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ARTICLE

Controlling Service Work

An ambiguous accomplishment between employees,
management and customers

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Abstract

In order to understand the control of service work, most service literature has focused on its production while treating the customer as secondary. The consumption literature emphasizes the customer's role but lacks empirical evidence for its claims. Using an ethnographic study of an 'exclusive' department store, this article aims to reduce the gap between these two bodies of literature by investigating how employees, management and customers control service work. The findings suggest that the maintenance of class difference combined with competing expectations of managers, employees and customers makes the management of service work highly ambiguous and reveals a continuing instability between managerial practices of control and consumer culture.

Key words

aesthetic labour • department store • embodiment • exclusive consumer

THERE HAS BEEN a proliferation of 'service literature' of recent years, which can be broadly regarded as either 'service work' (e.g. Hochschild, 1983; Rafaeli and Sutton, 1987; Wharton, 1993; Taylor and Tyler, 2000) or 'consumer culture' (e.g. Urry, 1990; du Gay and Salaman, 1992; du Gay, 1996) in focus. Korczynski and Ott (2004) note that the vast majority of 'service' literature has focused on the production side of service work (i.e. employees and management), while treating the role of the customer as

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secondary. Nevertheless, a handful of studies have paid attention to the influence customers may have over the 'service encounter' and demonstrate that a 'struggle for control' may emerge between the employee and customer (e.g. Benson, 1986; Hall, 1991; Filby, 1992). These studies propose that the ideology of 'consumer sovereignty' (Korczyński and Ott, 2004), and the organizational requirement that the 'customer is always king' (or queen) (Peters and Waterman, 1982) may mean that the employee lacks any 'real' or substantive agency over the service encounter.

Another body of literature has focused much more on processes of consumption in service work. There has been a particular emphasis on the role of consumption in shaping and maintaining both employees' and/or consumers' self-identity (Urry, 1990; du Gay and Salaman, 1992; du Gay, 1996). Here, service work is treated as a site where both service workers and consumers 'play out' their identity. According to this line of argument, service work is fluid and the boundaries between an individual's identity as 'a worker' and as a consumer are blurred and dynamic. It is argued that we can no longer use a binary system of workers/producers and consumers when addressing processes of consumption and production, as both groups are discursively constructed within the enterprise of consumption. However, there is a lack of any substantive empirical evidence to illustrate and support this argument. For instance, there is little evidence of how both employees and customers may attempt to 'play out' their various identities (i.e. as service workers, customers, consumers, or a combination of these) during the service encounter and the impact this 'identity work' has on the management of service work.

Using an ethnographic study of an 'exclusive' department store, this article investigates the character of managerial, employee and customer control in service work. It does this by focusing on the 'embodiment' of organizational control as it pertains to the employee and the consumer. This embodiment is then linked to the influence 'exclusivity' has in the pursuit of both service worker and consumer control.

THE SERVICE LITERATURE

One of the most influential voices within the service literature has been that of Hochschild (1983), whose seminal work explored the nature of organizational control over service workers and the socio-psychological costs of such control practices. More recent studies have also explored the 'struggle for control' between the service worker and organizational management and the various paradoxes within this relationship (Sturdy, 1998; Taylor et al., 2002; Taylor and Bain, 2003) and a number have

drawn attention to the gendered characteristics of service work (Hall, 1991; Leidner, 1991; Tyler and Abbott, 1998). While authors such as Macdonald and Sirianni (1996) have argued that service work must be understood as a three-way relationship between managers, employees and customers, 'there remains an inadequate' and 'largely misrepresentative picture of the role and agency of the customer' in most service work studies (Bolton and Houlihan, 2005: 686). For example, within the majority of critical and/or feminist accounts of service work, customers are usually seen as 'consumers of sexuality', 'emotional vampires' or as 'thieves of identity' (Rosenthal et al., 2001). In most of this literature the rendering of the customer is often indirect or 'oblique' (Rosenthal, Peccei and Hill, 2001).

In an attempt to address the relative neglect of the customer/consumer in service work, Pettinger (2005) investigates the 'gendering' of clothing retail, and adopts the role of a customer/consumer by observing a number of women's clothing retail stores in the UK. Pettinger's study offers some interesting insights into how gendered attributes of workers form a key part of the branding of a gendered product. However, while Pettinger rightly argues that there is a need for more studies that consider the perspective of the consumer, the account presented seems removed from the actual experience of shopping. For example, there is no account of how a shopper chooses a brand to shop for, the experience of trying products, making choices from the available products and purchasing these or the actual interactions with sales staff as a shopper/consumer.

Bolton and Houlihan (2005) also seek to understand the service interaction from the perspective of the customer through an ethnographic study of call centre customers. Their study provides a conceptual framework for understanding the different roles customers may adopt. Although their framework advances our understanding of customers, it is likely to be less applicable to other service contexts. In particular, it is less applicable to face-to-face service contexts, such as retail, where the service expectations of the customer and general dynamic of the interaction may be quite different from a call centre. Therefore, while researchers are becoming increasingly aware of the need to consider the influence the customer has on service interactions in studies of service work, there is still much to be understood about the motives and influence customers may have on service work. What studies such as Pettinger's and Bolton and Houlihan's point to, however, is the necessity to incorporate not only practices used by employees to control the interaction that takes place between the service worker and customer, but to also consider the various motives and actions

of the customer, and the various ambiguities and conflicts that arise within this relationship.

The embodiment of control

Critical approaches to service work, such as Hochschild's study, have tended to focus on the management of feeling but do not conceptually focus on the embodied aspects of interactive service work (Witz et al., 2003). While service providers are seen as capable of changing and controlling their emotional display, there is little analysis of how such displays of style and tone are effectively part of the 'corporate software' (Nickson et al., 2001). For instance, whereas Hochschild and others have commented on the recruitment and training directed at ensuring that the 'right' embodied capacities and attributes are possessed by frontline service work candidates, it is the *transformation* of these into a particular competence and the production of a specific 'style' of service that encapsulates 'aesthetic labour'. This type of labour encompasses how frontline service personnel can be 'made up' (du Gay, 1996) in order to embody a corporately produced self, and refers to 'the mobilisation, development and commodification of the embodied capacities and attributes of employees to provide a favourable interaction with the customer' (Nickson et al., 2001:178). It is the incorporation of these less tangible skills that are harnessed to reflect the particular taste and style the organization wishes to convey that forms part of the work role. Furthermore, organizations, such as the one discussed in this article, may have a number of brands or products within the same organizational context, and these different brands will have certain expectations about how the employee should look in order to best represent the brand and attract the target customer. Therefore, organizations may require certain gendered or classed dispositions of the employee to be enacted in order to fit with the projected image of the organization or brand (Warhurst and Nickson, 2007). We argue that organizations seek to mobilize and commodify particular 'embodied capacities' in their employees so that an employee effectively embodies the product and/or organization they represent.

THE CONSUMPTION LITERATURE

While critical sociological accounts of service work have tended to neglect the role of the customer in service interaction, another stream of literature has placed more emphasis on the consumer. Within the more 'post-modern/enterprise' literature (Rosenthal et al., 2001), it has been argued that service work represents a profound social change in (post)modern society by bringing in new forms of identities through a process of 'dis-

location', whereby a hybrid of work identities is produced. Du Gay (1996) envisages the identities of both customers and producers (employees) as discursively constructed by a single dominant discourse, namely enterprise (Rosenthal et al., 2001). Within this discourse of enterprise the boundaries between production and consumption and the inside and outside of the organization are blurred (Rosenthal et al., 2001). The sovereign consumers in this discourse of enterprise are seeking to maximize their worth or existence through personal choices of consumption. The employees are also in search of meaning and a sense of personal fulfilment, and work becomes the place where employees and consumers represent, construct and confirm their identity. Consumption is therefore seen as a 'way of life' rather than simply a 'by-product of production' (Miles, 1998: 2).

Hence, in this line of argument, consumption is not primarily about buying goods but about identity formation. Through purchasing goods, we come to possess objects with signifiers that project a sense of self-image. Consumption can therefore be seen as a creative *bricolage* whereby identities are fashioned 'through an active engagement with product images' (Gabriel and Lang, 1995: 88). Looking more specifically, identity is not simply a story of who we are, but also a fantasy of who we would like to be (Giddens, 1991). As Gabriel and Lang (1995) note, once the fantasy built around the product has accepted the test of reality, its value to the ego-ideal decreases. Therefore, a new fantasy will start to develop around another product, and consumer capitalism continues. Herein lies the paradox of consumption; it is both constraining and enabling (Miles, 1998). That is, it perpetuates inequality while at the same time allows people 'the freedom' to create their own meanings and invest their own identities into goods and services.

Skeggs (1997) focuses specifically on the role of consumption in shaping femininized identities, and argues that physical appearance operates as a form of class-specific display. Femininity 'requires the display of classed dispositions, of forms of conduct and behaviour' (p. 100), and appearance becomes the means by which women are able to 'place other women' in relation to classed (heterosexual) notions of 'feminine respectability'. Women, Skeggs observes, 'are "free" to construct themselves through consumption' (p. 108), yet only certain types of femininity are seen as possessing any cultural value and therefore worth investing in. Nevertheless, as Casey and Martens (2007) argue, there have been few studies that have explored the actual lived experiences of women shopping or attempt to account for the complex gendered practices of consumption. There are even fewer studies that focus on both processes of consumption and the role of the employee in shaping the 'consumer experience'.

An organization that sells consumer goods would want the consumer to buy products rather than be consciously aware of this potential lack of fulfilment. It is therefore important for an organization that employees are able to use effective strategies to get customers to purchase. The employees must make the customers believe that the goods will fulfil the fantasy, and the employee will be much more convincing if they believe themselves that the products will do this.

Following this line of argument, both consumers and employees can be seen as mutual 'identity makers', carefully negotiating the site of consumption. This negotiation can be made all the more intricate when ideals of 'exclusivity' are included in the encounter. This term refers to the creation of a particular elitist status, which can be associated with particular products or services, with the aim of heightening their desirability. In terms of the maintenance of 'exclusivity' during a service encounter, the onus is on the service worker to ensure this encounter imparts this 'exclusivity' to the customer. Indeed, if part of the very act of consumption via the service encounter involves the construction of certain ideal identities (a certain class, style or taste), the service worker must act to ensure this act sustains its significance.

However, the idea that both consumers and employees are mutual 'identity makers' has not gone unchallenged. Taylor (2002), for instance, argues that there lacks an empirical foundation to the above argument, and contends that by focusing on the 'cultural' nature of employment relations and the influence this may have on the 'production of the self', neglects the economic relations infused in the employment relationship. Taylor suggests that there needs to be a stronger emphasis on locating mechanisms of control and the fragmented, ambiguous nature of the relationship between management, employees and customers.

It has also been argued that there is a tendency among the consumption researchers to neglect processes of consumption during service interactions (Korczyński, 2005). An additional shortcoming is that these authors have tended to treat consumption as an all encompassing process rather than examining the more micro-processes involved in consumption and the fact that this involves people with various motives and desires. Clearly, consumers engage in service interactions with different needs and identities and are, therefore, likely to have a different effect upon how easily the service encounter can be managed.

In conclusion, while the service literature has grown substantially there remains a lack of conceptualization of how customers 'as consumers' influence service work. The consumption literature, on the other hand,

emphasizes the importance of the consumer in service work but provides little empirical evidence for exactly how the consumer attempts to shape the service encounter. This article does not focus primarily on the role or perspective of the customer, but seeks to understand the role of management, employees *and* customers in shaping face-to-face service interactions. It argues that these three groups must navigate an often ambiguous social encounter and that service work cannot be understood without taking into consideration how all three groups negotiate processes of production and consumption surrounding the service encounter.

MANAGING SERVICE WORK IN THE 'EXCLUSIVE' F&S DEPARTMENT STORE

This article is based on material gathered from an ethnographic study of an 'exclusive'¹ department store in a metropolitan city in New Zealand. The store is renowned for providing exceptional customer service and has remained in the same central city location and within family hands since its establishment in 1882. A fourth-generation family member currently manages the organization. At the time when this study was conducted, the store employed 218 people. The 'guiding principles' of the store – primarily a strong service ethic – have remained the same since its conception. As the Managing Director stated in a magazine interview, '(the) guiding principles have been non-negotiable since day one' (Anonymous, 1999). Seen as a 'great survivor' in retail markets, and described as possessing an 'indefinable soul', with a 'quiet civility', the store appeals to a customer who enjoys a 'quiet (and) subdued' shopping experience, whereby customers 'can potter, drift around . . . staff smile and pass the time of day (and) politeness rules'. Regarded by some customers as 'a bit musty and fusty', others see it as reflecting 'the romance of shopping . . . it's like entering another world' (Anonymous, 1999).²

As with the majority of frontline service environments, it is predominantly women who are employed as service providers (Gutek, 1985; Reekie, 1993). This was certainly the case at F&S,³ particularly so where 'women's products' were sold. In the cosmetics department, where the majority of observations were made, there was not one permanent male staff member. There were, however, two casual male staff members, who both identified themselves as gay.

Using ethnography as the primary data collection method, the principal author was able to work for a six-week period on a full-time basis in the cosmetics department of the store. Interviews were also conducted during the observation period with management, supervisors, service

personnel and included 'on the spot' informal interviews with customers. A total of 30 interviews were conducted. Notes were made both while working at the store and after the shift had ended, based on staff comments made to the researcher while working, general staff interactions and staff–customer interactions. All employees of the store were informed via a staff letter of the researcher's presence and employees within the cosmetics department were requested to provide informed consent to participate in the study. It should be noted that the principal author had been employed as a casual employee on a regular basis while studying at university prior to conducting this research. The period between conducting the observations as an employee and previous employment was one year. As a Caucasian 'middle-class' woman in her mid–late 20s, the author possessed the 'aesthetic' and performance qualities the organization sought in its employees. The principal researcher was also a relatively regular customer of the store and so was able to reflect on her experiences as a customer/consumer and employee of the organization.

Working as a service worker enabled the researcher to become enmeshed in the day-to-day activities of the store, while also allowing her to further critically explore the embodiment of providing 'good service' from a personal perspective. Initially, the study sought to explore the emotional and gendered aspects of service work. However, as more observations were made and reflected upon, it became increasingly clear that the embodied character of the work role was a prominent component of the transformation of the sales assistants into 'high class' service providers. The myriad of ambiguities imbued in such a class-specific context also became apparent, as management were faced with shaping the behaviour of both service workers and customers through modes of embodiment.

We begin by outlining the main techniques used by F&S to shape the appearance and behaviour of employees. These techniques include recruitment and training, direct supervision of the appearance, and by implication mood, of employees, stipulating particular dress codes, and processes of socialization. Thereafter, we describe the techniques both employees and customers use to control the service encounter, and then focus more specifically on to how the behaviour of the consumers is shaped, consisting of customer intimidation, expert knowledge, and class and exclusivity. Finally, we focus more explicitly on the ambiguity of managing service work.

SHAPING THE AESTHETICS OF EMPLOYEES

Recruiting and training aesthetic labour

Much has been written about the recruitment practices of service-providing organizations. For instance, Hochschild (1983) discusses the very specific requirements of airline recruits, including physical characteristics such as weight, height, skin and teeth condition, and their general demeanour and personal qualities, including a 'positive' attitude, friendliness and willingness to defer to others. Other authors have identified the gender-specific aspects of service work (Leidner, 1991; Taylor and Tyler, 2000; Tyler and Abbott, 1998) and how women are usually preferred because of their perceived 'natural' ability to defer to others and act as 'adjuncts of control' for management (Tancred-Sheriff, 1989). Therefore, women are employed for their 'natural abilities', including their propensity to present themselves as aesthetically pleasing. This self-aesthetization remains invisible because it is projected as a 'natural' expression of a female's body (Hancock and Tyler, 2000). Here, bodies come to be 'encoded artefacts' of an 'externally imposed organizational aesthetic' as well as the 'internalization' of an 'idealized' aesthetic self (Hancock and Tyler, 2000:122, emphasis in original). However, what these studies do not pinpoint is how the manifestation of such externally and internally produced aesthetics is intertwined with class differences. By internalizing the organizational aesthetic, the employee also carries a certain social status while representing the symbolic class/status of the organization.

Not only did F&S employ⁴ mainly attractive 'younger' (i.e. 35 years and under) and predominately white females, but the majority were from the 'lower middle class'. Similar to the argument made by Gimlin (1996) in her study of a hair salon, while the F&S employees did not describe themselves as belonging to any particular social class they did regard the customers of the store as being somehow different in their social status from themselves. As with Gimlin's (1996) study, staff also spoke at length about the type of customers who shopped at F&S, with comments such as 'she likes the finer things in life', 'she expects good service because that's what she's used to' and 'a customer comes here because they want to be given the full treatment . . . they want the best and that's what we offer'.

Employees were recruited not only based on physical attractiveness,⁵ but also on their understandings of class and taste, which formed an integral part of their work. In other words, the employees not only had to 'look the part', but also had to be able to 'act the part'. Being able to 'act the part' required an appropriate understanding of upper-middle-class culture and

of suitable ways of interacting with this class. However, while employees may 'look' and 'act' according to the display rules of the organization, they were not accorded the same social position as customers within the confines of the store.⁶

Using Bourdieu's notion of 'habitus', employees must be able to embody a certain style, taste and class as representatives of the organization and the brand/s it sells. This embodiment is all the more important when the organization and its products are marketed as exclusive and associated with a particular class. Bourdieu (1986, 1990) argues that modes of embodiment and their associated physical capital act as signifiers of class, gender or racialized 'habitus', which can be defined by the relationship between the capacity to produce classifiable practices and works, and the capacity to differentiate and appreciate these practices and products in the form of 'taste'. By being connected with tastes and schemes of perception of other classes and class sectors, specific lifestyles of a class or class sector emerge. Therefore, taste is not given naturally, but rather has to do with the dialectic of structures and actions and subsequently leads to class reproduction. Bourdieu maintains that we effectively inhabit class as manifestations of economic, social and cultural capital. Wright (2005: 105), for example, showed how bookshop workers through their intermediating role between cultural production and consumption, were 'engaged in the reproduction of the cultural aspects of social class by 'shoring up' their insecure position in the relations of cultural capital, rather than simply being the taste leaders of reflexive modernity'. When we think of aesthetic labour in this sense, it can be seen as the materialization of class practices, which in turn will have a profound effect on the way we come to inhabit our bodies as well as the values attached to bodily forms (Witz et al., 2003).

F&S in this sense becomes part of the habitus of both employees and customers. Not only do employees inhabit the manifestations of class, but customers also come to the store to engage in this inhabitation. Having employees who possess the right appearance, tone of voice and confidence to deal with customers was particularly important at F&S for a number of reasons, as described in the following paragraphs.

Staff needed to be able to interact confidently with the higher social position customers by using the right tone of voice, having the 'right' appearance and being confident in directing the customer, but also needed to have the ability to defer to the customer. However, observations and interviews with staff showed it was often problematic for employees to accept in front of both customers and management the reinforcement of their social status in the store. For instance, employees talked about how

annoyed they felt when customers behaved all 'hoity toity', and as one so eloquently explained after dealing with a particularly demanding customer, 'sometimes I just think, 'who do you think you are? I'm sure you fart and burp and scratch your bum each morning too'. One incident in particular illustrated how upset staff could feel when dealing with a difficult customer. After explaining repeatedly to a customer that store policy stipulated they could not exchange a sale item, the employee faced the humiliation of a manager then over-riding the employee and, in the words of the staff member, 'letting her have her way'. The employee was visibly annoyed and commented to the researcher: 'What do they [management] expect from us? We stick by their rules, and then they change them when it suits them or suits the customer'. Or, as another employee summarized after being treated 'like pond scum' by a customer: 'They [customers] have all the rights; we have none.' It was evident that those employed on a full time basis,⁷ as opposed to part-time or casual basis, were the most disgruntled with some of the treatment they received from customers. While interviews showed that part-time or casual employees did not tend to identify so strongly with the work role or organization (e.g. 'It's just a job to me, I could be working in any store'), full-time employees did tend to see their work as an important part of their identity (e.g. 'I really like helping people . . . that's me . . . its so upsetting sometimes when you're trying to help (a customer) and they're just throwing it back in your face'). Yet this acceptance was important for management to obtain. For an employee to seriously question or attempt to change the status differential would be to invert the symbolic foundation of the store.

In addition to employing people with a strong identification with the work role, and strong ideational commitment to the symbolism of the organization and its service/commodities, training can be used to encourage employees to *consume* the ideology of the organization. While management did not consider technical skills as important for the job (see Nickson et al., 2001, for similar findings), having the ability to 'empathize' or defer to customers was considered important and formed an integral part of the service training provided. The majority of permanent staff were provided with two full days of training addressing issues such as how to deal with a difficult customer, and how to create the 'warm fuzzies' for both the employee and the customer. Unlike Witz et al.'s (2003) study, training was not provided to most staff in relation to their appearance or aesthetic qualities. It seemed to be assumed that employing someone with 'good presentation skills' at the interview stage and the influence of socialization would ensure employees adhered to the 'appearance rules' of the organization.

Nickson et al. (2001) discuss the necessity of aesthetic labourers to first consume the tone and style of the organization in order to be able to engage in the production of this style. This was achieved in the Nickson et al. study by extensive training and educating employees on the 'Elba way'. However, F&S staff had consumed the 'F&S way' prior to being employed by the organization. One department supervisor stated that:

Most people at the interview stage have a pretty good idea about what we are about . . . that we strive for the best, in fact most staff we employ are usually customers of the store anyway so they have an understanding about the service we provide.

So well known was the organization and the service ethic of the store that people were employed not only based on their appearance and demeanour but also their understanding of F&S as consumers. It is this blurring between the self-as-service producer and self-as-consumer that was one of the dominant methods used by the organization to ensure service staff provided good service. However, it was clear that there was a marked differentiation between customers and employees. While employees were expected to use their 'self as customer of F&S' understanding in providing good service, at the same time they had to adhere to the status division between themselves and the customer. Interestingly, none of the staff interviewed saw themselves as a typical or 'preferred' customer of F&S. As one commented: 'I guess I wouldn't be the usual (F&S) customer . . . [in an affected 'posh' tone] I'm just not enough of a lady perhaps.'

While training was provided to staff, most of the employees interviewed stated that they did not find it particularly useful and that most of what was covered was 'pretty obvious'. However, different store departments offered specific product training and this was particularly extensive in the cosmetics department.

Training to become a 'cosmetics girl'⁸

Although the type of training given to the 'girls' varied from brand to brand and varied in terms of its sophistication, some common themes emerged. The dominant one was the specific guidelines provided to brand representatives about how to respond to different customers. Similar to general staff training, the 'girls' were encouraged to use their own experience as a consumer/customer to guide their interaction with customers. While studies such as that of Mills-Wright (1953) outline the variety of approaches saleswomen may use to acquire a sale, employees at F&S relied

more on the actions of the customer as a way of changing their own behaviour and as a means for shaping the service encounter.

The most specific type of training programmes involve categorizing types of customers so the employee could 'read' and anticipate how to 'act' with that particular customer. The 'girls' are encouraged to 'mimic' the person, using the same verbal and non-verbal responses and actions as the customer. For example, if a customer uses quick movements and short or abrupt comments, (denoting that they are in a hurry or want rapid, efficient service) the employee must do the same.

Customers are assumed to be female; not one of the cosmetics brands had a category for male customers. Of special interest were the names given for each type of customer by some of the brands, particularly the American brands, which were predominantly animals – in particular, birds. For example, an 'eagle' was described by an employee as 'someone who knows what she wants . . . she swoops in, doesn't linger, she's in there and wants your attention . . . you don't muck around with her'. On the other hand, a 'dove' was seen as 'easier to please' and is 'usually pretty quiet, maybe a bit hesitant . . . you need to tease it out of her what she's after'. The gendered connotations that can be derived from categorizing women as 'birds' can be regarded as stereotypically feminine traits. Not only were the 'girls' able to categorize customers by interpreting and assessing their behaviour, but also categorized themselves as a particular type of customer.

This identification with the customer is similar to that found by Korczynski et al. (2000), where workers often defined themselves in terms of their identity as, and identification with, customers. Nevertheless, unlike Korczynski et al.'s findings, employees seemed to be consciously aware that such customer orientation could also prove problematic in terms of dissociating themselves from the potentially upsetting aspects of the job, and to propagate the self-as-customer orientation was not always possible. Again, employees discussed how they would be reminded by both customers and management that they were in the subservient role. As one employee commented, 'sure, you get on well with some of your customers but then the next one will just treat you like you're their servant', and reflected: 'I guess sometimes you just get a bit of a wake up call that *they* are the customer . . . they're always right, we're not.'

In sum, through recruitment and training, F&S sought to encourage employees to internalize their role as both a producer of a service/commodity, and simultaneously incorporate their understanding as a consumer of these processes/goods to their work. Nevertheless, these self-as-consumer understandings could only be used in the context of ensuring

the status differential between staff and customers was maintained, and thereby sustaining differences of class culture within the store. Hence, employees were able to enact aspects of class and gender relations and assist in maintaining these relations on behalf of the organization. Tied in with this enactment of class are also specific aesthetic qualities of the actual service worker.

To look good is to feel good

If we are to consider the aesthetics of labour as embodying the corporately produced self, the employees within the cosmetics department of the store were a prime example of this embodiment. Here, employees were quite literally 'made up' (du Gay, 1996) to embody both the product they were selling and the mood and associated behaviour preferred by the store. For instance, if one of the 'girls' was not wearing enough make-up or was not wearing the right shade or hue, the department supervisor very quickly reprimanded her. In fact, so important was having the right appearance that the supervisor would cheerily walk around the department early each morning to check on each girl's appearance and make-up.

This form of 'mood shaping' was a method frequently used by the supervisor, and she commented that she saw this as a critical part of her job, 'to keep them "up"' and to 'make sure they're smiling' and by implication happy, and added that 'when a girl looks good . . . she feels happy'. Make-up, in particular, was seen as a useful tool to effectively change a person's mood. In effect, the assumption was that if the employee is happy, she will be more likely to sell the products. If one of the girls was 'feeling tired or lousy', the supervisor would instruct her to put on a brighter 'lippy' or apply 'more blush(er)' or add 'more colour to their face'. Therefore, the management of aesthetics was seen equally as the management of emotions. This is not to suggest, however, that employees always complied with these managerial make-up expectations. On occasion some employees would purposefully wear 'sombre' or more 'edgy' make-up shades and were well aware that the supervisor would not be impressed by their choice. On those occasions, the employees would either try to avoid the supervisor on her morning round or, if they were 'caught' by the supervisor, would say that they were just experimenting with some new products in the range they were selling, to which the supervisor would suggest to them to 'avoid those types of shades tomorrow'. Employees would immediately recognize whether a fellow employee was having a day of quiet (and visible) rebellion.

Dress codes

Further embodiment of the job role was evident in the dress codes for staff in the store. Such dress codes formed part of the production and reproduction of gender difference within the store. All women in the store were expected to only wear skirts or dresses to work, and trousers could only be worn with a matching jacket. The cosmetics department supervisor believed that 'when people dress smartly, they conduct themselves nicely'. If an employee did not comply with these dress codes (e.g. wear trousers with no matching jacket), they were immediately sent home to change.

Socialization

While management endeavoured to ensure that employees adhered to the appearance expectations of the store, it was predominantly fellow employees who had the most influence over staff. Indeed, the principal researcher experienced this herself, with the other 'girls' setting about 'transforming' her with a make-over. Upon reflection, the researcher is a prime example of the desire a new employee has to fit in with the other staff, and this was achieved in the cosmetics department by 'looking the part', and to 'look the part' was to embody 'the part'. The aesthetics of the store itself also served as part of the embodiment of the work role, as there were clearly demarcated 'on stage' and 'off stage' sections of the store. Watching staff prepare for the day ahead before the store opened was like watching a stage production in preparation. Before the bright lights and classical piped music came on, staff would be busy applying their make-up with an expert hand at the counters. Once the store was open staff would take their counter positions, their posture would change and they adopted the face of a willing sales person, ready to serve.

In conclusion, through the careful management of appearance via make-up and clothing and the use of 'performance skills', employees were able to embody their work role by personifying both the style of the organization and the aesthetic product they represented. In this way, they stand on the nexus of production and consumption and represent the embodiment of both organizing logics. However, while management was usually able to effectively manage the appearance of employees, customers represented a more problematic entity to control.

INFLUENCING THE AESTHETICS OF CUSTOMERS

'Exclusive employees' and customer intimidation

The cosmetics department in the store was widely regarded by most people (i.e. middle-class types) as very intimidating. This intimidating façade

formed part of the symbolism of the organization. This customer intimidation within an exclusive environment parallels findings in Sherman's (2007) research based on luxury hotels, which discusses the customer's 'fear of not belonging' and the intimidating hotel atmosphere. However, this sense of intimidation in F&S was strongly aligned to notions of 'perfected femininity'. The 'cosmetics girls' of F&S were expected to wear substantial amounts of make-up and to be very 'well groomed' at all times. The girls were placed at counters displaying the cosmetic products, promising youth and beauty, in addition to displays showing large photos of models, which created a rather intimidating ambience. As the cosmetics department was the most profitable in the store (as is the case with most department stores, according to Reekie, 1993) most customers were forced to walk through the area, surrounded by cultural reminders of a 'perfected' female identity. Customers are encouraged to become part of this culturally accepted form of 'beauty' through the aesthetic deployment of in-store advertising, branding and physically attractive employees, ready and willing to 'help' them explore and 'find' a new or 'improved' feminine identity. This exploration may be fuelled by feelings of anxiety or by a desire to 'treat' oneself to a product that symbolizes possibilities. As Black (2004) notes, there are a number of reasons why women would seek to engage in beautification processes. However, Black argues that whatever reason women may give for this endeavour, it can be understood as a process of exploration and negotiation of meanings of 'appropriate' forms of femininity. This knowledge of 'appropriate' femininity is socially situated, and translated into consumption practices within the specific social positions occupied by women (Black, 2004: 79).

Not all customers saw the 'cosmetics girls' as representing a desirable feminine identity, and a number of customers commented on the 'stand-offishness' of the 'girls' and the intimidating atmosphere created in the department. However, this customer intimidation served to convey the exclusivity of the organization while also portraying the cosmetics girls as 'extra-ordinary' with porcelain skin, bright glistening eyes and glowing lips. It was patently clear when a customer entered the store who were the staff members.

The cultural and economic influence of the department store has been noted by Reekie (1993), who argues that the department store represents a cultural and sexual site that participates in the creation of new social and economic relationships. With a particular focus on 'capturing' the female customer, Reekie (1993) contends that through the sexualization of consumption, seen in products such as make-up and other beauty products,

women are offered a 'complete' feminine identity through which they can gain social acceptance. Through advertising and other media the department store materializes ideas of desire and sexual desirability, and staff are the prime form of this materialization.

The tactics used by the cosmetics industry to sell their products has been criticized by a number of feminists. Naomi Wolf (1991) makes a rather amusing yet poignant attack of the entire cosmetics industry and the 'cultist' practices of the cosmetics saleswomen. Like a 'professional cult converter', the 'moment of truth' comes when the saleswoman stands closely and stares fixedly into the customer's eyes, convicting her of various sins and errors: 'you use *what* on your face? . . . you're *destroying* the delicate skin under your eyes' (1991: 108). Indeed, most of the staff gained a great deal of satisfaction in 'sucking in' a customer by admonishing them and then telling them what type of (expensive) product they should be using. For example, staff treated the selling of certain products as a competition, not only between themselves and the customer (could she 'win over' the customer and convince her to buy) but also with other staff members. The researcher would see 'the girls' discuss which product they would try and 'push' that day or week (most often a new product) and agree to have a friendly competition over who was the most successful at selling the product. If an employee felt a customer might be interested in a similar product (e.g. skin cream), they would recommend to them this particular item and try to convince them of the product's various 'ground breaking' properties and the 'incredible benefits' they would notice if they used it (and then refer to specific parts of their face the employee thought the customer would be concerned about). After such a sale, the employees would share their elation, making various comments to each other like 'ha ha, got her!' in reference to the customer. The employees, including the researcher, would compare their sales records and congratulate each other on their sales tactics. This gave the employees a sense of power and ownership of the service interaction. Of importance here also is the issue of age. Staff tended to regard 'older' customers (i.e. those expressing concern over the visibility of ageing) as potentially good customers, as there was more perceived opportunity to sell the more expensive anti-ageing products in order to help them 'win the battle' over ageing.

The majority of 'girls' commented during interviews or while on the shop-floor on how 'irrational' they felt this pursuit of 'ideal' femininity could be, and as one quipped to the researcher after selling some products to an elderly woman, 'I know that some of these products aren't really going to make much difference to some customers, but I would never admit that

to [the cosmetics brand]'. At the same time, interviews and staff comments indicated most of 'the girls' also saw their job as 'helping people' by 'improving them . . . and showing them' how to use products. This seemingly 'irrational' behaviour needs to be seen as part of a constant negotiation between what are appropriate 'ways of being' as women, made up of a complex interweaving of their social location (such as class, age and ethnicity) and their 'positional' location (i.e. more subjective experiences and understandings). The cosmetics girls saw their job as helping these women to navigate these potentialities and to assist with the 'appropriate' performance of gender. Gendered performance, as Black (2004: 182) observes, can be seen as a result of the 'self' or embodied position taken by women, which is closely tied to social position.

Nevertheless it is the multi-billion dollar cosmetics industry, advertisers and other types of mass media industries and management of F&S who reap the rewards from such 'positioning' and serving and selling techniques. In this sense, the cosmetics girls act as 'adjuncts' between the beauty industry/enterprise and managerial control. However, these selling techniques must be located within a hierarchical social positioning between the cosmetics girl and the customer, where both use their understandings of what are appropriate ways of being women within particular social positions.

Expert knowledge

Part of the control moves used on customers was based on the cosmetic girls' 'expertise' in the aesthetics of the consumption experience. Their job was to use their expert knowledge of the beauty products to entice the customer into buying their product. However, this expertise was not only about the products themselves, but also how to apply them. The employee's role was to ensure customers complied with the 'good service ethic' of the store by directing and therefore managing their behaviour in such a way that they received 'full service'. If a customer expressed interest in a product, the employee needed to make sure they did not go behind the counter and look at the products, as was acceptable in a less 'exclusive' context. Instead, the employee would bring the products to them. If a customer wanted to try the products, the employee would sit them down and apply these products while complimenting her on how lovely she was now looking with the addition of the products. Such close proximity to the customer formed part of the 'body work' of the employee (Wolkowitz, 2002). The customer had to trust that the employee was an 'expert' in make-up and beauty products, and that they were not making the customer look unattractive.

When asked what were the more enjoyable aspects of the job, most of the 'girls' indicated during interviews that they enjoyed being given the opportunity to use their 'professional skills' and expertise immensely. This was what F&S was synonymous with: customers could go into the store and have 'real experts' tend to them. Part of this expertise involved using a specific language, consisting of scientific jargon (e.g. 'peptides'), using language to describe the products (e.g. 'very sheer', 'a full-volume, high-definition look'), using special tools (brushes, sponges, tissues) and methods of product application. This expertise was enveloped also in a certain style and tone as the employee pampered the customer while instructing her how to behave. Customers complied with these instructions because the employee possessed knowledge about 'appearance skills', how to apply products and what are 'appropriate', fashionable forms of femininity.

Class and exclusivity as control moves

While the role of the cosmetics girls was to act as 'adjuncts' between the beauty enterprise and the organization, they also acted as adjuncts by assisting management to retain the symbolic exclusivity of the store. For example, one employee recounted to the researcher an incident she had just had with a customer, who she described as having 'very dirty hands and nails', implying she was not well dressed and should have not been in the store anyway. This customer began to try various make-up products and inquired about their cost. The employee told her, to which the customer became irate and told the employee that the prices were ludicrous and 'a total rip-off'. The employee informed her that 'perhaps [she] would like to try a cheaper brand at a pharmacy'. The customer then yelled at her with a number of expletives, catching the attention of all the other customers in the store. Rather than apologize or try to 'smooth over' the customer's angry shouting, as would be expected of employees, the employee started to reprimand the customer:

I said to her 'you cannot raise your voice like that here and you cannot use that type of language in this store' . . . [she] may use that sort of language at home, but [she] cannot do that at F&S.

This would appear as rather audacious, to be 'telling off' a customer. However, the other staff were most sympathetic towards the employee. One employee commented that 'you have to let them know what's acceptable, you can't do that sort of thing, not in this place . . . you've got to let them know that'. Such admonishing of 'misbehaving' customers occurred on a number of occasions in the store, the most 'offensive' and frequent being

'help-your-selves' (those who did not wait to be served by staff) and those who were 'poorly' dressed.

While there were no regulations dictating how 'poorly' dressed people should be treated, it was widely assumed that such people were not 'acceptable' and were not deserving of F&S service. One employee commented on how surprised she was that customers could ever try to go against the social rules of the store, and commented that 'customers should know they can't do that (they) have to follow our rules as well'. Just as employees had to conform to socially/organizationally prescribed rules or norms of the store, so too did customers have to conform. Warhurst and Nickson (2007) argue that in 'exclusive' forms of aesthetic labour, service workers may have a great deal of influence over the customer. While the authors admit that service worker subordination certainly still exists, an emerging 'gentrification' of some retail and hospitality jobs points to the increased ability for aesthetic labour employees to control, indeed be 'superordinate' in some cases, to the customer. By treating some customers with disdain or indicating to the customer they are not necessarily 'always right' (p. 792), within an exclusive context service employees can reconfigure the service interaction so they enhance their status in relation to the customer. In essence, the symbolism of F&S provided the employees with the leverage to assert their perceived (albeit temporary) higher status.

Some customers, however, seemed to enter the store simply to be noticed. The most frequent type was known by staff as the 'Friday night crazies'.⁹ These were people who would not shop at the store, but for some reason came to the store during late night shopping on Fridays. Some appeared to have been drinking, although most seemed to have peculiarities and would do everything a person of 'good taste' would not, such as talk loudly or mumble to themselves, dress 'poorly' and show no sense of 'style', and generally created a stir as they paraded this 'bad behaviour' in front of staff. Most of the time employees would not bother acknowledging them unless they were particularly disrespectful of the store norms, where the control moves would begin in an attempt to get the person to leave the store in the politest but firmest way possible. Had the employees not perceived it as important or identity-enhancing to ensure customers complied with the behavioural norms of the store and exclusivity, they would not have attempted to assert the authority of the store and all that it symbolizes.

Unless a customer complains about such control moves on the part of the service provider, the interests of the organization are fulfilled. That is, the standards and elitist culture of the store are maintained when employees

manage customers and/or the service encounter, thereby reinforcing the symbolic power of store management and the organization as a whole. As such, management implicitly condoned the employees' 'telling off' and attempts to manage certain customers. Customers' implicit understanding of the authority and power of the store meant that official complaints were made very rarely. Most customer complaints were related to two types of behaviour from employees: (a) the service providers' non-compliance with the general ideology of the store (i.e. politeness, attentiveness, 'always putting the customer first', etc.); and (b) an expression of indifference on the part of the employee (e.g. cosmetics 'girls' appearing 'snobby').

Therefore, it would appear that customers implicitly recognize that they have no personal justification or right to attempt to go against employees' control moves, because they are not 'playing by the rules' of the organization. In the context of exclusivity, the very organizational characteristics and conditions that may be oppressive to workers can become resources in the creation of 'nonsubordinate selves' (Sherman, 2007: 17).

THE AMBIGUITY OF CONTROL

Gaining control over the service work was not a totalizing practice, as all three groups implicated in the service encounter (the employee, management and customers) had to negotiate between modes of power and submission in order to sustain the ideology of consumption and the exclusivity of the store. This negotiation was particularly ambiguous when the dominant 'symbolic order' of (hetero)sexuality was challenged within the store. While management could implicitly dictate what form of sexual expression was permissible in the store (and utilize various forms of this to sell products) the sexuality of customers was problematic.

The most ambiguous type of customer to frequent the store were drag queens. The spectacle that they created when they entered the store was farcical. The queens seemed to represent everything the store did not; loud over-the-top clothing and make-up, non-heterosexuality and part of the 'fringe' of social cultural relations. As Butler (2004) argues, drag can be seen as a representation of the 'unreal', of a fake or copy of the 'real'. In so doing, it makes us confront our version of 'reality' and questions what it means to be a 'woman' and thereby challenges the binary system of gender. It suggests that the creation of gender and gender identity is far more malleable and arbitrary than we assume.

Nevertheless, within the context of the store, the gender binary was clearly maintained by staff even though there were no explicit regulations from management about how to 'deal' with customers who were outside

the gender norm. It was evident that staff were not sure what to do with drag queens, as they were known to spend a great deal of money on beauty products, yet they did not appear to fit in with 'acceptable' types of customers. While it seemed relatively clear to staff, albeit through their own implicit awareness, who were 'legitimate' types of customers, those that challenged the dominant symbolic order of organizing in terms of gender/sexuality were a more ambiguous entity. Employees realized it served the organization's best interests to serve drag queens, but they were also aware that the logic of production in the store dictated that only certain people could be allowed to enter the symbolic realms of exclusivity and elitism via consumption in an environment of 'good taste'.

Employee honesty

Although the role of employees was to represent authority while upholding the exclusivity of the store, there was also a certain degree of 'space' within the service encounter that allowed the employee to influence the behaviour of the customer, irrespective of the customer's class or behaviour. A frequent strategy used by employees was to 'be honest' with customers about how effective certain products might be for their 'particular needs'. During a make-over, for instance, an employee told a difficult 'older' female customer that they had very 'crepey' skin around their eyes and therefore was 'very difficult to effectively apply the make-up'. The customer then asked what products could alleviate this, to which the employee suggested, with an angelic smile, some form of surgery, and proceeded to suggest different surgical clinics. The customer listened intently, believing that the employee was simply giving good advice as part of the 'good service' ethic of the store. However, the employee was intentionally trying to lower the self-esteem of the customer. Following this interaction, the researcher asked the employee why they had suggested surgery, to which she responded:

Some of these older women need a reality check! She was being so bossy with me . . . and I just thought 'ok, you want to be given a make-over, well, no amount of make-up is going to fix those wrinkles!'

The employee also thought it was 'the same with women who have had too much surgery':

Who do they think they're fooling? They tell you they look after their skin really well and use all this stuff, and I can see how

many face lifts and peels they've had, so I might just say to them that the products they're using aren't really doing the best job . . . they believe you because they think we know 'good healthy skin' when we see it.

What is surprising about these forms of 'honesty' is that management allows this when it does not serve the interests of the organization. While the department manager did not witness this particular employee/customer interaction, staff recounted how the manager had seen similar interactions, and one employee regaled how the manager had said to her later in the day 'that was a bit cheeky' and quipped with a wink 'but as long as the customer is happy!' All the more intriguing is that a customer as in the example above would be so willing to trust the expertise and opinion of the cosmetics staff to the extent that they were willing to be belittled. While customers may just 'go along' with the 'service script' they expected during the interaction, it was surprising the extent to which customers seemed to trust the advice given to them by staff. Indeed, the researcher found herself resorting to telling customers a few 'non truths' because of a lack of product knowledge, and each time the customer would buy the product.

While the high expectations of customers most often constrained the behaviour of the employee, the desire for both the employee and customer to engage in 'appropriate' forms of femininity seemed to be so powerful in some instances that customers were willing to believe almost anything the employee told them. As one customer commented after being asked if she was happy with what the staff member had chosen for her: 'She's the expert and she would know, so I'm happy if she is!'

'Extra' service

In addition to exercising a variety of control moves over more difficult customers, if an employee liked a customer, and genuinely felt that the brand they represented did not have what the customer really needed, they would not try to sell their products to the customer. For instance, the employee might show the customer other brands around the store (which management condoned, although the cosmetics companies were less than favourable about this practice), but the employee would also suggest other stores where the customer could find a certain product. Management implicitly condoned suggesting other stores and believed this practice showed the 'extra mile' staff would go for customers; however, this 'extra service' was enveloped in notions of sustaining the exclusivity of the store. For instance, the department supervisor felt that such strategies differ-

entiated the store from other 'cheaper', less exclusive types of stores where the staff would try to 'push a product onto customers'. However, at F&S, the staff were not so 'pushy' according to the supervisor, implying the store did not need to resort to such 'coarse' selling techniques.

The assumption seemed to be that customers would still come back to the store in the future because of such a 'genuine concern' for their welfare. However, if this tactic was used too often, clearly it would not work in the organization's favour. Indeed, one employee was reprimanded by her supervisor for suggesting alternative products and stores a little too often.

DISCUSSION

This article has explored how both processes of production and consumption shape the managerial control of employees and consumers in service work. The findings suggest that the control of the service encounter cannot be fully understood unless the influence of employees, management *and* customers are considered as an integrated whole. More specifically, the findings demonstrate that service work involves not only managerial influence over processes of production (i.e. the service worker) but is also a site where processes of consumption must be managed. Service work, in this way, can be seen as a site where employees, management and customers endeavour to influence the service encounter. The complexity of this relationship, and the ambiguities imbued in the logics of production and consumption, mean that all three groups must accommodate the other/s to help sustain the service encounter. In particular, the findings show how management, employees and customers must coalesce in order to uphold the precarious relationship between the logics of production and consumption.

To sustain the ideology of exclusivity it was necessary to employ people with a certain understanding of class relations and how to become part of the organizational habitus. Employees in particular become physical artefacts of the organization and portray certain styles of taste and class associated with the organization. However, ensuring that employees accepted their own social standing as being inferior to that of customers was a delicate process. Through recruitment, training and supervision, employees were encouraged to *consume* the organization's purpose and symbolism. Through the management of appearance, employees embodied their work role and personified the style of the organization and the aesthetic product they represented. In this way, they stand on the nexus of production and consumption and represent the embodiment of both organizing logics.

Added to the complexity of managing service work is the need to influence the behaviour of the customer. The work role of employees requires that they assist in managing and sustaining this habitus for the customers by being organizational gatekeepers, ensuring only the 'right type' of customer engages in consumption in the store. However, while management used a number of strategies to ensure employees represented the authority, symbolism and the exclusivity of the store, these strategies did not always ensure customers could be effectively managed. The negotiation for control over the service encounter was particularly ambiguous when exploring issues of sexuality and employees' 'extra good service'. For example, not serving non-heterosexual customers went against organizational goals, as those customers were renowned for high rates of cosmetics consumption. But constrained by the ideal of exclusivity, the organization was forced to sustain a certain paradox; namely, to go against the goal of selling products. Management needed to allow employees to exercise their expertise over customers and permit customers to take their business elsewhere, because to deride this expertise and 'good service' would be to deride the service ethic and symbolism of the store.

In this sense the organization is constrained by its own ideology; namely, the need to sustain the class-driven ideal of consumerist exclusivity while also sustaining the logic of production, which is to sell goods. In essence, the logics of production and consumption clashed at times, but this was both managed and accommodated by management, employees and customers. In other words, the logics of production and consumption cannot co-exist without concession and negotiation between management, employees and customers.

CONCLUSION

In this study, we aimed to bring the management of both production and consumption closer to the foreground of service work research. We argued that combining these two areas of thought provides a greater awareness of how management as well as how employees and customers control service work. To date, this is a neglected facet of the service work research. While most literature has focused on how processes of production are managed, there is little research that accounts for how consumption intervenes in this process and how all three groups (management, employees, customers) negotiate both logics. This study shows that one group and logic cannot exist without the other/s. The processes of control in service work, as we have shown, are far more complex and precarious than previously thought.

Clearly, this is an exploratory study looking at a particular case, and as such this study and discussion may raise more questions than answers. We believe that any research that fuels further studies and debate in the area can only be a positive progression. We have certainly seen important developments in the area of production and the relationship between management and the employee. However, we hope that placing greater emphasis on the customer in this relationship and introducing elements of class in a consumption/service context will contribute to future developments that provide a fuller understanding of the nature of control in service work.

Notes

1. The term 'exclusive' has been used to demonstrate how the store differentiates itself in relation to other department stores.
2. Although this is a 'puff piece' from a magazine, it does encapsulate well the service ethic of the store and common public perception of the organization.
3. A pseudonym has been used to protect the anonymity of the research participants.
4. The store recruited employees rather than the individual cosmetics brands.
5. As evidenced by the attractiveness of the majority of the employees, comments made by the department manager in reference to employees being able to sell the products by 'demonstrating them well (on themselves)' and the cosmetic companies' job advertisements stating preference for someone 'who takes pride in their appearance', among other 'physical requirements'.
6. It is worth noting that differences in race were not a particularly noticeable concern in this context. This could be because in New Zealand where the study was conducted there is a significant degree of inter-marriage between the aboriginal people (the Maoris) and the Caucasian settlers. This is not to suggest that there is 'racial harmony' throughout New Zealand, but the issue of race is perhaps not as prevalent as it might be in a department store in the USA, for example. Perhaps the most significant or noticeable issue of race was the presence of Asian customers, who were known to spend a lot on beauty products, which meant the employees welcomed the opportunity to sell products to these customers.
7. The majority (i.e. 80%) of employees of the store were full-time.
8. The term 'cosmetic girl' was used by both management and staff. This term has been retained as an illustration of the gendered elements and connotations of the work role for the cosmetics sales staff.
9. The term 'Friday night crazies' was used by staff. These were customers whose behaviour is difficult to define, although their general behaviour did not 'fit in' with what most customers would do. Most of the staff spoken to during observations, and the researcher herself, understood these 'not-preferred' customers to have some type of mental disability. In New Zealand, the mental health system has been woefully under-resourced and it is not unusual to see people suffering from these disabilities around Auckland city (where the study was conducted) on Friday nights or weekend nights. Why they appeared on Friday nights the authors

are not entirely sure, although it might be partly due to the fact the city mission refuge for the homeless, drug addicts and alcoholics wasn't far from the store. Staff tended to just ignore these customers in the hope they would just go way (and perhaps also out of fear of what they might do). There was usually only one store manager on site on Friday nights so there was less managerial awareness of these types of customers coming into store, which may explain why the organization did not try to get rid of them. In some ways, ignoring them may be seen as a way of maintaining the calm and 'refined' ambience of the store rather than creating a stir.

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