior in public settings.

Keywords: public sphere, private sphere, ethnography, café

Recent global, economic, and technological shifts have contributed to the emergence of different forms of work. These new forms of work are perhaps best reflected in the increasingly more common occurrence of tele-work (Mallia & Ferris, 2000), consulting, and freelance work (Pink, 2001), currently performed by a growing number of people. Reich (1991) describes those that are inclined to perform these types of work as the knowledge worker, or symbolic analyst. Reich argues that symbolic analytic work, which involves processes of thought, writing, and communication, would increase with globalization.

Due to the rise of symbolic analytic work, the boundaries of when and where people work have expanded both temporally and spatially. Technological developments allow work to be conducted anywhere at any time, helping to facilitate these new forms of work. Consequently, more and more public spaces allow for such work, reflecting greater flexibility in where work is performed. Therefore, this study examines the use of one public commercial space, a bookstore-café, as a place where people are observed doing work-like activities. It examines how public spaces and time are used for work in a café, as one kind of public space for communicative possibilities.

This study can contribute to existing research by showing how, in subtle ways, people interact and thereby inform our understanding of the norms underlying social behavior in public settings. Also, this context explores and supports the notion that the location of where work is accomplished has evolved in today’s society, resulting in the typology of a leisure time-space worker. Therefore, by examining the use of one commercial space and

the behavior of individuals that occupy it, this study will explore contemporary intersections of the “flexible” nature of work in the new economy, the capacities of new communication technologies to support this flexibility in work-like activities, and offer one perspective on how new forms of work are experienced in practice.

Literature Review

A growing number of commercial spaces are accommodating people who use this space to perform work traditionally done in private (Kreiner, Hollensbe, and Sheep, 2009). This increasingly more common occurrence makes it possible to offer insights into the changing conceptions of public and private life and space, as private work-like activities are increasingly performed more frequently in public spaces. Further, the investigation contained herein provides a perspective on both the interaction and the normalized activities conducted within one commercial space, a bookstore-café.

When examining a commercial public space used for work, the physical environment acts as an essential component of the encounter between individuals. The “sense of place” found in environmental features contributes to the structure of the encounter (Duncan, Fiske, Denny, Kanki & Mokros, 1985). When defining locations that fit into a “sense of place,” Jackson (1995) points out that they are “cherished because they are embedded in the everyday world around us, and are easily accessible, but at the same time are distinct from that world. The experience can be private and solitary, or convivial and social. What ensues is the instinctive desire to return” (p. 24).

Central to the “sense of place” perspective for this analysis is Barker’s (1963) work involving “behavior settings.” Barker established that routinized patterns of interaction are found in physical arrangements. The study couples “a sense of place” with “behavior settings” to examine the use of personal space in a public context. An identifiable structure for how people use space to work will be identified.

This study focuses on the aspect of the new economy literature that suggests that new forms of work are a result of technological change and globalization. Beck (2000) explored the interplay of society and the nature of work, and argued that work at all levels is characterized by insecurity. He proposes that the overall structure of work is becoming more temporary, resulting in more flexible work arrangements. A possible explanation for the changing nature of work is globalization (Scholte, 2005). As mentioned previously, Reich (1991) discusses work type, and the effects globalization will have on these types. First, Reich devises three broad categories for the classification of work: routine production of work, in-person services, and symbolic analytic services. Reich then argues that symbolic analytic work will increase with globalization. In various forms, these types of workers are central to this study by bringing into focus the changing nature of work.

When discussing the emergence of new forms of work and the increasingly more common practice of individuals working in public spaces, it must be recognized that communication technologies facilitate work-like activities. Of particular relevance is when individuals perform work-like activities in public spaces where laptops, smart

phones, and wi-fi access are essential to effectively performing these tasks. Aided by technology, some employees no longer have dedicated offices, but instead frequent company sponsored “e-mobility centers” where workers drop in to use phones and Internet connections (e.g., I. B. M.). Organizations are also utilizing independent consultants and freelance professionals who may drop in to cafés to access the Internet in between appointments (Kleinman, 2006). This study identifies this type of professional as the leisure time-space worker.

A similar body of literature within the new economy framework examines the personal consequences of flexible work arrangements. Sennett (1998) discussed the personal consequences of changing forms of work in the new economy, and maintains that fragmented forms of work lead to competing values for a successful career and work life, contributing to a “corrosion of character.” Carnoy (2000) maintains that these new forms of work place increasing pressure on individuals to maintain a work-life balance, highlighting the work of both paid employment and the management of one’s personal life. Hochschild (2003a) engaged the notion of care becoming a commodity, and points toward economic trends, such as new forms of work, as one source for understanding the ways in which our culture embraces people working to the point of excess. This results in “outsourcing” care of loved ones due to the frenzied pace of life.

By offering insights about the behaviors that occur within one bookstore-café, it is possible to contribute to the discussion regarding conceptions of public and private life and space, the ability for new communication technologies to facilitate work-like behaviors in public spaces, and lastly, to offer one perspective on how new forms of work are experienced in practice.

Constitutive View as Theoretical Lens

The position adopted for this analysis is the constitutive view, which establishes that communication is the process by which we make sense of our surroundings and our relationships with others. In other words, communication constitutes social reality (Mokros & Deetz, 1996). The focus on the communicative nature of space and the activities that occur within specific spaces brings to the forefront the constitutive view (Mokros & Deetz, 1996), which is the process by which 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.

Mokros’s (2003) constitutive view is derived from sociology (Goffman, 1959; 1967; Mead, 1934; Scheff, 1990), anthropology (Bateson, 1996), semiotics (Leeds-Hurwitz, 1993), and communication studies (Watzlawick, Beavin, & Jackson, 1967). These contributions form the three components of social interaction, social construction, and discourse, and when taken together, form the constitutive view of communication (Mokros, 2003). These concepts manifest themselves as interaction, self-reflection, and discourse, respectively.

According to the social interactionist perspective, self and society are viewed as interactive. For Mead (1934), the self emerges through social interaction: “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 (1998) integrated self with society. In other words, the interplay between the self and one’s social environment, or society, results in 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.

With similar emphasis placed on the self in social interaction, Bateson (1996) believes that communication and interaction should be of primary focus, with relationship and interaction characterized more as a symbiotic 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 boundaries between work and non-work or home and work, to acquire meaning in a specific context.

Social constructionism contributes to the understanding of concepts such as self, work, and non-work by examining the processes of how each is understood as a relational concept, which becomes manifested as communicative activities. Social constructionism views identity as an inherently communicative process embedded within discourse, highlighting communication as the mechanism through which meaning is constituted. In this perspective, communication is central to “meaning-making processes in everyday interactions” (Berger & Luckman, 1966, p. 28). 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 other words, the self is viewed as a concept created by interaction, presented through communicative engagement with others (Goffman, 1959).

Social constructionism, then, sees the self as a social process, in relation to others (Gergen, 1991). Social interaction, coupled with social constructionism, assumes that people are created by their interactions with others, rather than just being connected to others through interaction (Mokros, 1996).

Traditionally, discourse, the third component of the constitutive view, is considered talk, but within the framework of identity and interaction, discourse is viewed as a much larger societal backdrop, whereby people 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 bookstore-café provides a rich context in which to investigate the constitutive view within a traditionally non-work space used for work.

Method

For this analysis, patrons of the café of a well known books and music organization were observed as they worked. Data was obtained from thirteen ethnographic participant-observations, about two hours each in length, conducted over a two-month period. Seven of these observations were conducted on weekday afternoons, one on a weekday morning, one on a weekday evening, and four on weekend afternoons. Regarding the layout of the café, the seating area is located perpendicular to the café counter, where coffee and food can be purchased, and has sixteen square tables. Each table has four wooden chairs. Situated around the perimeter of the café are six large brown, comfortable armchairs, almost always occupied. New age artwork and company signage adorn the walls, and jazz music lightly plays in the background at all times.

After the observations were completed, the researcher conducted a grounded theory technique on the observations from field notes. In order to develop emergent themes, the analysis of the field notes was systematic, iterative, and inductive. The examination of how this public space is used for work yielded the following themes, which are discussed throughout the paper using examples from field notes: rules for interaction, rules for use of space, norms for the use of time, and lastly, defining a multi-functional environment by examining work, family, and leisure as they intersect in a café.

Findings and Discussion

Rules for Interaction

In a sense, the patrons, myself included, take on roles and follow practices indicative of social norms for interacting with strangers in a public place. The bookstore-café environment is comfortable, providing a feeling of a home away from home, without pressure to purchase food or drink. At times during my observations, I would buy a cup of coffee to “legitimize” my presence in the space. Other times, if I simply did not feel like purchasing something, I felt more anxious in this environment. Perhaps because in some way my presence felt less justified, I felt more self-conscious and less entitled to such mundane tasks like using the public restroom. To prevent this feeling, eleven of my thirteen observations included my purchasing something from the establishment. More often than not, however, I noted patrons who stopped in to browse the aisles or sit down and read without buying anything at all.

Much of the participant activity in this routinized encounter is beyond the awareness of the participants. During my fifth observation, I reflect on my own glancing at others and use of space while I work in the café:

I enter and get situated. It is then that I start to reflect on how it is I use my space to conduct my own work. I note that I like to sit in very specific places in the café, so that I can see the café area as much as possible. I also like to spread out, not so much because I need all of the space I claim with my belongings, but more so because I do not want anyone sitting too close or asking me about

my work. Territorial, I openly admit, but it seems to be the constant here. People seem to want to work independently and quietly, able to spread out with all of their belongings. I quickly look around, more so to survey the area, secretly not wanting to connect with anyone in anyway really, so I can get down to work.

In public, individuals typically act in alignment with their reading of cues produced in an environment (Rapoport, 1982). In other words, once an individual notices and understands a cue, the expectation is that the individual will act as expected within that environment. If the individual does not do so, he or she is considered a social deviant (Goffman, 1959). Individuals' reading cues and acting as expected is perhaps best illustrated in the sixth observation below:

Normalized in this environment, and much to my surprise, was patrons' use of headphones to listen to music. I often witnessed teenagers and people in their early to mid-twenties who entered the store with their headphones on and who appeared to be in their own world, as they found a magazine to read and sat down either alone or with friends. More often than not, the headphones were not removed throughout the entire interaction with a friend, with just a head nod acknowledging their presence. No staff members or fellow patrons attempted to interact with these individuals. While this occurrence surprised me to a certain degree, I assume the normalization of being able to "check out" while occupying public space makes the environment appealing.

As I reflect on this field note, I continue to engage this notion of "checking out" along with what I found surprising about this instance. Regularly individuals occupy this public commercial space, only to simultaneously conduct activities that take them out of this space. As observations that will be discussed herein will illustrate, the activity of "checking out" through using iPods, laptops, and cell phones is a recurring finding within this context.

The prevalence of symbolic analytic work, the leisure time-space worker, and "checking out," is supported by the example from my eleventh observation below:

People work independently. No talking, few exchange glances as they work, but work is being conducted privately in a public place. The area between public and private is blurred. People situate themselves in public places, but work solely, and seem content with this. To my left is a man, thirties, appearing very relaxed, but reviewing documents and carefully moving them from a pile on his right to a pile on his left. Directly in front of me, an Asian woman sits entering information into her palm pilot from a piece of paper in front of her. To my right is an older man, sixties, sipping his coffee and reviewing his day timer. These people are working professionals, using the café either as an office or a drop-in spot.

Either way, they are using a public space to perform typical office-like work tasks.

I also note if these patrons purchased something from the café, as they occupy space to work.

Each of them has purchased a cup of coffee. The woman ordered hers in a ceramic cup and saucer, while the men got theirs in to-go coffee cups. Perhaps they feel less guilty using the space if they purchase something. I think for a moment how I must look to these people...I am doing the exact type of things, and I do not always buy something!

Since patrons are working privately in a public space, the blurring of both the public and private spheres, and consequently, the behavior of patrons using the café to work, becomes normalized. I note during my second observation, as I interacted with a leisure time-space worker:

The man to my right says, "Excuse me, but I am unable to get on-line. Are you?" I deduce that since he sees me typing he thinks I must be on-line. "No, you can only get on-line here if you are a T-Mobile customer," I respond. "Well," an African-American woman sitting behind me says looking up from her laptop, "If you sit closer to the outer tables over here you usually can pick up the signal from the pizza place next door. That is why I always sit over here. It works, as long as the pizza place is open." "Agh," the man says. He stands up, notices an open table, and rushes over to it. With that his phone rings, and he clicks on his earpiece and answers it. "Hey John...oh, good, nope, I am ready. Hi, Sam. How are you? Nice to meet you as well."

This discussion highlights the existence of symbolic analytic work commonly performed by leisure time-space workers in a café. Specifically, in all thirteen observations, regardless of day or time, either I observed a patron using a tool indicating that they are at work, or I used a tool indicating that I was at work. Specifically, during the seven weekday afternoon observations, the one weekday morning observation, and the one weekday evening observation, tools such as books, highlighters, laptops, cell phones, newspapers, paperwork, and day timers were commonly used. For the four weekday afternoon sessions, tools such as books, magazines, and highlighters were most commonly used. The use of all of these tools shows symbolic analytic work done in a public space while remaining personal and private.

Rules for Use of Space

In a café, the existing environment may constrain or direct the interaction between interactants. For this study, the patrons of the café occupy and utilize public space for work. The café area is located to the left as patrons enter the bookstore. This structure

creates a “flow” of traffic that flows out into the café area upon entering. A “sense of place” is established, which in turn provides regularity to the interaction between patrons.

In public spaces where shared presence occurs, people use subtle behavioral adjustments to maintain a comfort level with others. Goffman (1963) discussed “civil inattention” as a way of accomplishing this. This occurs, for example, when a person recognizes the presence of another individual with a brief glance, and then looks away to show that they (a) are not concerned with the other person, or (b) want to respect the individual’s privacy (Goffman, 1963). An example of this from my third observation follows:

I decided to sit at the table where the “flow” empties out into the café area. Upon arriving in the cafe, people look surprised. They look at me and quickly look away. Some want to be in the café area, and they quickly walk towards the café counter. Others look away, almost embarrassed they are, to their surprise, at the café. I count, and fifteen people enter, one after another, look quickly at me, and look away. The majority walk towards the café.

These interactions are important since they provide information about the individuals involved and the social norms affecting their interaction in a public space. Specifically, the patrons glancing at me while entering the café, and my glancing at others while working, is evidence of how people acknowledge one another in public places. This acknowledgement, or form of “civil inattention,” while working was also found in my interaction with the male patron. This form of acknowledging others but remaining in one’s own world is normalized in this environment. Glancing quickly at others, as the patrons above did, is considered to be a social norm for interacting in a public place. During my sixth observation I reflect not only on a patron glancing at me while he works, but also his use of space:

I notice a man in his mid-thirties using a large black couch to do his work. He has his laptop on his lap, papers to his left and right, and his cellphone beside him. Black coffee sits in a ceramic coffee cup with a saucer. He only quickly glances at me while he systematically, almost robotically, enters data into his laptop from his stack of papers on his right side. I was most taken with his use of space. He did not have a problem taking up the entire couch! I guess he figured he got here first, and the space was his to do with what he wants. Papers, laptop, cellphone; a working professional of sorts.

And another instance, during the same observation:

An African-American man sits down in the leather chair across the aisle from me, and begins reading and taking notes on his legal pad. How to get rich quick is the book. I then realize how often people may come in a place like this, read the books and magazines, buy nothing, and leave! Maybe customers will buy a

cup of coffee, but not always. They are able to work, read, listen to music, and not even spend a dime! This behavior is accepted in this atmosphere.

These observations indicate that the use of a large amount of space to work is accepted in this environment. The social acceptance of people using a full table to work was found in my own use of space while working in the café. The normalization of occupying a large amount of space was also found in the male patron who occupied an entire couch to work. The last observation also points out the occurrence of patrons' using space to work without purchasing anything. This is also, to a certain extent, normalized in this environment despite the implicit rules of a purchase equating to use of space for a period of time.

Norms for the Use of Time

When examining a "sense of place," the physical environment creates a "flow" of patrons entering the café, and normalizes patrons' use of a large amount of space. An extension of how the physical environment constrains or directs interaction, thereby contributing to our understanding of both "a sense of place" and the leisure time-space worker, is patrons' use of time.

Similar to space, the physical environment dictates "dropping-in" to work as acceptable, and makes occupying a table all day the norm. The practice of patrons' working in a traditionally leisure environment is indicative of the "multi-functionality" of a café as a workplace. An identifiable structure for how people use time to work in a leisure environment is evident in the observation below. I noted:

How long the majority of people sat at a table working. The majority stayed for longer than two hours, but a significant amount "dropped-in." One woman, early forties, enters the café and races over to a table by the window. Must need the Internet, I assume. She drops her stuff all over the table and quickly opens her laptop. She studies it closely, and types for a while. Within the next twenty minutes, just as quickly as she arrived, she packs up her belongings and exits.

Most interesting about this observation is that this café was as frequently used as a "drop in" location as it was used for longer periods of time, such as two hours or even all day (as I did upon rare occasion.) This environment normalizes this behavior, making all three time options, drop-in, two hours, and all day, acceptable behavior.

Defining a multi-functional environment: Work, Family, and Leisure

Within the last ten years, cafés have become dual purpose arenas: people are able to work as they sit in a leisurely environment (Kleinman, 2006). This multi-functionality of cafés has resulted in the blurring of work and leisure. The current findings extend existing work life balance research by focusing on a "workplace" that allows for the management of both home and work.

Kirby, Golden, Medved, Jorgenson, & Buzzanell (2003) believe that among the social sciences the communication discipline is well positioned to contribute to the understanding of the experience of work-life interrelationships “through a meaning-centered, rather than outcome centered perspective” (p. 2). Recent communication scholars have adopted a constructionist approach, or one that examines how work and life become constituted in interaction (Buzzanell & Burrell, 1997; Farley-Lucas, 2000; Golden, 2000; 2001; Jorgenson, 2000; Medved, 2004). This provides the opportunity to examine how the areas of work and life are communicatively managed while bringing the self to the forefront. In doing so, the complexity of work-life connections in everyday life are also examined (Golden, Kirby & Jorgenson, 2006), while advancing our understanding of how individuals can integrate the spheres of home and work, and to manage the tension created when the realms overlap (Kirby, Golden, Medved, Jorgenson, & Buzzanell, 2003).

Hochschild (1997) discussed the blurring of home and work, or when work becomes home and home becomes work. Hylmo and Buzzanell (2002) analyzed telecommuting as inherently paradoxical, due to its blurring of home and work. Kunda (2006) wrote of a high-tech corporation whose employees did not limit work to a time or place. Kunda argued that employees needed discipline to combat both the company’s demands and one’s own impulses in order to separate work from non-work time. The result is often that people’s professional and private lives suffer, due to the inability to focus on, and cultivate, each adequately.

The data contained herein suggests, alternatively, that perhaps a blurring of the public and private is necessary in order to multi-task between the demands of both professional and private lives. For example:

A man, late thirties or so, comes in with two bags, one on each arm, and three kids. He proceeded to tell two of his kids to go and pick out one book each while he got set up at a large table. He seemed stressed as his cell phone started ringing. He looked at the number and put his phone down on the table. “We have got to get you settled in,” he said as he lifted up his youngest, about two. The other two kids returned with books in hand, and the man tells them to sit down and read quietly. He then picks up his phone and listens to his message as he sets up his lap top and takes folders out of his bag, occupying the majority of a large table with his belongings. He then takes a toy, one belonging to the boy and one belonging to the girl, and places each toy by their chairs, respectively. Before you know it, almost the entire table is covered in paperwork, and the kids want snacks. He leaves his belongings behind and takes all three kids up to the counter.

Regarding the above example, Hochschild might argue that “family bonds are now being recalibrated to achieve greater productivity in less time” (1997, p. 50). As an alternative to this position, I suggest that perhaps it is the multi-functionality of the café environment which allows for the father to accomplish dual tasks, namely, work and spend time with

his children. This environment normalizes the blurring of work and leisure, which allows the father to work in a leisurely place, and simultaneously allows the children to behave leisurely in daddy's "workplace."

Hochschild concluded, after studying the workforce practices of a Fortune 500 company, that while their company offered flex-time, paternity leave, and other family friendly policies, few working parents utilized these benefits. Hochschild argues that the roles of home and work have reversed, in the sense that work offered the rewards of home, such as stimulation, guidance, and a sense of accomplishment and belonging, while home had become the place with too much to do in too little time. I further suggest that perhaps Hochschild's work should stand as a warning about the way we have come to live. Or, that the multi-functional café environment helps people accomplish tasks throughout the day, such as "dropping in" to check email and schedule appointments, thereby increasing leisure time after traditional work hours.

Similar to the earlier observation regarding a male patron conducting a conference call in the café, perhaps it is this multifunctional environment, supportive of the blurring of work and leisure, that allows for leisure time-space workers to stay more connected to their personal lives. Hochschild has argued, however, that the "more attached people become to the world of work, the more its deadlines, its cycles, its pauses, and its interruptions, shape our lives, and the more family time is forced to accommodate to the pressures of work" (p. 45). An example of a patron behaving differently is included in the example below. The man entered the café area, looked around, and then placed his belongings on an available table. He then asked me to "watch his belongings," which consisted of communication-based tools, including a laptop and a portfolio of papers, while he purchased food from the café. He came back about five minutes later, thanking me for my help since he has had a "frustrating day." He then tells me about his job, and what brought him into the bookstore-café:

I usually work from home, but my Internet connection is down and has been for two days, so I had to think creatively about how to get work done." "Ah," I said. "And this place allows you to get done what you need to, then?" "In a pinch, yup. I would rather be at home doing my work, but this is better than falling way behind. I need to stay up to date so I can see my son's soccer practice after school tomorrow. I am sure you can relate." I know what he means, but only nod in agreement. I then ask, "What is it you do for a living, if you do not mind my asking?" "No, not at all. I do freelance copyediting for a website. Ya know, post and edit new stories daily. It is a political website, so I need to change the stories daily, and really keep up on the goings on. If I fall behind, it is all over." His phone rings, and I excuse myself from the conversation.

The café environment provides a "sense of place" that normalizes the leisure time-space workers' use of space and time. This multi-functional work and leisure environment allows patrons to accomplish dual-tasks, namely, work while spending time with children, or catching up on work so that time can be spent with family at a later time.

This multi-functional context also allows for both drop-ins and prolonged visits in order to work. The tools of communication previously discussed are ubiquitous in our society, but this analysis confirms that the use of these tools in a bookstore-café is accepted since the space is designed to be tool friendly. For example, it is the using of these communication-based technological tools (e. g., to check email, use cell phones, and occupy space for a long period of time) that is promoted, if not expected, by the bookstore. Further, it is argued that this blurring of work and leisure is perhaps a beneficial byproduct of the environment in that it allows people to meet the demands of both their personal and professional lives.

Future Research

This project concludes that patrons' use of space and time to work in a café is normalized, and that the blurring of work and leisure exists. It is argued that perhaps a blurring is beneficial in that it can help people stay connected with all facets of their lives. Furthermore, the analysis regarding the nature of communication-based tools (e. g., laptops, palm pilots, cell phones), allows work to be accomplished in settings that accommodate various types of activities, such as a multi-purpose bookstore-café. No work was observed outside of that with communication-based technological tools, which therefore normalized symbolic analytic work.

These findings provide researchers with several directions for future research. First, an essential next step is to understand the business rationale regarding commercial spaces used as workspaces. While specific commercial spaces promote this practice (e.g., bookstore-café), there also are spaces that do not promote, and may even discourage, this practice. This would provide a contrast between what behaviors are acceptable and what behaviors are not acceptable in various commercial spaces. Secondly, the practice of individuals working in commercial public spaces, including but not limited to bookstore-café, should be further examined. It is important to understand why people choose to work in these commercial spaces, and how they feel about working in public spaces. Specifically, conducting interviews with individuals that chose to work in these environments would inform our understanding of why people work in public spaces, and how they feel when they do. Therefore, by examining the use of commercial spaces and the behavior of individuals that occupy them, these future research directions would further explore and contribute to our understandings of contemporary intersections of the "flexible" nature of work in the new economy, the capacities of new communication technologies to support this flexibility in work-like activities, and conceptions (and consequences) of the definitions of private and public life and space.

Conclusion

This study provides insight into the social norms affecting how space and time are used for work in a public space. It also shows not only a normalizing of acceptable behavior in a public space, but also a blurring of the public and private spheres. The observations determined that it is acceptable for patrons to work in the café space. While the type of work that is done in this public space varies, it tends to use symbols, data, and information transmission via technologies of communication (e.g., laptops, palm pilots,

cell phones.) The patrons' use of these tools indicates symbolic analytic work done in a public space, resulting in the leisure time-space worker typology. This study also shows that brief drop-ins or longer stays are accepted in this environment. This recent normalization of work in a public space suggests that the changing nature of work is one possible reason for the blurring of the boundaries between work and leisure. While it is tentatively proposed that this blurring has benefits, future research regarding the consequences of this blurring on the lives of leisure time-space workers is needed.

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