TIPPING CAPITAL AND THE GUISE OF GRATUITY:
WOMEN SERVERS' PERSPECTIVES OF SEXUALIZED INTERACTIONS
IN THE SPORTS BAR AND GRILL INDUSTRY

by

Lisa L. Walker

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Thesis Committee:

Dr. Jackie Eller, Chair

Dr. Gretchen Webber

Dr. Meredith Dye

To Brianna Young —

whose resilience, strength, and life experiences inspire so many of my questions about the status of women in society.

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ABSTRACT

The masculinized territory of the sports bar and grill provides a complex setting for women servers' experiences of sexualized interactions in the workplace. I explore servers' perspectives of their interactions with customers and the influence of their structure of compensation on their experiences. The results of this analysis are based on interviews with six women servers who had worked in seven sports bar and grills in Tennessee, and field research as an observer within these restaurants. These findings suggest that the form of "tipping capital" that the server's structure of compensation provides to customers may be especially problematic within atmospheres that capitalize on the "sex appeal" of women servers. Their structure of compensation influenced servers' ability to end unwelcomed interactions with customers, and fluctuations in customers' "tipping capital" corresponded to the pace of each restaurant. These findings have specific implications for law and policy related to "third-party" sexual harassment.

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INTRODUCTION

In general, women make up the largest proportion of workers in low paid, low status jobs overall, including 71% of all "waiters/waitresses" in the restaurant industry (U.S. Department of Labor 2013). In particular, the position of women servers within "heteromasculine-oriented" sports bar and grills, and the structure and terms of their employment, relate to broader gender equity issues in the U.S. workforce, such as sex discrimination, occupational segregation, and the devaluation of "feminine work" in the larger society. In this thesis, I examine women's experiences of sexualized interactions in the workplace through in-depth interviews with six women servers who worked in a variety of heteromasculine sports bar and grills, and through my observations within the contexts of these restaurants. The findings of this study have particular implications for sexual harassment law and policy, and more specifically, policies to prohibit and remedy "third-party" sexual harassment. Moreover, this research adds to previous sociological examinations of sexual harassment by highlighting the influences of the structure in which restaurant servers are compensated and the construction of the "feminine" role of serving within this masculinized territory.

More specifically, the exemption of most restaurant servers from receiving the federal minimum wage required for all other employees, and the lack of additional wage guidelines for "tipped employees" in states such as Tennessee, allow the server's employer to structure her terms of employment so that her income is primarily dependent on the "gratuity" of customers. Due to the relatively low status and wage of "serving" in general, women are often faced with having little control over their work environment, and must carefully negotiate their interactions with customers, managers, and one

another. Within their negotiations with customers, the server's agency is structured by her need for generating income through tips. Furthermore, within the heteromasculine-oriented bar and grill niche of the restaurant industry, the informal structure of "the tip" and the arbitrary basis of the server's income translate into a customer-server hierarchy that magnifies broader gender inequalities and poses challenges for women servers who seek to avoid, manage, or end unwelcomed sexualized interactions. One of the most persistent influences on these servers' experiences of sexualized interactions with customers is the structure of "the tip"—the system of compensation in which restaurant servers receive the majority of their income from paying customers, rather than their employers.

The consequence of "the tip" within the context of the heteromasculine bar and grill is a gendered hierarchy whereby primarily men as customers evaluate and compensate women as the majority of servers, without facing any serious consequences for the scope of their appraisal or an unreasonably low amount of "gratuity." The three primary themes that emerged across my interviews with women servers stem from the foundations of this tenuous structure of compensation: First, the influence of "the tip" as a gendered structure that contributes to the narrow constructions of femininity expected of the server; second, the implications of customers' informal discretionary power over women servers, what I refer to as "tipping capital," within the context of restaurants that capitalize on the appearance and sexuality of women servers; and third, the influence of the tipping volume and table turnover within each restaurant's context on customers' "tipping capital" and the server's "tipping point"—the point at which a server decides she is no longer willing to participate in "the tip." The findings of this research suggest that in

workplaces that emphasize the gender and sexuality of their workers to attract customers, and then place those employees in the position to obtain their primary income from customers, the employer's failure to provide protection from damages to their employees' income may be a significant influence on the server's ability to end unwelcomed and persistent sexualized interactions.

In this thesis, I argue that the unwelcomed sexualized interactions with customers, or "third-party" sexual harassment, that women servers experience within heteromasculine sports bar and grills is a phenomenon that should be distinguished from other models of abuse and consent. These servers experienced sexualized encounters within restaurant atmospheres that are designed to appeal to men through sports, beer, and by capitalizing on the servers' performances of femininity and sexual desirability. In contrast to women in jobs whose primary goal is to provide a form of sexual pleasure for customers, women servers in heteromasculine sports bar and grills have the primary task of providing table service and the structure of "the tip" shapes their interactions with customers, similar to the job expectations and models of compensation that constrain other restaurant servers. However, in environments in which the server role is constructed as feminine, and the atmosphere is permeated with themes of heteromasculine dominance, these elements combine to create a type of "tipping capital" for the customer that has negative implications for the server's ability to earn her income in a workplace free of persistent "third-party" sexual harassment.

LITERATURE REVIEW: SEXUALIZED INTERACTIONS IN THE WORKPLACE

A variety of academic disciplines examine issues relevant to sexualized interactions in the workplace; three of these fields include sociology, law, and feminist

jurisprudence. Despite disagreement among feminist theorists over whether the legal

system should be used as a way to promote social change, a primary contention of

feminist jurisprudence is that the law reflects and perpetuates gendered inequalities in the

larger society (Thomas and Boisseau 2011; Barkan 2009). Because the majority of those

who legislate and enforce the law have been and still are men, feminist scholars argue

that laws and social policies do not reflect women's lived experiences (Lindgren et al.

2005; Mackinnon 2005). Sociological perspectives of law echo this critical view of the

disparity between the intended and actual outcomes of law and policy—i.e. the difference

between "law in books and law in action" (Pound 1910; See also Barkan 2009). Previous

studies in sociology related to this research have examined issues such as sexual

harassment policies and outcomes, women in overtly sexualized occupations, and

sexualized interactions within a variety of restaurant settings. Because sexualized

interactions in the workplace have direct implications for sexual harassment law and

policies, I begin by reviewing relevant legal foundations and scholarship.

Legal Background of Sexual Harassment

For most of US history, employers could legally discriminate against women on

the basis of sex. Sex discrimination in employment became illegal after the passing of the

Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Lindgren et al. 2005; Barkan 2009). Title VII of this Act

explicitly prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, as well as other protected

categories, regarding a person's terms or privileges of employment (EEOC 1990;

Lindgren et al 2005; Ream 2000). When scholars, activists, and plaintiffs first raised the

issue of sexual harassment—at the time described as "unwanted sexual attention toward

women"—the courts denied that Title VII was legally applicable to these "private matters" (Lindgren et al. 2005:139).

The first cases of sexual harassment recognized by the U.S. Supreme Court were primarily cases of *quid pro quo* harassment, in which a supervisor sexually propositions a subordinate in a way that reasonably interferes with the conditions of her employment (Ream 2000). Starting in the 1980s, courts began to recognize another type of sexual harassment as a violation of Title VII—"hostile environment" sexual harassment (Lindgren et al. 2005; Sanville 1999). Feminist and political theorist Catherine MacKinnon describes "hostile environment" sexual harassment as "the situation in which sexual harassment simply makes the work environment unbearable" (1979:40). In other words, "hostile environment" sexual harassment refers to a setting in which sexual comments, behaviors, gestures, or even "humor" are so severe and pervasive in the work atmosphere that it interferes with the performance of one's job.

The most recent decisions in cases of sexual harassment imply that the categories of *quid pro quo* and "hostile environment" sexual harassment are not mutually exclusive. For example, situations of *quid pro quo* harassment may also constitute a "hostile environment" when a supervisor's harassment of an employee reasonably interferes with the performance of her job and conditions of employment (EEOC 1990). Today, the agency charged with monitoring Title VII violations—the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)—defines sexual harassment as "unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical harassment of a sexual nature" when the conduct "affects an individual's employment, unreasonably interferes with an individual's work performance, or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive

work environment." (EEOC 2009). The U.S. Supreme Court has held that in order for a

plaintiff to have cause for action in a "hostile environment" sexual harassment complaint,

the standard must be met that "a reasonable person" would find the environment to be

hostile or abusive, in addition to the plaintiff herself (See *Faragher v. City of Boca Raton*

1998; *Harris v. Forklift Systems, Inc.* 1993).

Although most Americans still think of sexual harassment as following the model

of *quid pro quo* harassment, such as when the perpetrator is a male superior to the female

subordinate victim (Bursik and Gefter 2011), U.S. courts eventually recognized sexual

harassment between equally positioned coworkers, the harassment of and by female

superiors and male subordinates (Lingren et al. 2005), and in some cases, sexual

harassment perpetrated by a "third party" (Ream 2000; Sanville 1999). *Quid pro quo*

sexual harassment case law is relevant to the issues I examine in this research, since my

findings suggest that customers take on a position of authority similar to a fellow-

employee supervisor within individual interactions with women servers, and therefore

may also constitute a "hostile environment." Furthermore, because I focus on servers'

sexualized interactions with customers, non-employee or "third-party" sexual harassment

is a particularly relevant legal issue to these findings.

Third-party sexual harassment. An unsettled debate among legal scholars is

whether and under what circumstances an employer is liable for the harassment of their

employees perpetrated by "third parties," such as clients or customers, with whom the

employee interacts during the course of performing her job (McGinley 2006; Sanville

1999; Cahill 1995; Aalberts and Seidman 1994). In *Meritor Savings Bank, FSB v. Vinson*

(1986), the U.S. Supreme Court held that Title VII provides protection for employees

from a "hostile" work environment caused by *quid pro quo* sexual harassment, yet the *Meritor* Court did not distinguish between harassment perpetrated by coworkers and non-employees. However, the EEOC stipulates, "the harasser can be the victim's supervisor, a supervisor in another area, a co-worker, or someone who is not an employee of the employer, such as a client or customer" (EEOC 2009). An important consideration in these cases is the employer's negligence—whether the "employer or its supervisory employees knew or should have known of the harassment and failed to take immediate and appropriate corrective action" (Cahill 1995:4).

Cases of "third-party" sexual harassment perpetrated by customers often involve the issue of employer enforced uniform requirements that arguably invite sexual comments and gestures from customers, and therefore, may create a hostile and discriminatory work environment (Hazen and Syrdahl 2010; See also *EEOC v. Newton Inn Associates* 1986; *EEOC v. Sage Realty Corp*. 1981). In one of the first cases of "third-party" sexual harassment involving the employee's uniform— *EEOC v. Sage Realty Corp.* (1981)— a former lobby attendant sued her employer for requiring her to wear a provocative outfit that appeared to be made out of an American flag. The district court ruled in favor of the plaintiff, finding that the company was negligent since they were aware that "wearing this uniform subjected her to sexual harassment" (Cahill 1995:3). Based on *Sage* and updated EEOC guidelines*,* courts have begun to hold employers liable for damages when the employer requires female employees to wear revealing or provocative outfits as a condition of employment and they experience sexual harassment by non-employees (McGinley 2006; Ream 2000; For example, see *EEOC v. Newton Inn Associates* 1986). Some courts have found that employers were not only

negligent in protecting employees from harassment, but that they also encouraged the harassing behavior from customers by requiring the provocative uniforms (Ream 2000). Furthermore, case law regarding "third-party" sexual harassment indicates that employers who require revealing uniforms or use sexual innuendo as a primary attraction to the business should establish sound procedures for handling complaints that result from their own construction of a sexualized atmosphere (Kamer and Keller 2003).

Legal scholars, Grover and Piro (2010), argue that the social context and hierarchy of the relationship between the harasser and the harassed should be used to decide whether or not sexual behaviors are "pervasive or severe." Grover and Piro (2010) support this recommendation with sociological and other social science research demonstrating that victims experience greater harm from sexual harassment when the harasser is in an authoritative position over the victim. Economic and legal scholar, Blair Druhan (2013) conducted a survey of federal employees to understand what factors influenced victim interpretations of sexual harassment, and his findings suggest that workers are "significantly more likely to believe that sexually suggestive actions constitute harassment if they are performed by a supervisor than if they are performed by a coworker" (2013:377). In fact, when a court examines the liability of an employer for coworker sexual harassment, a standard consideration of the "totality of circumstances" is whether or not the perpetrator of the harassment is in a position of authority over the employee (See *Burlington Industries, Inc. v. Ellerth* 1998*; Faragher v. City of Boca Raton* 1998). In this research, I examine the sexualized interactions between women servers and customers. Due to the customer's non-employee status, the hierarchical positions of the harassers and the harassed in customer-server interactions prompt even

more obscurity than when a perpetrator of harassment is a recognized superior over the victim. However, the level of influence the customer has on the server's compensation within each interaction, the amount of authority the customer has in evaluating the server's performance, and the customer's lack of accountability for how he exercises his position may elevate the severity of "third-party" sexual harassment within this context due to this situation's similarities to the supervisor-subordinate relationship.

Sexual Harassment Studies

Interpretations of sexualized interactions are highly complicated by the subjectivities of the people involved, and not all sexualized interactions in the workplace can be classified as cases of "sexual harassment" (EEOC 2009; Giuffre and Williams 1994). On the other hand, many women who experience unwelcomed interactions that would legally constitute sexual harassment are reluctant to categorize their experiences as worthy of filing a formal complaint (Barkan 2009; Marshall 2005). This reluctance can stem from complicated company procedures, coworker attitudes, and other organizational characteristics that inhibit employees' willingness or ability to seek remedies for the damages they experience (Marshall 2005). Marshall (2005) found that the greatest obstacles to filing a complaint for sexual harassment that the women in her study encountered were the procedures the company implemented to manage complaints of sexual harassment in the first place. These policies defined prohibited sexualized behaviors in ways that were difficult for the average employee to understand. Furthermore, the women in Marshall's (2005) study perceived that their male managers and superiors—those responsible for handling these complaints—did not view the issue of sexual harassment as a serious concern. Consequently, women who experienced

unwanted sexual advances from coworkers or supervisors did not know whether the risks

of filing a complaint would be worth the potential recourse.

In contrast to Marshall's (2005) focus on women's perspectives, Quinn (2002)

examined a form of unwelcomed sexualized behaviors in an office setting from the

perspectives of men who exhibited the unwelcomed behavior. She found that many men

in this office engaged in the practice of "girl watching"—a voyeuristic "game" men

played with each other that involved sexually evaluating and objectifying female

coworkers' bodies. She found that these men used the practice of "girl watching" to

demonstrate heterosexual masculine dominance, perform masculinity for other men, and

subordinate women who were otherwise equally positioned in the company. Further,

when women disrupted their "game" by responding subjectively to their behaviors, such

as by glaring back at them or complaining, men described feeling angry, surprised, and

irritated. Despite indicating in their interviews that they understood how this "game"

could harm the status of their female coworkers, they continued to define "girl watching"

as trivial and playful and women's negative reactions as hypersensitive and irrational.

Although elements of sexual harassment in office settings are relevant, these workplaces

do not fully reflect the sexualized interactions within workplaces where employers profit

from their employees' gender and women's sexual objectification.

Studies of Employee-Customer Interactions in Sexualized Industries

Sociological examinations of women's experiences within overtly sexualized

workplace contexts, such as the "gentlemen's bar," are relevant to this research in that

"sex appeal" and the performance of sexuality may be linked to the level of compensation

servers receive within heteromasculine sports bar and grills. In an early examination of

sexualized interactions between exotic dancers and strip club patrons, Enck and Preston (1988) coined the term "counterfeit intimacy" to describe the idea of feigning the desire for intimacy and appearing to genuinely enjoy an interaction with a customer. Within this concept, the authors suggest that both the customer and the worker are aware of the monetary basis for the encounter, but continue to participate in the charade of intimacy. In her participant observation study of a gentlemen's club, Katherine Frank (1998) added the similar concept of "manufactured intimacy"—the "illusion of intimacy... to make an interaction between a dancer and her regular seem more 'real' and desirable" (p. 175). Another relevant concept in the literature on sex workers is Teela Sander's (2005) term "manufactured identity"—a tool used by sex workers in the British indoor prostitution industry to maintain one's "true" identity while simultaneously capitalizing on one's own sexuality. The "manufactured identity" that these sex workers developed is similar in many ways to Arlie Hochschild's (1983) concepts of "surface acting" and "deep acting"—strategies workers use during the performance of "emotion labor."

In her ethnography of a strip club, Kim Price-Glynn (2010) found that the club owners and supervisors expected dancers to perform "emotion labor." Frank (1998) also used Hochschild's (1983) concept of emotion labor to describe the difference between dancers' genuine feelings of intimacy and those they were able to manufacture. Price-Glynn (2010) explained that dancers not only enhanced the status of customers, masked their own feelings, and tolerated poor working conditions, but they were also expected to enhance the status and appearance of the club through the attitudes they projected on and off stage. Price-Glynn (2010) found that Hochschild's (1983) concepts of "surface acting" and "deep acting" described these dancers' strategies for making their work seem

genuinely enjoyable, and their success at this performance influenced the degree to which they were compensated by customers. In spite of the differences between the job expectations of servers and women in overtly sexualized industries, these concepts have implications for the gendered construction of the server role in the heteromasculine sports bar and grill industry and the sexualized interactions that may arise due to customers' expectations of women servers' performances.

Sexualized Interactions in the Restaurant Industry

Several sociological studies have focused specifically on women within restaurant settings, and a consistent theme among them is that sexualized interactions are commonplace within the restaurant industry (Tibbals 2007; Lerum 2004; Williams, Giuffre, and Dellinger 1999; Giuffre and Williams 1994). Previous studies of restaurant workers have examined unwelcomed sexualized interactions that women servers encounter with coworkers, in addition to the comments and behaviors that women servers actively initiate (Tibbals 2007; Lerum 2004). Furthermore, findings from studies of restaurant workers suggest that women servers also actively initiate sexualized encounters in the workplace and do not necessarily define every interaction as hostile or offensive (Lerum 2004; Tibbals 2007).

For example, Giuffre and Williams (1994) found that restaurant workers did not define all unwelcomed sexualized interactions between men and women employees as "sexual harassment." Sexualized remarks and behaviors were often overlooked and sometimes even interpreted positively when these interactions followed hegemonic models of ideal sexual expression. Sexual behaviors were more likely to be perceived in a harassing way when the initiator was a member of a non-white ethnic/racial group and

the recipient of the behavior was a white woman. When the initiator of the sexualized interaction was a member of their own racial/ethnic group, Giuffre and Williams found that servers typically defined interactions as sexual harassment only if the behavior was "severe," such as when the interaction involved physical threats or when the harasser held a supervisory position over the employee. These findings support legal scholars' assertions that "the power differential between the supervisor and the victim can elevate the severity of the harassment" (Druhan 2013:377). Additionally, in another study of restaurant workers' sexualized interactions with coworkers, Lerum (2004) found that some women servers felt a sense of camaraderie with other female servers through the use of sexual discourse with one another. Sexualized banter sometimes signified "insider" status to other servers and "outsider" status to customers. Therefore, Lerum argues that sexual comments between women may be used to reinforce solidarity among coworkers and create a protective barrier between the servers and customers.

Other research suggests that the consensual sexualized interactions between servers, and "lumping" the harm of unwelcomed interactions with customers (Barkan 2009), may serve as a small part of a larger performance of gender. Sociologist Robin Leidner (1993) asserts that in the service industry, "the constant 'doing' of gender is mandatory for everyone, but... the effects of this demand are asymmetrical, since doing masculinity generally means asserting dominance, while doing femininity often means enacting submission" (p. 210). Tibbals (2007) examined the ways in which women servers "do gender" during their interactions with customers within two different restaurant contexts (See also West and Zimmerman 1987). Tibbals (2007) differentiated women who worked in these two restaurants by labeling one group "servers"—those who

worked within the corporate atmosphere—and the other "waitresses"—those who worked for an independently owned family restaurant. Among the "waitresses," one version of femininity they displayed was that of the "girly-sexualized waitress"—or waitresses who displayed an exaggerated, outgoing, flirtatious, and aloof performance of femininity. Tibbals found that the "girly-sexualized" version of femininity increased the amount of tips that the "waitresses" received from tables of men and helped them maintain a stream of "regulars" who would often ask for the server by name. Consistent with Leidner's (1993) assertion that workers may only "do gender" in ways that correspond with themes already present in the organization's context, Tibbals's (2007) findings illustrate the different constructions of femininity available to women servers within contrasting restaurant atmospheres. Furthermore, even when a restaurant's atmosphere is not overtly sexualized, implicit sexual undertones are often present when the server's role is constructed as "feminine."

One of the most relevant studies to my own is Meika Loe's (1996) ethnography of a Hooter's restaurant ("Bazooms"), during which she worked as a "Hooter's Girl" and interviewed her coworkers about their experiences. Similar to Tibbals's (2007) discussion of the "girly-sexualized waitress" as well as exotic dancers' performances of "manufactured intimacy" and "counterfeit intimacy" (Frank 1998; Enck and Preston 1988), Loe (1996) found that servers at Hooters were expected to appear as if they genuinely enjoyed sexualized interactions with male customers. Servers at Hooters were often reprimanded by both managers and customers for breaking out of this performance, such as by dealing with an offensive customer in any way other than smiling and deferring to the customer or a male manager. Loe found that the restaurant chain

constructed the "Hooter's Girl" as a narrow performance of femininity, and therefore, the servers' superiors emphasized servers' expectations to fulfill the traits associated with this role. Importantly, Loe found that customers compensated servers based on their ability to make this perky, aloof, and sexually available demeanor appear genuine.

Through her application of Hochschild's (1983) concept of emotion labor, Loe (1996) explains the process and experience of embodying the "Hooter's Girl" concept. However, even though Loe found that management and the company itself created and sustained a sexually subordinating environment for women, she argues that these women were also active agents within the same system and not all of her coworkers perceived their experiences of sexualized interactions as unwelcomed or offensive. Although Loe examined women's experiences within a heteromasculine bar and grill, she focuses primarily on servers' processes of emotion management with less emphasis on the influence of the servers' structure of compensation within this particular atmosphere. Furthermore, several questions remain as to the motivations of women servers who continue to work in this context and do not complain when they do experience abusive, pervasive, and severe sexualized interactions with customers.

Many aspects of Loe's (1996) study are relevant to my own examination of restaurants that follow this model of attracting a primary audience of men through sports, beer, and the sexual attractiveness of their servers. One of the participants in my study had worked for two locations of the Hooter's restaurant chain, and I conducted multiple field observations in these and similar restaurants. Although Hooters claims to have maintained the same basic characteristics since its inception ten years prior to the publication of Loe's (1996) study, this "powerful force in the branding game" as a whole

has evolved under the influence of several sex discrimination and trademark infringement battles (Hooters, LLC 2012; Brizek 2011; Krizman 2009).

Despite these legal obstacles, Hooters has maintained its original purpose of appealing to heterosexual men through "a relaxed atmosphere" and its "emphasis on good food at a good price served by attractive females in an entertaining, sports-oriented setting" (Brizek 2011:5). However, Hooters is no longer an anomaly in the casual dining industry; other restaurant brands, and the sports bar and grill industry as a whole, reflect a distinct influence of the "Hooters concept" (Hooters, LLC 2012; Brizek 2011). Particularly after the restaurant chain lost a 2003 trademark infringement lawsuit against a chain that mimicked the use of "female sex appeal" and other elements of the Hooters atmosphere, several other restaurant "brands" have capitalized on this marketing strategy (Hooters, LLC 2012; Brizek 2011; Krizman 2009). More than twenty years after the Hooters chain began, the company continues to be a source of Title VII debates regarding sexual harassment; therefore, it is important to explore current experiences of women working for restaurant chains that are arguably modeled on similar characteristics.

By integrating these areas of separate lines of research, this study builds upon Loe's (1996) work and other sociological examinations of sexualized interactions in the workplace to explore the structure and agency involved in the heteromasculine-oriented restaurant atmosphere. I focus on current gendered implications of "the tip" hierarchy of customer-server interactions and its influence on women servers' experiences of sexualized interactions. Additionally, I examine contrasting characteristics among these similar restaurant atmospheres and the influences these contrasts may have on women servers' perspectives of sexualized interactions with customers.

METHODOLOGY

The findings of this research are based on my in-depth interviews with six women who worked in "heteromasculine-oriented" sports bar and grills and my empirical observations within these restaurants as a paying customer. As Williams, Giuffre, and Dellinger (1999) point out, "in the study of sexuality in the workplace, context is paramount. The same behavior in different organizational contexts can have different meanings and consequences" (p. 90); therefore, in addition to in-depth interviews with women servers about their sexualized interactions with customers, I spent numerous hours in each restaurant observing the characteristics of the interviewees' workplaces. The purpose of my observations within each restaurant was to be prepared to interpret the participants' perspectives of their interactions with customers within the context of each participant's workplace. Additionally, I conducted background research about each restaurant chain or individual establishment online and by collecting restaurant materials and "artifacts," such as employee handbooks, restaurant menus, and advertisements. I used a grounded theory approach to my interpretations of these women servers' perspectives to compare and contrast their experiences within the contexts of their individual workplace settings, with an analytical emphasis on the servers' discussions of their interactions with customers.

Observation Methods

To gain an understanding of the heteromasculine sports bar and grill atmosphere, I conducted multiple "observation sessions" as an observant participant. I spent time in these restaurants as a paying customer before, throughout, and after my interviews with

women servers, depending on when I learned about new restaurants to be added to the study. During my time in these restaurants, I observed characteristics the themes of the atmosphere, décor, section arrangement, demographics of the customers within different sections, characteristics of the servers' interactions with customers, and interacted with the servers assigned to my table, and in some cases, with the managers "on the floor." These observations were important to understanding the potential similarities and contrasts among the experiences that these servers described.

My table typically consisted of a party of two to five people, made up of either men and women or women only. I took notes during my time in the restaurant when possible, and recorded these notes in a day planner or on my mobile device, in addition to recording my observations in the parking lot outside of the restaurant or after returning home. The people who came with me to conduct these observations usually carried on a conversation while I observed the environment; furthermore, they were typically the only people in the restaurant who knew about my identity as a researcher.

Interview Methods

I conducted in-depth, in-person, semi-structured interviews with six women servers who worked or had recently worked within a heteromasculine sports bar and grill. Interviews lasted between approximately one-and-a-half to two-and-a-half hours. I conducted two of the interviews at a coffee shop or café, one in an office at my university, and three in my home. These interviews included questions about their experiences with customers and their relationships with their coworkers. I asked participants to describe the types of customers they served, characteristics of their work environment, and the conditions that structured their evaluations and compensation.

Furthermore, participants discussed specific examples of common situations they experienced, as well as their overall perspectives of their status in the environment.

I informed participants that I had no work-related experience as a restaurant server, since both of the first two interviewees asked for this background information during their interview. Knowing that I lacked work experience in the restaurant industry prompted several servers to clarify many of the industry or restaurant-specific terms they used without being asked, in addition to offering their perspectives about their occupation and industry, in general.

Data Analysis

To interpret the data I obtained during interviews, I used a "constant comparative" approach derived from the "grounded theory" method of analysis (Glaser 1992; Glaser and Strauss 1967). I began by using a line-by-line coding procedure during open coding and categorized the interview data from all six interviews into repeating ideas. Ultimately, I categorized these repeating ideas into subcategories (e.g. "alcohol," "kicking out or cutting off," "the regulars," "tipping patterns," "phone number request reactions," "crossing the line," etc.) and then into broader categories, which are represented by the primary themes of the research results.

Pseudonyms and Consent

All interviews were recorded and transcribed, and participation in the study was voluntary. I recruited participants through my research flyer via e-mail, paper flyers posted on campus, my study's research page on Facebook, as well as through word-of-mouth. All six participants received a $10.00 gift card at the end of the interview in

appreciation for their contribution to the study. I used an oral script to obtain informed consent so that I would not need to record the participants' real first and last names in any of my records related to the interview. To protect the participants' identities, every interviewee chose a pseudonym after consenting to the interview. I provided a list of the most common names for an age group of 21 to 28 year old women, however, they were free to offer any code name they wanted. I used the name they chose throughout my notes, coding process, and to label interview transcripts. Furthermore, I have used pseudonyms in this paper to represent restaurants with only a few locations restricted to the Tennessee area. Finally, I changed all names that participants used when they offered stories or examples during the interview.

Sample and Restaurant Criteria

The primary criteria for the sample of participants included were being a woman and having work experience during the previous twelve months in restaurant that fit into the casual dining, sports bar and grill niche of the restaurant industry. I focused specifically on restaurants that were oriented around "heteromasculine" forms of entertainment, interests, and performance among men. My observations, interviews, and in most cases, my background research confirmed that the primary customers at these restaurants are men and all six restaurants hire primarily or only women as servers.

The restaurant criteria I used to recruit servers exclusively from this niche of the industry included: (1) employing a primarily female wait staff; (2) having multiple televisions throughout the restaurant that remained tuned in to sporting events; (3) selling alcohol, emphasizing beer specials or selection, and having customized drinks with names that reflected an atmosphere of fun, casual dining; (4) themes of fun, humor, and

entertainment in the restaurant's advertisements, atmosphere, and/or décor; and (5) fried food entrees on the menu, such as burgers, wings, and fries. All of the restaurants examined in this study matched all five of these predetermined characteristics, although they varied in the degree to which they emphasized each characteristic as a primary appeal to their customers.

Additionally, most of the women servers' uniforms within these restaurants were relatively physically revealing, such as including short shorts or tightly fitted shirts. I determined whether women made up the majority of the wait staff by asking the servers themselves and by noting any men that I observed serving tables in the restaurant. In the case of the Hooters restaurant chain, the company explicitly states that only female applicants are hired for the server position (Hooters, Inc. 2013). During my observations, I noted the types of sporting events that each restaurant showed on their dining and bar area televisions and confirmed the "sports bar" themes of the atmosphere. Background research online for each restaurant confirmed the remaining three criteria, such as by looking up each restaurant's menu and examining advertisements and slogans.

Sample Characteristics and Restaurant Details

I conducted field research for this study within numerous restaurant chain locations and individual establishments, all of which shared the characteristics described above. The six participants in this study had worked in a combined total of seven of these restaurants. Two participants—Jane and Brittney—had spent a year or more working in two different restaurants of the same chain of restaurants. As a full-time student, Jane had worked for the Cooter's locations chain—first at Cooter's West and then transferred to the new Cooter's East location in the same city, where she had quit approximately one

month before the interview. Brittney spent a year as a server at a Hooter's location in a university town—the restaurant I refer to as the "highway" Hooters—while pursuing her bachelors degree. After quitting her job at the "highway" Hooters, she completed her degree and worked multiple jobs before deciding to return to the Hooters chain. She applied for another server position, this time at the fast-paced Hooters location in a nearby metropolitan area—the restaurant I refer to as the "city" Hooters—where she continued to work at the time of the interview.

The other four servers discussed their experiences at just one of the restaurants included in this study. Emily had worked as a server, and occasionally as a hostess, at the busier location of the Cooter's chain, Cooter's West, for approximately four months at the time of the interview. Nicole worked as a server and bartender for a Buffalo Wild Wings restaurant, where she had worked for over a year and quit less than a month before the interview. Sophie worked as a hostess and "food-runner," and had requested to move up to the full server position at an independent sports bar and grill near a university campus. The sixth interviewee, Lily, had nearly twelve years of experience as a server, and had worked at a Bar Louie location for several months at the time of the interview.

RESULTS: WOMEN SERVERS' INTERACTIONS WITH CUSTOMERS

One of the most persistent elements of these women servers' discussions of customer-server interactions is the hierarchical structure of "the tip"—the system of compensation in which servers receive the majority of their income from customers' "gratuity." This hierarchy is a significant element to understanding servers' experiences of their interactions with customers, particularly in instances of unwanted or unwelcomed sexualized interactions. Three themes emerged across my interviews with women servers,

all of which highlight the ways in which these women negotiated and experienced

customers' "tipping capital"— the discretionary power given to customers through the

practice of tipping.

The first theme, "The Structure of 'The Tip' and the Guise of Gratuity," describes

the structure of these servers' primary source of compensation and the gendered

foundation of "tipping capital" within this restaurant atmosphere. The second theme,

"'Tipping Capital and Tipping Points," illustrates the implications of customers'

discretionary power over women servers' incomes in the context of restaurants that

capitalize on the appearance and sexuality of their female servers in order to attract their

primary "audience" of heterosexual men. Finally, the third theme, "Tipping Volume and

Table Turnover," emphasizes the influences of each restaurant's pace and volume of

customers on the level of customers' "tipping capital," and the point at which servers

were no longer willing to participate in "the tip" with a particular customer.

The Structure of "The Tip" and the Guise of Gratuity

Within these restaurant settings, where nearly all of the servers are women and the

majority of customers are men, "the tip" structures the gendered balance of power in

server-customer interactions. The constraints of "the tip" emerged as a primary influence

on servers' concerns about work decisions and performance, as well as their individual

interactions with people in various positions of authority over them. On a broader level,

the degree of hierarchy between servers and customers involved in the structure of "the

tip" often depends upon whether a restaurant is located in a state that mandates a higher

minimum wage for "tipped employees," and therefore requires the restaurant pay a larger

proportion of the server's income than that required by federal minimum wage guidelines.

The state of Tennessee, where I conducted this research, does not enforce additional regulations on the federal minimum wage of "tipped employees"—workers who receive $30.00 or more per month in tips—and therefore allows restaurant employers to pay servers only $2.13 per hour, as long as the amount the server earns in tips plus her hourly wage is equal to or above the minimum wage for all other workers—$7.25 per hour (U.S. Department of Labor 2013). Sophie, who worked primarily as a hostess and "food runner" at The Parkway Grill was the only "server" in this study whose primary source of income came directly from her employer; Sophie had requested to "move up" to the position of server, however, due to the potential to earn more than minimum wage by being able to accept tips. In contrast, although Nicole was confused about the legitimacy of the policy of her Buffalo Wild Wings location, her paychecks from the restaurant typically were not monetary checks at all. Nicole explained,

> You're supposed to get $2.13 an hour, and I never understood it—I didn't get checks. If you make over minimum wage with your tips, they take that away. When I got a check for working two weeks, it would say "This is not a check—zero dollars" almost every single week. So, I'd get a check for like four bucks and I would be like, "Whew!" It was like a surprise— "Four dollars! I'm going shopping!" So, I basically lived off my tips. I didn't make an hourly wage. And, you know, people say stuff about it, but you don't want to say too much because you don't want to lose your shifts, you know? (*Were you ever paid for work hours when you weren't able to earn tips?*) No. And that's what I said too—"When we close can I clock in for minimum wage?" Because... if it was a busy night... it'd be two in the morning and I'd be mopping and the managers would be like, "Hey, could you go back there and do this extra cleaning thing?" "Yeah, like do extra? I'm only making $2.13 an hour and I'm not even making it!" That's the crazy part.

Perhaps similar to many other servers' system of compensation, virtually all of

Nicole's total income came directly from customers' tips and the employer paid only a

nominal fraction of her income. The other servers in this study typically made enough in

tips to make up for the difference between their employers' hourly wage of $2.13 per

hour and the federal minimum wage required for other workers; therefore, two-thirds or

more of these servers' total incomes came directly from customers. Because customers

held the majority of power in evaluating the amount of "gratuity" the servers received,

"the tip" is one component of their perspectives of sexualized interactions that differs

from other examinations of "third-party" sexual harassment. Furthermore, an important

element of the structure of "the tip" is the informal nature of the exchange of services for

monetary compensation.

Typically, no pre-existing agreement guarantees a server a minimum amount of

"gratuity" in return for their work; therefore, one challenge that servers encountered in

this system is the absence of any formal explanation of what factors customers could

consider when they evaluated a server's performance and their compensation. In fact,

even the precise time at which the tip becomes the server's compensation, rather than the

customer's money, is often difficult to determine. The following incident, which occurred

during my observation at "the highway" Hooters, illustrates the degree of uncertainty that

servers face in managing this exchange:

> When we finished our meal, our server, Shelly, brought my $15.00 tab,
> and I paid in cash using five-dollar bills. In an effort to counter a
> stereotype I noticed in my interviews with women servers—that women
> tip less than men—I left $25.00 on the table to cover both my tab and the
> tip. When Shelly picked up our tickets, she asked if I needed change, and I
> replied, "No, thanks." She returned with my friends' credit card receipts
> and attempted to hand me nine or ten dollars in change before I clarified,

"You can keep the change," and returned to the conversation at our table. As we stood up to leave, I noticed our server at the register asking another server for advice before the coworker nudged Shelly toward us on our way out. She seemed awkward, but since she had been pushed into our path for the door and her coworker had already returned to her task at the register, Shelly finally asked if I knew the amount of my change. After clarifying a third time, "Yes, that's your tip," she smiled and seemed relieved.

This incident at "the highway" Hooters resembles several examples that interviewees offered to demonstrate the lack of certainty involved in their compensation. Jane, a server who had worked in two different locations of the Cooter's restaurant chain, recounted a similar point of confusion during an interaction with a customer that ended very differently.

> Whenever I went to give her her check—I think she gave me a twenty, and [her tab] was less than ten dollars—she goes, "Keep the change." I was like, "What? Are you sure?" She was like, "Yeah" and [I asked her again] and she was like, "Yeah, keep the change, but can I have a to-go Dr. Pepper?" Had I just taken it, she wouldn't have had the chance to ask for it. So, I went to the back and I'm like, "Whoa... " I knew she had tipped me more than I expected, but I didn't expect her to tip me like ten bucks. So, I gave her the to-go Dr. Pepper and she left... But she called back up there and told my manager, "Yeah, your server, Jane? She didn't give me my change back. She owed me like twelve dollars." So, she asked for ten back. I had to put it in an envelope. [She] was basically too ashamed to say, "Hey I didn't realize that I tipped her ten bucks. Can I get it back?" Instead, she made it sound like I just kept all of it. This was over an hour later, and I had already added it to my tips in my head, you know, like "Ok, that's my ten dollars." [My manager] was like, "You didn't do that, did you?" and I told her everything and she was like, "Well, we have to give it to her..." and I was like, "I understand." She didn't write me up or anything, but it's just like—you're literally at the mercy of everyone there, except yourself.

Jane's experience with this customer may explain why our server at "the highway" Hooters was so hesitant to accept my tip of approximately the same amount. Both incidences demonstrate the confusion several servers felt about tips that exceeded

their expectations, particularly when the customer was a woman, as well as the customer's discretionary power over the amount and terms of the tip. However, the gender of the customers involved in both of these customer-server interactions may have influenced the amount that the servers expected to receive, particularly within these heteromasculine restaurant atmospheres.

In contrast, all six interviewees described what they perceived as normal situations in which men tipped significantly more than the "customary" proportion of their bill. Unlike the two situations described above, over-tipping by men does not appear to come with the same confusion about whether the customer realizes the amount of his tip. Instead, their concerns about accepting significantly higher tips from men often involved what they perceived as the customer's unspoken expectations for their interactions in the future. For example, when I asked Emily, a server at Cooter's West, if she ever worried that not giving her phone number to a customer would affect her tip, she offered the following example:

> Sometimes, yeah. I have had a guy... he came in with his friends... and he pulled me aside and was like, "He thinks you're really pretty and he thinks you're really nice, just give him your phone number." and I was like "Ok, yeah. He seems like a really nice guy..." So I gave him my number and he left me a $30 tip, which I don't think he would have left me if I hadn't given him my number, you know? *(Did he call you?)* Yeah, he texted me and we're... friends. He tried to take me out on a date, but I didn't really like, you know... He's a nice guy. He wasn't pushy or weird or anything.

At times, the lack of regulation and informality of "the tip" contributed to the perspective that a customer's "gratuity" is a form of generosity, rather than an exchange for the server's efforts. When the amount a customer leaves in "gratuity" far exceeds the "customary" percentage of the customer's tab (e.g. 20% of the bill), both the server and

the customer may view the tip as a "gift." Nicole, a server and bartender at a busy

Buffalo Wild Wings, illustrates the difficulty in distinguishing "gifts" from the server's

compensation.

> I had this one regular... and everybody at Buffalo Wild Wings knows,
> every time he comes in, he's like "Where's Nicole?" I've always been
> nice to him... but he came in one night... Girl, bags of Victoria's Secret
> underwear, sixty-dollar bottle of perfume... [He left me a] two hundred
> dollar tip... and, he just has a managing job—he's not rich, you know?
> He's just like, "You're just always so nice to me, Nicole." I'm like, "That
> don't mean go buy me..." Like, [he bought me] a *thong*! I mean, you're
> thinking of me the wrong way in your head! *(So, you did take it?)* Well, he
> left it at my car. If he would've tried to give it to me, I'd have been like,
> "No." I would never try to accept gifts like that. I walk out to my car and
> there's a bag... And, the next time he came in, I felt myself feeling very
> awkward. I mean, a bath massager—he bought me a vibrating bath
> massager. (*Did you talk to him?*) Well, he said something like, "Did you
> get them?" and I might've said something like, "You shouldn't have done
> that! You didn't have to do that!" you know... I'll say stuff like that. Like
> [when] he left me that two-hundred dollar tip, I said that. And, he said,
> "Well, I know you're in school..." Like, trying to be nice, you know, "You
> said you were having trouble with school..." "But I wasn't asking you to
> do anything like that!" you know? But, he was just being nice, I guess.

Nicole's example illustrates one way the hierarchy of "the tip" in this setting can

perpetuate notions of women as the recipients of the "generosity" of men. Because the

amount and conditions of the tip are not explicitly defined during the interaction,

customers are free to leave whatever amount they want to "give" to the server. Often

these servers perceived men's "generosity" as being based on sexual desire, and at times,

some form of sexual or intimate expectations for the future.

The examples described above illustrate the discretionary power of the customer

in deciding servers' compensation, the subordinate status of the server to the customer,

and the "guise of gratuity" that structures the tipping system. Because customers do not

consistently follow particular guidelines to determine the amount of compensation a

server "deserves," she does not have the benefit of knowing what aspects of her performance will be evaluated or even when the money that customers leave behind as "gratuity" actually becomes her compensation. This inconsistency caused servers to navigate an atmosphere in which many of their job conditions remained in a consistent state of uncertainty. In the most positive reflection on this inconsistency, Emily described her attitude toward customers who she perceived as "on a budget"— "I still give them the same service that I would give anybody, because you never know. Some people will just think that you're... such a good server and will want to tip you really well, anyways, so..." From a more jaded perspective, Jane's changing attitude toward customers emphasizes the uncertainty surrounding the criteria of each customer's evaluation of the tip, as well as customers' inconsistent expectations for her to spend time talking to them as a potential factor in their evaluations of the tip she deserved:

> At first, you do want to make your tables happy... but eventually you
> realize... Like sometimes you do—you fuck up, you did do a bad job...
> you forget to turn something in... That happens. But sometimes I could
> have done 15 back flips and it wouldn't have mattered at all. I could have
> talked to them for 5 hours... they're still going to tip me two bucks...

Lily, a server at Bar Louie with several years of server experience, offered a similar observation about the lack of consistency in tipping and an illustration of these servers' differing expectations for men and women customers:

> In my experience, you really never know how they're going to tip you.
> I've had people that I was like, "They're not going to leave me anything,"
> and they left me one of the best tips I've ever had. Or, if you have a table
> full of guys, you think "Oh, I'm going to get a really great tip off them!"
> and they leave you a dollar or something stupid. But usually after I have
> initially talked to a table, you can kind of feel out things like, "Do they
> want me to... talk to them and entertain them?" or are they... the people
> that are like, "Just want to order my food" and want you to go away.

Constructions of "femininity" in the server role. The servers' lack of control over customers' evaluations of their compensation had particular implications when servers perceived their tip as being based on their gender or physical attractiveness. While Hooters employed only women as servers (with the exception of the position of bartender), the other restaurants (Bar Louie, Buffalo Wild Wings, Cooter's East, Cooter's West, and The Parkway Grill) had only a few or no male servers at the time of this study in the locations I examined. Consistent with these restaurants' themes of heteromasculine entertainment, their appeal to a primarily heterosexual male audience of customers "promised" customers the experience of being served by attractive women, who are willing to tolerate sexual remarks, suggestions, and behaviors.

In restaurants that did allow men to apply for the position of server, several interviewees noted that fellow male coworkers in the server position were either pushed "up" or pushed "out" of the server position in various ways. One of the most obvious for these servers was that men seemed to move up into positions of management more quickly than women—an illustration of the "glass escalator" effect for men in "female" professions (Williams 1992). For instance, Sophie explained that although she could recall only one male server during her time working at The Parkway Grill, he was ultimately promoted to the position of manager over the other female servers. When asked to describe the restaurant to someone with no experience in the environment, Sophie responded: "I guess it's like a little upper-scale sports bar. I mean, they have a lot of food... and different menu items. But, it's mostly girls that work there. There was only one guy that was a server and he became a manager." Although Hooters does not employ men as servers, they do employ men as managers without the same experience as a server

in the restaurant as most of the women in management. The interviewee employed at the "city" Hooters explained that only one of her managers was a woman, and she considered her to be a valuable source of support to the servers since "she used to be a Hooter's Girl, so she knows what we go through." Similarly, Lily mentioned that most of the regular managers were men, with the exception of a new woman in this position. During my observations at Bar Louie, I noted a few male employees "on the floor"—two bartenders who never crossed the perimeter of the bar counter and the manager on duty, who walked around asking about the servers' performance and joking with customers.

In the restaurants that employed men as servers, the servers explained that customers' expectations for women in this position often discouraged men from remaining in this position at these restaurants for very long. Similar to Williams (1992) findings that men in primarily female-dominated professions experienced "discrimination from outsiders" such as clients or other non-employees, several women servers emphasized the ways in which "the tip" reinforced the construction of this position as feminine and discouraged men from remaining in this position. Several interviewees noted that common customer responses to having a male server at a table of men included moving sections, requesting a female server, remarks that indicated customers' dissatisfaction with having a man serve them at the particular restaurant, and perhaps most importantly, tipping men less than women servers.

Customers' negative responses to men as servers in these restaurants help to uncover the gendered expectations "promised" to the customer by the heteromasculine restaurant's construction of the server role. For instance, Emily, a server at Cooter's West, explained that older men generally tipped her the most. She continued to explain:

"I guess because I'm a girl... they tip me a little better than—Well, my guy friend, Alex, works there, and women love him. He gets a phone number like everyday! But, I don't think he... Well, I don't know." Emily brought up her friend, Alex, a second time when asked whether customers at her particular restaurant expected servers to be women— "Yeah. I haven't had anyone complain to *me*, but my friend Alex... He's had a couple of guys say, you know, 'Why we got you?' or 'Where the girls at?'" Jane, who had worked at both the East and West Cooter's restaurants, reiterated the perspective that customers preferred women servers and that the server's gender influenced "the tip":

> With a group of guys sitting at a table—they get mad when a guy server goes up to a table. They complain. They move sometimes, so you know they want a girl server... I don't *know* if that's why, but... [My boyfriend] worked there... and he made so much less than me on the same shift. It was embarrassing. I hated telling him how much I made.

In addition to being women, another "promise" of the heteromasculine restaurant atmosphere is that servers will be physically attractive, as demonstrated by managers' attitudes toward hiring only women who fit conventional standards of feminine beauty. For instance, Sophie recalled that when a hostess notified the hiring manager of a new application for the server position, his first and only question was "Is she pretty?" She continued, "I've heard other people call it an 'upscale Hooters.' It's not bad, but like, I don't know. All the girls that work there are pretty thin. They really don't hire anybody that they don't think is at least... somewhat attractive." Similarly, Emily's response to my question about the role of servers as part of the restaurant's appeal illustrates a key aspect of the "promise" of the heteromasculine sports bar and grill environment: "Yeah, some [customers] come in just to look at the girls, for sure. There's so many regulars that come in to Cooter's."

The degree to which the restaurants used physically revealing uniforms to communicate the "promise" of the heteromasculine atmosphere varied across the restaurants in this study, as did the degree of agency that restaurants claimed to offer servers in their uniforms. Servers at The Parkway Grill purchased their own shorts and black, short-sleeved, "form-fitting" style shirts in lieu of wearing a uniform, although Sophie noted that managers would critique a server's choice of top if it appeared to be "too loose." Similarly, both Cooter's restaurants allowed the server to purchase and wear any Cooter's T-shirt from the restaurant's gift store. Although their managers did not specify the length of the shorts, both servers explained that their managers had influenced their choice of shorts. Emily's reflection on her managers' suggestions highlights the servers' lack of options: "They don't tell you that you have to wear short shorts but that's the vibe you get. No girl in there is wearing long shorts, and they suggested to me when I was being hired to go to Hollister or Abercrombie and they don't sell long shorts so..." Another element of servers' uniform choices in these contexts is that, even when restaurants offer uniform "options," the structure of "the tip," or whatever helps increase their income likely pressures some servers to make particular choices. For example, Lily explained the options available for servers at Bar Louie:

> They provide us a black short-sleeve shirt and a tank top, then you have to wear black shorts... we can wear jean skirts too... They've gone through different shirts and they don't really care which one you wear, as long as it says "Bar Louie" on the shirt. If you pick your own size it can be tight or you can get a smaller size... I'd say there's certain girls that do wear shorter shorts all the time or tighter shirts.

With the exception of Bar Louie, whose servers typically wore short shorts and tight black camisoles with the restaurant's name printed across the chest, the "Hooter's

Girl" uniforms were the most physically revealing, consistent with the company's overt

marketing of "sex appeal" as a key premise of the "Hooters experience" (Hooters, LLC

2012). Unlike the other restaurants in this study, however, the Hooters restaurant chain

incorporated routinized, formal, individual evaluations of female servers' bodies. When I

asked Brittney what would happen if she or one of her coworkers "grew out" of the

uniform, she offered the following insider's perspective:

> Umm, (laughs), this sounds so bad. We have our little evaluations... I think
> its every 6 months, our "image evaluation," and we're pulled into the
> office, one-by-one, and the GM and our managers are in there, and they
> have to tell us if we're... um, if we still look good. (smiles) Because, what
> they say to us is (laughs) "When we hired you, it was because of your
> image" and they take pictures of you when you get hired. You have to
> stand – have you ever gotten a spray tan? Ok, well you have to stand like
> this, (holds her arms out slightly away from her body, hands to her side),
> and then you have to turn around, and they take pictures of you and, um...
> they keep those in the file. And, if you change your image, in a bad way,
> they'll pull out those pictures and be like "This is why we hired you,
> because you looked like this." And, there's been girls who have come out
> of the office crying because they gained too much weight and they told
> them if they didn't lose a certain amount of weight within a certain
> amount of time... that they were fired. (Looks up for my response, still
> smiling. I answer "Hmm..."). I haven't seen it, or like, I've seen *that*
> happen, but the girl didn't get fired. She didn't really lose the weight, but
> she didn't get fired. But I have heard a girl who got fired because of it.
> That was before I was there though.

The emphasis on the "image" that servers are required to reflect and maintain at

Hooters is perhaps the most extreme example of the ways these restaurants construct and

reinforce particular versions of femininity, and the sexual element of the server's work

performance expectations. Although the emphasis on "female sex appeal" is more

obvious in the physically revealing characteristic of the "Hooter's Girl" uniform, all six

restaurants in this study found ways to capitalize on the sexuality and allure of their

female servers. The most basic strategy that restaurants used was simply to hire only

women who fit conventional standards of feminine physical attractiveness. The construction of the server's role in these heteromasculine environments is evident in customers' expectations of the server.

A core aspect of the feminine role constructed within the heteromasculine restaurant atmosphere is the expectation for servers to appear receptive to men's sexual or physical remarks, suggestions, and humor. Similar to Loe's (1996) ethnography of a Hooter's restaurant, interviewees from these heteromasculine-oriented sports bar and grills felt that not appearing receptive to male customers' sexualized interactions could negatively impact their tips or even their employment at the restaurant. Both women who worked in Cooter's restaurants noted that managers often reprimanded servers for failing to meet customers' expectations of their demeanor and the time they spent in conversation with the customers. For example, Emily explained:

> We have to all have two comment cards on our table and people will say how it's going or they leave their e-mail... And we've gotten [e-mails]— There was a man that said he came on a Thursday and the girls in there were really rude... so he [the manager] read over that e-mail to us that day. Well... he said he said none of the girls in there were smiling and nobody was "happy."

From her experience within both Cooter's restaurants, Jane discussed the dilemma many servers experienced between performing all of their responsibilities and meeting customers' expectations for servers to spend time talking to their tables.

> It was confusing because [managers] did not want you standing around at all, but there was a like a thing for a while where they were like, "You guys are just rushing around too much. You've got to slow down, you know, and talk to your tables. We're getting comment cards and emails about how y'all just don't seem like you want to talk to the tables." (*So, they didn't think you were talking enough?*) Yeah, like that we weren't being like..."personable" enough.

In a context that "promises" heteromasculine entertainment and fun, servers must contend with additional gender expectations from customers, such as fulfilling the versions of femininity constructed and reinforced by the environment of the restaurant. These versions of femininity often included expectations for women servers to be flirtatious, receptive of customers' sexual advances, comments, or suggestions, or to accept the customer's sexually dominant status even when the interactions are offensive or uncomfortable for the server.

The servers' responses demonstrate part of the "promise" that heteromasculine-oriented sports bar and grills provide and the expectations that customers have as a result, whether these expectations stem from previous experience in the restaurant, the uniforms of female servers, or the themes and atmosphere of heteromasculine entertainment. Several servers in this study felt that both their gender and "sex appeal" were important influences on customers' evaluations and "gratuity," and thus, the arbitrary power of the customer within the hierarchy of "the tip" provided unique challenges for servers. Within this context, servers weighed the possibility of losing a portion of their daily income due to refusing to satisfy a customer's sexualized expectations in relation to the offensiveness or abusiveness of the customer's behavior.

Whether or not they perceived the malleable basis of their compensation to be a negative aspect of their jobs, many servers felt that some of the most significant factors that customers considered when determining their compensation were their sexual attractiveness, ability to "fit the role" of a server in this restaurant context, flirtatiousness with customers, and their appearance of being receptive to customers' sexual advances, jokes, and remarks. While many of these factors are perhaps not exclusive to the

heteromasculine sports bar and grill niche of the industry, these restaurant settings emphasize feminine subservience and heteromasculine dominance and satisfaction in more overt ways than what some servers described as "more family-oriented places." The atmosphere of the heteromasculine sports bar and grill may therefore attract customers who expect more from the server than simply "waiting on" their table. Furthermore, the hierarchical structure of "the tip" in this environment reveals the ways in which the position of the customer as a "pseudo-supervisor," with discretion over servers' level of compensation, provide the customer with a form of symbolic capital that complicates the server's performance of her job without tolerating unwelcomed sexualized interactions with customers.

A client or customer's status as a "non-employee," and therefore the employer's lack of authority over the individual, is the basis for the legal debate over the legitimacy of "third-party sexual harassment" (Ream 2000; Sanville 1999; Cahill 1995). An unresolved dilemma in this debate is whether to hold an employer liable for harm to their employees when the workplace is centered on "female sex appeal," and therefore thought to be conducive to sexual harassment perpetrated by customers (Brizek 2011; Sanville 1999). The structure of "the tip" adds a heightened level of power to the "third-party's" position in the server's workplace. In the contexts of the heteromasculine bar and grills examined in this study, servers contended with pervasive sexual harassment from customers (i.e. "third-parties") attracted by the "promise" of "female sex appeal."

Although many elements of the customer's position function in ways that clearly resemble the role of an authoritative and supervisory workplace superior, the lack of oversight and accountability involved in this superior role is unique to the structure of

"the tip." In addition to receiving no training or guidance to limit the scope of their

discretion over the server's compensation, customers are not accountable to any upper

level of the server's employer. The "customer pseudo-supervisor" is therefore free to

behave and interact with the server without any threat to his own "terms of employment."

As described below, the only potential consequences customers faced for offensive or

abusive sexualized remarks and conduct toward the server was being "cut off" from

drinking more alcohol, asked to leave the restaurant, or in some cases being sent home in

a cab. Therefore, unlike fellow-employee supervisors who may be deterred from

behaving inappropriately in their interactions with subordinates, the "customer pseudo-

supervisor" faces few significant consequences to deter him from initiating offensive or

abusive interactions with his "subordinate."

Another contrast between the fellow-employee supervisor and the "customer

pseudo-supervisor" is that retaliating against a subordinate for complaining about a

supervisor's sexually harassing behavior is typically grounds for an additional claim of

"retaliation" under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (EEOC 1990). However, no

such legal consequences prevent an angry customer from paying his bill and neglecting to

leave a tip for a server who rejected or complained about his unwelcomed sexual

advances, joking, or remarks. Therefore, unwelcomed sexualized interactions in this

gendered customer-server hierarchy have a potential consequence for the server's

income, and thus her "terms of employment"; however, the person in a position of

authority is not accountable for his actions. Moreover, as I found in both the

interviewees' descriptions of their workplaces as well as my own observations within

these restaurants, these "customer pseudo-supervisors" are often intoxicated during their

interactions with and evaluations of the server. This setting therefore allocates authority and influence over the server's work-related performance and compensation to primarily male customers in an environment characterized by "beer, ball games, and babes," without the additional accountability attached to a "legitimate" supervisory position. Combined, these conditions created an environment in which the server relied on customers for her income, customers held the power to evaluate her on whatever terms they chose, and servers who sought to increase their income were obligated to identify ways to satisfy the performance expectations of an intoxicated "boss."

"Tipping Capital" and Tipping Points

The second theme across these interviews is the servers' struggle to manage customers' fluctuating levels of "tipping capital," while simultaneously catering to heteromasculine entertainment and satisfaction. Two common challenges among servers were managing intoxicated customers and finding ways to avoid or reduce the harm to their work conditions posed by unwelcome, offensive, and degrading sexualized interactions. The effects of "the tip" hierarchy complicated the strategies available to servers in their efforts to shield their own status from the relative "tipping capital," or power, that each customer held.

Alcohol and intoxicated customers. Intoxicated customers posed particular challenges for servers within these environments oriented around masculine entertainment and feminine subservience. Alcohol magnified the entitlement customers felt for conduct that would likely be viewed as inappropriate within other public settings not permeated by the same themes of heteromasculine dominance and voyeurism. In

contexts in which male customers' relative "tipping capital" was high, the servers felt

obligated to tolerate intoxicated customers' offensive, "aggressive," or "loud and rowdy"

behavior. An added tension to the server's position in this context was that her job

expectations often included being responsible for regulating customers' alcohol access,

consumption, and behavior. For example, Brittney explained that her manager warned

servers on a regular basis about their responsibility to monitor customers.

> I mean, like *those* guys from [a local private university]. There's a big
> group that comes in for "All You Can Eat Wings." They try to get away
> with stuff. And my manager is like, "You know, if you get caught, *your*
> ass is going to jail, because that's *your* fault. You served them alcohol."
> (*Talking to you?*) Yeah, to the server. He's like "You will be arrested
> right then and there." *(For not asking them for their ID?)* I mean, it can
> just be anything. Like if they're underage and either we serve them with a
> fake ID or we didn't ask them, they don't have their ID, and say like, the
> police come in and start asking for IDs, and they don't have it and we
> served them, *we* would—*we* (points at herself) would be going to jail.

Nicole offered a similar discussion of how seriously her managers at a Buffalo

Wild Wings emphasize the servers' responsibility of regulating customers' alcohol intake

and behavior while drinking in the restaurant.

> They go over that a lot, because they don't want a situation where
> someone is intoxicated and a fight breaks out, or a lawsuit or, you know,
> or they get in a wreck. So they always try to keep you serving at low rates
> even though it doesn't help the money... We had one bartender that's
> gotten written up like 4 or 5 times for over-serving and they told her one
> more and she's fired. What happens with her is that she'll over-serve
> somebody, and a lot of times its usually men. She'll over serve them and
> they—they'll throw up, and when people throw up in the restaurant, that's
> disgusting. So, she gets in trouble. And, there's been times that, you know,
> I have over-served customers and I noticed it, and you know, I identified it
> and I was like, "Hey, you're not driving." And, I say it in a nice, joking
> manner because you're not trying to piss drunk people off.

As these two women explained, servers are often responsible for the conduct of

intoxicated customers, while simultaneously relying on the discretion and satisfaction of

these customers for their income. This role of monitoring customers' alcohol intake and being held responsible for "over-serving" them, complicated their pursuit of a tip from customers, particularly when the server had dedicated a significant amount of her time during her shift to earning a tip from the customer.

In addition to their responsibility to regulate customers' drinking behavior, these servers also expected to have to tolerate a "reasonable" amount of belligerent behavior from "inebriated people." Several servers used these expectations for inappropriate conduct among male customers within an atmosphere permeated by beer and alcohol to diminish the threatening characteristics of customers' behaviors. For example, Lily discussed one reason servers at Bar Louie needed to have "thick skin" in order to be able to tolerate the environment:

> You kind of just have to let stuff roll off your back a lot. You do have the men who, you know, hit on you and you have to deal with drunk people even if they don't hit on you... people that are drinking too much or come in and they've already drank too much before they ordered anything from you... There's not a whole lot of fights or anything. There has been a couple, but overall, for that kind of atmosphere, I would almost expect there to be more.

Similarly, Sophie explained that when she "ran cocktails," she learned to expect bolder requests from men who patronized The Parkway Grill:

> They would like... try to strike up a conversation with you type of thing... or for some reason they'd be like, "Hey, lets take a picture with you" (*A mixed group of people?)* Um, no, probably usually just guys... Sometimes younger guys... but it seemed like it was more often men.

In more overt instances of unwanted sexualized interactions with customers, the customers, managers, and even the servers themselves, often accounted for customers' offensive sexual remarks and behaviors by the amount of alcohol they had consumed.

Several servers explained situations of unwanted sexualized interactions and ended these

accounts with a statement similar to, "But, he was just drunk." Furthermore, some servers

used this approach to shield themselves from feeling threatened by a customer's behavior

or "taking it personally." For example, Nicole explained an incident at Buffalo Wild

Wings that resulted in police involvement after other customers observed the intoxicated

customer's behavior towards her.

> Not too long ago, a guy came in... and he grabbled my arm and was like
> "Hey sweetie" and I was like, "Can you get off me?" And, when I first
> walked by, I handed him a beer... because I didn't—we were slammed and
> I couldn't tell he was that intoxicated. When he started asking for another
> drink, I could hear him slurring and that's when he grabbed me and was
> like "Give me a kiss, give me a crown." So, when he got arrested,
> apparently one of the customers told the cops, because they all saw him.
> So, when the cop was questioning me about it, they were like, "Was the
> man grabbing on you? Was he groping you?" I was like, "He wasn't
> groping me, but he did, you know, grab my arm and try and get my
> attention and I jerked away." And he was like, "If he was being physical
> with you— " and I was like "No, he was just intoxicated. You need to get
> him home, take him to jail, somewhere..." you know, "Don't let him
> drive." I was like "He grabbled my arm and he was standing over me, like
> getting really close to my face... He was just drunk." Like, I'm used to
> dealing with that... He was drunk. And I saw him later that week and he
> apologized but…

In addition to using alcohol as a way to defend one's own status and sense of

well-being, servers sometimes used customers' level intoxication as a type of strategy to

end their interaction with the customer. Because they were expected to tolerate or even

appear to "welcome" some sexual remarks and behavior as a primary component of the

restaurant's appeal to customers, some servers found reasons to end interactions with

customers that their managers defined as more serious than sexually offensive remarks to

the server. Several servers noted that managers became more involved in handling a

"problem customer" when serving the customer alcohol verged on becoming a liability

for the restaurant or when a customer created a scene in front of other customers. For instance, Lily explained the point at which she was willing to request the help of management: "Like if they're being really loud or aggressive toward, you know... not just me, but aggressive towards other customers or even someone that they were with... Then that's the point that I say something." Another example is a moment Brittney recalled when she had requested a customer be "kicked out" of the fast-paced "city" Hooters, after the customer "crossed a line" that entitled her to support from management:

> The last person that I kicked out was because he cussed me out because I asked for his ID. It was an older man, but we have to ID everyone. It doesn't matter if you're a hundred years old. That's the rule... And, yeah, he must have already been drunk because everybody he was with was already drunk. And they came in like 15 minutes until close wanting food, and everybody else got like a soda. He was the only one drinking beer, so I asked him for his ID. And he cussed me out. (*Is that a common reason to have someone kicked out?)* For *me*, yeah. It's been mostly somebody that's just already drunk, and usually, like an older man. And, you know, I try to be nice... But if they cuss, if they say one cuss word, I'm like "They cussed at me!" and they'll kick them out.

Several servers noted that, in extreme cases of abuse from customers who were drinking, alcohol could be used as a way in which servers asserted control, although this strategy often produced other consequences such as losing the tip. However, several servers perceived that managers took the threat of being held liable for a customer driving while intoxicated or causing an offensive scene for other customers more seriously than a customer's offensive conduct toward the server, herself. Therefore, "cutting someone off," or notifying management of the need to do so, is one area in which servers described having a sense of control in abusive situations with customers, or interactions that "got out of hand." Although most of the servers described simply tolerating the behavior, avoiding the table or customer or "trying not to make a scene" when their only path of

recourse was to complain about the customer's unwelcomed sexual conduct, several

servers described incidences of requesting that managers "kick someone out" or "cut

someone off" when they could provide some evidence of the customer's intoxication. For

example, Nicole explained using offensive remarks and behavior as a gauge for when she

would have someone "cut off" from drinking any more alcohol.

> When things go over the line, the first thing I do is stop serving them, so I
> automatically have to get a manager. And I would, you know, go tell my
> manager the situation and be like, "He's been drinking *this* much, and he's
> starting to say *these* comments to me, and grabbing me, and saying..."
> Girl, you know, "...talking 'bout my butt," or something (laughs). Like, I
> let them know! That's how I know he is getting too drunk. A lot of
> [servers] won't go that far unless they've had too much to drink. But, once
> I get offended, I cut them off. I get my manager to let them know that
> they're cut off, and yeah... And, it takes a lot to offend me, because I
> usually just joke things off to try to keep my tip. But, if they cross a line
> and I get offended, then I report it to the manager... And, they usually cut
> them off pretty quick.

As illustrated in Nicole's explanation, servers sometimes used the strategy of

having a customer "cut off" to end the interaction, but this measure came with

consequences to the server's income in that she could not rely on an angry or disgruntled

customer to leave a tip. The degree to which this concern affected their decisions to "cut

someone off" varied across servers and across different restaurant contexts, as described

further in the final theme. However, an important implication of the "tipping point"—the

moment when servers became willing to forego a customer's potential tip in order to end

the interaction—is that the servers immediately benefitted from a shift in power in the

absence of relying directly on the customer for a portion of her income.

Using alcohol to explain offensive remarks and behavior allowed the customer to

maintain his relative level of "tipping capital" within the individual setting, so long as the

server remained the only person harmed by his behavior. The customer's level of

intoxication also served as a protective mechanism for servers to allow the interaction to

continue, while also decreasing the customer's influence on her perception of her status

and self-worth. However, except in cases of loud or "extremely" offensive remarks or

conduct, or when a customer became a liability for the restaurant, the potential revenue

from a drinking customer served to reinforce the customer's status, even when servers

complained to managers about the customer's sexualized conduct. This was particularly

true for "the regulars," who generally held the highest level of "tipping capital" in the

contexts of these restaurants.

The Regulars. As explained by the servers, "the regulars" are a significant

component of the heteromasculine bar and grill atmosphere. "Regulars"—most often

defined as middle-aged men who patronized the restaurant one or more times a week—

held a high level of "tipping capital" in that they would likely return in the future, they

drank a lot of alcohol, and their "loyal customer" status often encouraged management to

ignore their bad behavior. Their status as "regulars" often also meant that the servers

could reliably estimate the tip they would likely receive from the customer as well as

their expectations as the "regular's" server.

Regulars usually sat at the bar or at a "high-top" table in the bar area, often

"picked favorites" among the servers, knew or were friends with restaurant owners and

managers, and the restaurant's staff usually knew them by name. For example, even as a

hostess at The Parkway Grill, Sophie remarked, "I knew a few regulars, like I just did

like the brief, you know "Hey, how are you..." But like I knew probably like 5 or 6 of

them by name. Yeah. Like one guy, Rudy, would be there like every day. A few of the

other guys would be there a lot, too." Lily offered a slightly different version of this

definition when asked about "the regulars" at Bar Louie:

> Um, I have a couple but like I haven't worked there too long. There are
> other people there that have regulars that come in. And, I do recognize the
> people that are in there a lot, but I mean I have a few, but not as many as
> the other girls that have worked there a long time. *(So, you would consider
> regulars to be matched up with particular servers?)* Yeah... usually.

Within the context of these restaurants, most of the servers defined a customer as

one of "the regulars" based on the customer's frequency of patronizing the restaurant. For

instance, Brittney described the group of regulars at "the city" Hooters: "A lot of people

come in every single day to see us... Most of them sit at the bar, or around. Some of them

have their favorites and they'll sit with them... and, a lot of them just kind of move

around and kind of talk to everybody." Additionally, these servers often characterized

"the regulars" as either providing a reliable way to ensure a decent amount of income

during an unpredictable shift or as posing challenges for servers. For example, Jane noted

that the expectations that some "regulars" had to talk to servers outside of the restaurant

often made her job more stressful—

> I think that... you can draw the line, but [the regulars] are gonna' push it. I
> don't know if they notice that you're more flexible... and then they
> definitely pursue it. There are tons of these middle-aged guys that would
> be at the bar, and you knew their names and everything about their family,
> because they were there for so long. It was like they were there so much
> they were like your brother. It's like, "Why would you think that I would
> wanna' get off work and go hang out with you when you've been here my
> whole shift talking to me?" You know what I mean? But some girls would
> like... flirt with them, and people do make friends with the regulars.

By comparison, "the weirdos" illustrate the relative "tipping capital" of "the

regulars" within each restaurant atmosphere. In contrast to "the weirdos," servers and

management addressed "the regulars" by name, knew personal details about their

occupations and family lives, were friendlier and often worked harder to ensure their satisfaction, and were more reluctant to "cut off" their access to alcohol, even when servers addressed their offensive behavior. However, servers and managers typically had limited interactions with "the weirdos,"— men with inappropriate fixations on particular women employees at the restaurant. "Weirdos" were usually perceived as being socially awkward in some way, such as silently sitting in the restaurant and staring at a particular female server. Importantly, a "weirdo" had also not contributed much money to the restaurant's revenues, nor had he developed a reputation for tipping the servers enough to compensate for the uncomfortable feelings he elicited. The low level of "tipping capital" that this type of customer held presented fewer barriers to servers complaining to management. For instance, Jane explained that managers reacted by calling the police when customers with few interactions with the staff acted in offensive or threatening ways toward female employees:

> This one girl, for a little while... she had this guy that would like come and meet her when she got off work on a motorcycle, which you know, is kind of sketchy, so... Like she didn't know him, but somehow he knew her. And, [in a separate situation] basically this guy came in and asked [a fellow employee] a question, like something really inappropriate... and they actually ended up having to call the cops based on what he said, but it was like aggressive and sexual and really random... She was just like, "Hi, how are you?" and he just said something—I didn't hear what he said. But I think they found his car somewhere down the road.

While the restaurant's staff often worked together to "protect" a woman server from a "weirdo's" unwanted attention, managers and even servers often overlooked or downplayed many similar, threatening behaviors, when the customer held the status of being a "regular." For example, Jane explained her frustration about a regular's continued

presence at Cooter's East, even after she notified her manager of the customer's offensive

behavior.

> One time [a regular] kept telling me he wanted to see my tattoo—because
> I have one on my side and he saw the one on my neck. So, he kept asking
> me to lift my shirt up. It isn't a big deal but he was like pushing really hard
> and it was just like... really annoying. He eventually got kicked out, I
> think, because he called some girl a bitch behind the bar. But we wouldn't
> get rid of him, even when I would go tell a manager about it.

Although in this situation, Jane chose to tell her manager about the problem, most

of the women in the study explained trying to ignore most customers' sexualized

behaviors whenever possible, especially if the customer was one of "the regulars" and she

would likely have to see him again in the future. Several servers described having to use

the strategy of "ignoring it," or pretending not to notice or be uncomfortable with a

regular's behavior, until the behavior "crossed the line." However, servers not only used

this strategy of ignoring or avoiding offensive behavior to manage sexualized interactions

with "the regulars"; servers often responded in similar ways when they experienced

unwanted, offensive, or threatening sexualized interactions with other customers.

Avoidance Strategies. The most common response to unwelcomed, offensive, or

threatening sexualized interactions with all customers was to try to ignore the behavior

and get through the table or shift, even when it made the server uncomfortable or posed

challenges for her work performance. Most of the time, their feelings of being

uncomfortable with a customer's behavior were not "severe" enough to justify requesting

the support of management. For instance, Emily explained that at Cooter's West, "there's

a guy that will come in and sit at the bar a lot and he just watches me... I try not to

acknowledge it..." However, the most common unwelcomed sexualized behaviors that

servers described were verbal remarks, suggestions, or sexual advances that the server

perceived as inappropriate, demeaning, or overly persistent. For example, Brittney

explained her general attitude toward daily instances of unwelcomed or offensive sexual

conduct from customers at the "city" Hooters:

> Most of the time, it's just somebody being flat out rude... And I have seen
> where girls have been sexually harassed. Like, whether it be like touching
> them inappropriately... I've had things said to me that were completely
> inappropriate, ya' know. (*Would you normally tell someone when it
> happens?*) See... I don't like to make a big deal about things unless I feel
> like I have to, you know? Um... if somebody said something that was just
> kind of, I don't know, where I didn't feel like it was a huge deal, I would
> probably not say anything at first. If it happened again, I would, but I
> don't know. I just try not—I try not to.

Nicole explained her typical response during repeated unwelcomed sexualized

interactions with customers, even after rejecting their sexual advances towards her.

> Umm, it could definitely get awkward, especially if they're consistent, or
> they keep asking, definitely yeah. There's some times it gets kind of
> awkward when you say no, and you try to joke about it, and then they're
> all, like they just keep asking you and keep on asking you. And... then I
> just start ignoring them, like act like I'm getting busy and I can't answer
> them. Then they leave and get mad, and I'm like "bye!" (in a happy tone).
> I just always try to... Well, ignoring them is like a last resort, just if they
> get too pushy, you know... Because like I said, I try to joke it off and not
> lose my tip and play friendly about it. But sometimes, I'd just pretend to
> get busy, and that was the best way for me to handle it.

Like Nicole, most servers attempted to ignore customers who made them

uncomfortable, unless the incident surpassed their own particular boundaries for

offensive conduct. Because satisfying the customer and tolerating a certain degree of

sexualized interactions are tasks required for the server in the heteromasculine sports bar

and grill environment, and because maintaining their interactions with customers is a

necessary component of earning their income during the shift, many servers simply try to

avoid having to confront the customer about his unwelcomed behavior. In instances when they believed customers had "crossed a line," they sometimes used strategies to end the interaction in ways that encouraged management to interpret the situation as more serious than a customer's sexually offensive behavior. These strategies included using other evidence of the problem the customer posed for the restaurant, such as offending other customers, using profanity, in addition to capitalizing on their own responsibility to regulate the customer's alcohol consumption. However, the strategies available to servers, when they finally chose to end an interaction, came with direct consequences for their income.

Different kinds of customers held different levels of "tipping capital," depending on their status as a "regular," their likelihood of leaving a customary or better tip in exchange for a reasonable amount of their effort and attention, and the varying characteristics of each restaurant's work environment, such as servers' access to support from management. The greater level of "tipping capital" that a customer held, the more difficult it became for servers to manage offensive or uncomfortable sexualized interactions with customers. In contrast, when customers held lower levels of "tipping capital," servers described feeling better able to manage negative interactions in ways that decreased the event's impact on their job performance, income, and overall sense of well-being and self-worth. "Tipping points," or shifts in the balance of power, occurred when the customer no longer held enough "tipping capital" to warrant the server's tolerance for their behavior. The most common "tipping points" occurred only as a result of extreme or numerous instances of offensive or degrading remarks or behaviors.

Within the context of the heteromasculine sports bar and grill, alcohol served to both fuel and excuse unwanted sexualized interactions. Managers sometimes used alcohol to excuse a regular's conduct, rather than perceiving it as causing harm to the server. Servers also referred more generally to customers' offensive or degrading behaviors as being a consequence of working in a "bar atmosphere," and they sometimes used this context to explain how they had learned to shield their overall attitude or well-being. Rather than "taking it personally," several servers used the intoxicated state of male customers to frame them as "just drunk guys," "a bunch of inebriated people," or as children that they were forced to "babysit." Although servers were able to use alcohol to reduce the status of these customers when referring to them outside of this context, several servers still described feeling verbally abused and subordinated by customers while in the setting of the restaurant. Furthermore, "the tip" hierarchy structured servers' interactions with intoxicated customers, whether or not the server belittled the customer's status in their own thoughts or during time away from work. However, alcohol also functioned as a strategy that some servers used to justify ending their interactions with customers, once an interaction reached a "tipping point" and she no longer perceived the harm of maintaining the interaction to be worth "the tip." At this "tipping point," the hierarchy of "the tip" no longer structured the balance of power between the server and the customer. As described below, the server's "tipping point" was often influenced by characteristics of the individual restaurant, such as the average volume of tips servers' received due to the pace of customers.

Tipping Volume and Table Turnover

The first two themes that emerged in servers' perspectives of their interactions with customers reflect the hierarchical foundations of "the tip" and the form of symbolic capital that this structure provides to customers, and particularly for men, in restaurant atmospheres characterized by heteromasculine dominance and entertainment. While the hierarchy of "the tip" and the power of customers' "tipping capital" define the framework and components of this structure, the pace of the atmosphere and volume of customers emerged as the most fluctuating influence on the status that servers held and the amount of "tipping capital" that customers were able to accumulate. Faster-paced restaurants provided an environment in which each customer provided a smaller share of a server's income, and therefore, servers were less reliant on the positive evaluations of every customer they served. In contrast, slower paced restaurants increased each customer's relative "tipping capital," since servers in these environments relied more heavily on the "gratuity" of nearly every table or customer that they encountered during their shifts. Furthermore, this affected their ability to ignore or reject the sexual advances of "the regulars" as well as their willingness to request that managers "cut off" a customer's alcohol consumption. Additionally, the pace of a particular shift in which an incident occurred also influenced the servers' experiences and perspectives of their interactions.

When asked about the pace and atmosphere of the environment, servers often included different elements to explain a common type and volume of customers. In addition to the overall pace of the restaurant and comparisons to other restaurants where they had worked previously, servers discussed contrasting characteristics of different sections of the restaurant, varying times of day and days of the week, as well as special

occasions or special events like "happy hour" or major sporting events. For example,

when asked to describe the atmosphere of The Parkway Grill, Sophie offered the

following perspective:

> It depends on the kind of crowd... but [the atmosphere is] sort of like, spirited, I guess. If there's a sports game going on, it could be really loud or really tense. If [a game] went bad, people were yelling. If things went good, people were yelling, that sort of thing... There was definitely always a wait on like a fight night... That was a different kind of crowd... Nobody really liked the fight nights, except the bartenders... probably because they made a lot of money. The bar got tipped out based how much servers got tipped. That's when it would always be like really crowded and... the kind of people that came in were like... they'd get really drunk, but sort of were... not very appreciative, I guess, and expect a lot... But, especially once football season starts, there's a lot more people waiting. They'll go to the bar and wait... The game kind of determines who's there, unless there are no games. Then it's sort of slower, I guess, like a slower, social drinking kind of thing.

In restaurants with a slower pace of customers, or restaurants that received a high

volume of customers only during particular special events or occasions, servers often

described feeling that managers defined the server position as having very little authority.

Generally, servers in faster-paced restaurants were better able to request particular shifts

and more often favorably described taking on a high volume of customers, while servers

in slower paced-restaurants explained that the infrequent but rapid increases in the pace

and volume of customers sometimes posed a problem due to being understaffed.

> Managers hate when people below them—you know, the servers basically—are asking if people can go home, because the managers have to work harder. Because if we get really busy, and there's food that needs to be run, the managers have to run it, so they don't want us to buddy-out [cut some servers and assign their tables to remaining servers when no more customers are coming in]. Because now they're having to work really, really hard. Like on Halloween, when everyone was cut, I had all these tables open, and then out of nowhere we got all these... two tables of thirty probably... But we had cut everyone, so it was just me, a manager, and the other closer. So, we were all like working our butts off, like to

refill people's drinks and... sometimes the managers have to go help the kitchen guys while another manager's out there helping us. So, they don't want to cut anyone if they don't have to—especially servers, because we only get paid $2.13 an hour and they tell us that. (*They remind you how much you make an hour?*) Yeah, they'll just be like, "Hey, ya'll don't need to come up and tell us when to buddy. If ya'll are doing what you're supposed to, we will. But ya'll are getting paid $2.13, so we don't mind keeping you on the floor." They say that stuff to us all the time.

In contrast to servers in slower-paced restaurants, servers that described their restaurants as having a higher volume of customers offered more favorable images of their relationship with management and their ability to request managers' support when a customer's sexual conduct made them uncomfortable. For example, when asked her typical course of action in the event a customer made intimidating or threatening remarks, Emily explained,

> If it was really offensive I would tell my manager for sure... If it was making me uncomfortable, they would ask him to leave. They'd do whatever, like, I need them to do... Yeah, if it was making me uncomfortable they would definitely ask him to leave.

Along with the degree of tension between servers and managers, the pace of the restaurant also influenced servers' perceptions of the other women they worked with and the overall level of cooperation among the staff. Servers in slower-paced restaurants noted more "cattiness and drama," among other women servers. In contrast, servers in fast-paced restaurants more often described enjoying their time around their coworkers and being able to ask for help when necessary. For instance, Brittney alluded to her time at the "highway" Hooters when asked if she felt comfortable asking coworkers for help at the "city" Hooters: "Oh yeah, definitely. Especially the store I'm at now. We're all really close friends. We hang out after work, we help each other with you know, whatever it is— work problems, personal problems... Some of my best friends are there—even the

managers." With a similar attitude toward her fellow servers, Emily described her overall

experience working at the faster-paced Cooter's West:

> I think it's a lot of fun. It's usually really loud and there is a lot going on
> so you can—we all just cut up a lot and we are really loud... I like it... It's
> my favorite place I've worked so far. We all get along really well... It's
> one of those places that if you don't ask for help, you aren't gonna' make
> it, so we all do. (So, *you feel comfortable asking coworkers for help?)*
> Yeah, you have to ask for help, like we all help each other as much as
> possible... if you don't ask, you aren't going to make it there.

In addition to simply having to rely on coworkers in a faster-paced atmosphere,

another influence on servers' feelings of cohesiveness with other servers is perhaps due

to the casual seating procedures at most of these restaurants. The ability to "seat

yourself," rather than being told where to sit and the fact that the servers covered

particular sections of tables meant that customers were able to choose their server by

sitting in their section. Slower-paced environments often encouraged servers to compete

with the other servers for the customers. An example is Brittney's description of the

difference in her average tips between her years at the slower-paced "highway" Hooters

and her current employer, the "city" Hooters:

> It's lot better, like probably close to $100 a shift better. It's just because
> of the business there and the regulars there. I mean I had, at [the
> "highway" Hooters], it was *all* regulars. And, you didn't make money if
> you didn't get all the regulars. It was like a fight! Girls would run to the
> door when regulars walked in and just be like "Sit with me! Sit with me!"
> And, I'm not really aggressive like that. I'd be like, "Sit where you want.
> I'm not going to fight over you."

In spite of the heightened level of "sex appeal" that the Hooters brand of

restaurants markets to its customers (Hooters, LLC 2012), Brittney described feeling able

to request support from management or have a customer "kicked out in a heart-beat" in

instances of extreme or repeated offensive conduct. Her own comparison of the two

restaurants within the same chain indicated that the "tipping capital" of "the regulars" was much higher at "the highway" Hooters location than the status of regulars that she observed while working at the bigger and busier "city" Hooters.

Similar to Brittney, Jane frequently answered my questions by comparing her experiences at two locations in the same restaurant chain, primarily contrasting the effects of the different volume and pace of customers. However, in relation to Brittney, Jane experienced working at these two differently-paced restaurants in the reverse order—the faster-paced Cooter's West and then the slower-paced Cooter's East. Jane explained the negative effects of the low volume of customers at the slower-paced Cooter's East on her ability to earn her income while being pressured to satisfy "the regulars'" repeated sexual advances:

> If you're on bar, and they kept asking you [for your number], it's like... Like, if they're a regular, you couldn't really get out of it because if you give them the wrong number, they can just call it right then... and they would know. And, then they're pissed off. And, since they're there all the time, they can ask other people about you, and sometimes they know about your personal life. So, you don't really have a "good excuse," without... unless you're just rude, which like... is just going to make them mad. But, some of them just won't take no for an answer... and like you end up giving it to them... Because if they're a regular, he's probably not going to tip you anything the next time, either... Because it's always the same people that come in. And, like, that one person can make a big difference, you know? ...Because it's so slow at East... So, you just feel like you have to.

Jane's example highlights the additional complications that "the tip" structure provided for servers in slower-paced restaurants, particularly when servers relied on "the regulars" as a significant source of their income. Although Lily explained that Bar Louie usually maintained a moderate pace of customers, one of the primary differences between the restaurant and the other five in the study was the difference in drink prices. With

twelve years of experience as a server, she explained that the tips were generally better at

Bar Louie than other places she had worked. She also described a diverse crowd of

customers, who were older and likely settled in their careers, with the exception of the

local university students who more often patronized the bar and grill for the one-dollar

burger specials on Tuesday. In addition to a steady pace of customers, she explained that

the typical differences in drink prices likely influenced her above-average tip earnings at

Bar Louie, since most of her customers tipped a percentage of the total bill. In spite of

receiving a higher amount in tips from each customer on average, Lily described a lower

degree of cohesiveness among the staff and in her interactions with managers than faster-

paced restaurants. For example, when asked if she felt comfortable talking to a manager

if a customer's unwelcomed sexual advances became threatening, she explained:

> I don't think it's ever gotten to that level where I felt *really* uncomfortable,
> um, but if I did, I don't know that I could say something to one of my
> managers... When I first started, it was a different manager. I know he
> asked someone to leave because they were harassing one of the girls.But I
> mean if they're straight up rude, you know, not just being persistent in a
> sexual or flirtatious way, you know... just being ugly or rude, then they
> have to go— He'll ask them or we'll to ask them to leave.

Lily's example highlights a key premise of the heteromasculine-oriented sports

bar and grill atmosphere at both slow and fast-paced restaurants in this study—the

expectation that servers will tolerate sexualized interactions with men. However, the lack

of cohesiveness between managers and servers provided a barrier for her ability to

approach managers about the "less serious" issue of "harassing" the server without any

harm to others in the restaurant.

In addition to learning that managers perceived other reasons more seriously than

"simple sexual harassment," servers in slow-paced atmospheres faced managers'

reluctance to ask customers to leave even for "more serious" incidences of misconduct or loud and rude behavior in front of other customers. For example, Jane explained her opinion about each Cooter's locations' willingness to ask a customer to leave:

> I felt like there was less control at Cooter's East because we didn't have enough people there to like—We didn't want to scare any customers away, basically. Like you can tell someone to go away at West if they're, ya' know? But at Cooter's East they really don't want to step on anyone's toes.

Although the servers at both fast and slow paced restaurants felt constrained by the structure of "the tip" regarding their ability to end an uncomfortable interaction, servers at faster-paced restaurants described their status as having a relatively higher authority when they finally reached their "tipping point." For example, when I asked her, "What would be a reason you could have someone kicked out?" Brittney explained, "It could be—I mean it could be pretty much anything that's... Not just kind of like a sexual harassment issue, but it could be just that somebody's rude to you... for something unnecessary." Although Brittney explained during the interview that she typically "tries not to" complain about a customer's behavior when it had not yet caused a scene, she emphasized in multiple responses that her managers would be willing to ask a customer to leave if she complained about a customer's unwanted or offensive sexual behavior.

In contrast to servers in fast-paced restaurants, Jane described multiple incidents in which managers at the slower-paced location of Cooter's were reluctant to respond to a server's request to handle a "pushy" customer whose repeated sexualized remarks and suggestions interfered with her ability to perform her job, even after she informed management of the problem. For example,

> [The regular] was like "So, Jane, when are y'all gonna' put a pole up here?
> I'd like to see that!" And, I went and told a manager, and he was just like,
> "You know, we can't kick him out." Like he addressed it as, "He's a
> paying customer—Like, he drinks a lot of beer, like really fast... so..."

Relative to slower-paced restaurants, servers in faster-paced restaurants described more instances in which they felt able to assert control over a problem customer, without having to ask managers before enacting their decisions. For example, Nicole worked as both a bartender and a server in the bar area, the busiest section of a fast-paced Buffalo Wild Wings location. When asked if she had to ask a manager for help when she needed to "cut off" a customer, she offered the following example:

> Not all of the time. I did cut some people off myself if a situation escalated
> really quick and the managers weren't around. Like one football night, we
> were slammed and this guy was drinking at a table and then he moved up
> to the bar. And, I was like, "Hey, hello? Can I get you a drink?" I'm like
> throwing drinks and so I got him a drink, and he was like, "This isn't what
> I said!" And, like... he got angry with me real quick, and I had just served
> him one beer, and he started cussing me out in front of everybody. So, I
> grabbed his drink and was like, "No, I think you're done." And, he was
> like, "You're cutting me off?" I was like "Yeah, you're not having no
> more!" (laughs) And, he started cussing me more, and I was like, "You
> can just wait right there and I'll go grab my manager for you!" And like, I
> stay calm because if I escalate or like cuss at them... it's just going to get
> worse, you know...

Like other servers in fast-paced restaurants, Nicole showed less concern about how her managers would react to her decisions. Even though Nicole provided numerous examples of customers' offensive remarks or requests, she was perhaps one of the least negatively impacted by these unwelcomed sexualized interactions regarding her work environment, average income per shift, and overall attitude and job satisfaction. As her example demonstrates, a key factor in the increase in status that servers in fast-paced restaurants experience is perhaps the force of the overwhelming volume of customers and

managers' inability to handle every instance of customer "misconduct" on a regular basis.

When the restaurant maintained a high flow of customers, managers were more reliant on

the servers to decide how to handle a problem customer; therefore, the status of the server

in a fast-paced restaurants experienced a relatively higher status than those in slower-

paced environments.

Overall, servers in faster-paced restaurants described feeling less distress about

their unwelcomed sexualized interactions with men in the restaurant and better able to

handle customers, and even "the regulars," who "pushed the boundaries" between what

they perceived as playful banter and joking and remarks or suggestions that were

inappropriate or uncomfortable. For example, at Cooter's West—a restaurant that both

Jane and Emily described as having a high volume of customers and fast pace of table

turnover, Emily felt able to manage these encounters with less negative impact on her

overall attitude and sense of well-being at work.

> I guess I tend to deal with situations like that really well. Like I don't
> know. Like there's like a line, for sure. I tend to like, I don't know, I tend
> to deal with it. I try not to make it noticeable that I'm uncomfortable and I
> just like won't go back to the table or like I try to avoid the guy or
> whatever. *(What about customers who ask for your number?)* Yeah, I just
> tell them no or I'll tell them that I don't ... you know, "Maybe come see
> me a few more times and let me get to know you a little better!"... Or, I'll
> tell them my phone is broke (laughs).

The two women servers—Nicole at Buffalo Wild Wings and Brittney at the "city"

Hooters—who offered the highest estimate of their average tips, volume of customers,

and pace of the work environment during a typical shift and workweek also described

experiencing the highest frequency of sexualized interactions with customers on a regular

basis. For instance, Brittney explained that one or more customers asked for her number

or asked her to go out with them that night during virtually every shift she worked.

Unlike servers in slower paced atmospheres, Brittney perceived these situations as

generally very trivial and "annoying":

> What I can't stand is when guys come in and they'll talk to me a little bit
> and then be like "Come out with us. Give me your number." And I'm like,
> "No." (*You just say no?*) Most of the time. I mean, I don't want to be rude,
> but still... I don't like to lie about anything, so if somebody asks me for my
> number and I'm not interested, I'll just— Well, *sometimes*... I have said I
> don't want to give out my number, I have a boyfriend or whatever. But,
> that's to the extent I'll make stuff up. Most of the time it's like, "Uh, why
> don't you give me *your* number?" I just hate when people will just straight
> up ask you for your number. Like, they can leave theirs and if I want to
> call you, I'll call you. If not, oh well. It just gets on my nerves. (*Does that
> happen a lot?*) I would say it happens, yeah, almost every night.

Although Nicole explained that she frequently used the strategies of avoiding

customers and requesting support from managers to handle customers, she experienced

less harm from customers' sexualized advances on a nightly basis. In fact, these

situations occurred so often that Nicole even described feeling slightly entertained by the

number of customers who attempted to interact with her outside of work, as long as these

interactions did not "cross the line." To describe how she typically handled being asked

for her number, she explained,

> I would always joke about it saying, "My boyfriend wouldn't like that!"
> or, you know... A lot of times you'd get people that would leave *their*
> number... or leave you notes. I got that all the time. It was funny reading
> some of them. This one guy was drunk, though, left me his number, left
> Buffalo Wild Wings, and called back up there to talk to me! And, I'm like,
> "Uh, I'm working." (laughs) But, liquid courage is what we call it, you
> know... but yeah. (*Was it typical?*) Oh yeah. You'd get a couple numbers a
> week, like... yeah. It was funny when I would turn in my credit card
> receipts, my manager would be like, "Every time you turn your receipts in,
> there's always at least one with a phone number written on it!" and I'd be
> like, "I— These men! I don't know what they're thinking!" (winks)

In addition to their greater ability to laugh at customers who pursued their attention, the lower level of "tipping capital" that customers held in these faster-paced restaurants provided fewer barriers to rejecting customers' advances and ending sexualized interactions. For example, Brittney explained, "Yeah, I mean I do think of that— 'He's probably going to tip me less because I didn't give him my number.' But, so what, you know? That's one table." Similarly, Nicole described "the regulars" as holding a much lower level of "tipping capital" than servers in slower-paced restaurants:

> Like if you piss off a regular and lose their tip, it's not too big of a deal...
> Yeah, losing one regular is not a big deal, but you don't want to, because
> that's a guarantee of money coming in. If they, I guess if they get to that
> point where they irritate you that bad though, you're like "I don't care."

Across these servers' perspectives of their work environments, the contexts of the tipping volume and table turnover influenced the degree to which they perceived unwelcomed sexualized interactions as harmful to their individual work conditions and performance. The servers who worked for fast-paced restaurants experienced fewer problems with "the regulars" as well as other customers, due to the relative decrease to the "tipping capital" that each customer held. In faster-paced restaurants the servers, rather than the customers, became the most highly sought after "commodity," and therefore customers often competed for the server's attention rather than servers competing with one another over customers or particular sections. In slower-paced restaurants, each customer had a greater impact on the server's income, and when customers did not tip well, these servers described feeling as if they were "working for free." Furthermore, managers were less likely to take servers' requests seriously, and they often overlooked servers' complaints about unwanted sexual behavior from customers.

In faster-paced environments, however, the servers could "afford" to complain to managers in extreme cases, turn their attention away from the customer, or have the customer "kicked out" when the customer could be labeled as a threat to the restaurant. Managers became more compliant with servers when they were not able to examine the details of every problematic interaction, and therefore, they trusted the server's perspective of a situation rather than the intoxicated customer's. Furthermore, because the fast pace of the restaurant indicated a high volume of customers, managers were likely less concerned with maintaining the satisfaction of every individual who patronized the restaurant than managers in restaurants with few customers. Instead, these servers explained that managers and servers cooperated with each other to get through the shift successfully, and the servers felt more able to approach management and request their support when necessary.

Overall, the primary contrasts between servers' experiences of the structure of "the tip," the "tipping power" of customers, and their individual "tipping points" within sexualized interactions with customers were consistent with whether the server's workplace was a faster or slower-paced restaurant in this study. More specifically, the pace of each restaurant affected servers' perceptions of the complications posed by alcohol, "the regulars," and the sexualized atmosphere of the heteromasculine sports bar and grill. Therefore, the influence of pace, and thus the fluctuating power of customers, demonstrates how this particular structure of compensation creates a complex setting for servers' experiences of "third-party" sexual harassment in workplaces where customers are drawn in by the "promise" of heteromasculine satisfaction.

CONCLUSION

Focusing on "the tip" as a distinctive aspect of the restaurant workplace provides a different perspective for understanding the consequences of "third-party" sexual harassment in settings that emphasize masculine dominance and feminine sexuality and subservience. The experiences of sexualized interactions with customers in the heteromasculine bar and grill niche of the restaurant industry have many elements in common with settings examined in previous research and legal decisions related to sexual harassment. A few of these issues include: "Hostile environment" sexual harassment in which coworkers' sexually offensive behaviors create a discriminatory work environment (See Quinn 2002); *quid pro quo* sexual harassment perpetrated by a person's work-related supervisor; consensual sexualized interactions between coworkers, such as those described by Williams, Giuffre, and Dellinger (1999); settings in which the exclusive work-related responsibilities of female workers are to engage in sexual interactions with male customers and clients (See Price-Glynn 2010; Sanders 2005; Frank 1998; Enck and Preston 1988); and finally, unwanted sexualized interactions with non-employees in "non-sexualized" settings, such as the reception area setting involved in the landmark "third-party" sexual harassment case, *EEOC v. Sage Realty Corp* (1981). Additionally, servers in restaurants that do not emphasize themes of "female sex appeal" may also experience "third-party" sexual harassment with similar consequences posed by the structure of "the tip."

However, women's sexualized interactions with customers within the heteromasculine sports bar and grill atmosphere differ from previously examined situations of "harassment" in that they are more difficult to categorize with existing

definitions of abuse or consent. All six women experienced unwelcomed, uncomfortable, threatening, or "harassing" interactions with customers; yet, within this context, servers were to differing degrees required to submit to the behavior in order to maintain or increase their income. Furthermore, customers experienced few barriers to subjecting women servers to repetitive or threatening sexualized interactions due to their "non-employee" status and the general expectation for feminine subservience and heteromasculine dominance within this atmosphere.

The structure of "the tip" provided customers with a supervisory status, with influence and discretion over the server's income. These servers often felt that they were faced with conflicting objectives, such as regulating the alcohol consumption of "problem customers" while simultaneously attempting to maintain the customer's satisfaction to receive his tip. The "customer pseudo-supervisor" controlled not only the amount of the tip, but the criteria upon which the server would be evaluated, and these criteria were often influenced by gendered expectations. Although not all servers perceived every sexualized interaction as threatening or offensive, every situation they described included distinct influences of the hierarchy "the tip" imposed. Therefore, even when customers "pushed the boundaries" of their "tipping capital" until the server reached her "tipping point" and the balance of power shifted, the server still experienced a negative impact on her overall income. Because these servers received their primary source of compensation from customers, their concerns about "the tip" influenced their level of agency in deciding when to try to end an unwelcomed sexualized encounter. Thus, in the context of the heteromasculine sports bar and grill, the structure of "the tip" serves to reinforce

gender inequalities in the larger society— women's position of subservience and sexual

subordination and men's position of sexual dominance and economic control.

Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

By limiting the scope of this research to include only women servers at

restaurants with heteromasculine themes, I examined the influences of a distinct structure

of compensation in an environment that capitalizes on women servers' performances of

gender and sexuality. However, across many types of restaurants, the structuring

influence of "the tip" in customer-server interactions may pose consequences for both

men and women servers. Furthermore, I did not focus specifically on the influences of

race, sexual orientation, socioeconomic class, education level, or age in my analysis.

Additionally, the small sample of servers who participated in this research may not

represent the experiences of the majority of servers in this niche of the restaurant industry

or the variety of perspectives of sexualized interactions with customers that may exist.

However, the perspectives these servers offered reiterate what others have found

regarding women's experiences of sexualized interactions at work and the ways in which

women servers are expected to "do gender" within customer-server interactions. The

findings from this study highlight the potential implications of a structure of employee

compensation that other examinations often take for granted and specific consequences

this structure may pose for servers who experience "third-party" sexual harassment in

heteromasculine-oriented workplaces. Future research on servers' experiences within the

structure of "the tip" may build on these findings by examining the influences of

restaurant pace and other contextual factors on servers' perspectives of sexualized

interactions with customers. Furthermore, other examinations may explore the customer-

server hierarchy and its implications for "third-party" sexual harassment in states and

individual restaurants where servers receive the majority of their income directly from

their employer, rather than from customers' tips.

Policy Implications

The women who participated in this research illustrate how this form of

"women's work" and the policies that structure it perpetuate women's positions of

subordination to men. Their descriptions of customers' expectations demonstrate that

servers in the heteromasculine sports bar and grill atmosphere are assumed to embody

distinct versions of femininity, and failing to meet these expectations may negatively

impact servers' overall compensation. "Serving" in the restaurant industry overall is

primarily done by women; thus, the low and static federal minimum wage for restaurant

servers, who make up more than 2.2 million members of the U.S. workforce, may due in

part to the devaluation of "women's work" in general (U.S. Department of Labor 2013).

However, these findings suggest that individual structural characteristics of "feminine"

occupations may create distinct obstacles for many women. Therefore, policies designed

to reduce or remove exploitive, disadvantageous, or discriminatory structural forces such

as "the tip" may provide more immediate improvements to women's status in specific

workplaces.

The structure of "the tip" exists in restaurants across the U.S., even in states that

provide additional wage guidelines for "tipped employees," since the minimum wages

they require are often still only a fraction of the minimum wage for all other employees.

More specifically, the women who serve men in heteromasculine bar and grills contend

with sexually subordinating constructions of femininity in addition to customers'

informal and arbitrary power over their compensation. These servers' experiences of the customer-server hierarchy demonstrate some of the challenges policy makers may face when they attempt to reduce the damage and prevalence of "third-party" sexual harassment.

Although the findings of this research are drawn from a limited number of participants, their experiences indicate that one of the primary ways to reduce "third-party" sexual harassment in the sports bar and grill sector, and perhaps the restaurant industry overall, is to reduce the potential damage caused to servers' incomes in the event they decide to end an abusive or offensive encounter with a "third-party." One way to accomplish this is to require employers to pay the majority of servers' regular incomes in the same way that other employers are required to compensate their employees. Therefore, the tip would return to its original purpose as additional gratuity, and servers would be less reliant on unaccountable and unregulated "third-parties" for their livelihoods. Alternatively, policy makers may consider requiring employers to reimburse servers for "the tip" in each instance in which they experience abusive or offensive interactions with customers so that servers may be more able to "afford" to end an interaction before the situation becomes persistent or "severe." This policy may also provide an incentive for employers to curb elements of their restaurant atmosphere that could encourage customers to feel entitled to sexualized interactions with servers. However policies to reduce the harm of "third-party" sexual harassment in this setting are designed, a key objective should be to reduce the power of customers to negatively impact the terms and conditions of a server's employment. To reduce and remedy "third-party" sexual harassment overall, it is important to not only develop procedures for

employees to report instances of harassment to their workplace superiors, but also to

dismantle structures in the workplace that penalize employees for utilizing these

procedures.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Interview Schedule

1. How old are you?

2. What responsibilities do you have outside of work? (school, children, etc.)

3. How long have you worked at _____?

4. What kinds of jobs did you work prior to applying at _____?

5. What brought you to apply at _____?

6. Tell me a little bit about your work schedule.

7. About how many hours do you work per week?

8. Describe the best shifts and sections at _____.

9. About how much do you make in tips on an average night?

10. If you were telling someone about the restaurant who had never heard of it, how would you describe it for them?

      --What is the atmosphere like at _____ ?

11. Tell me about working at _____.

12. Describe your managers and superiors.

13. What are your interactions with managers like?

14. Describe your relationships with other servers.

15. Tell me about a typical problem at work that you might have.

16. How do you typically handle problems at work?

17. Describe a "good table"…

18. Describe a "bad table"...

19. Tell me about different types of customers that come in to the restaurant.

20. Tell me about the regulars.

21. Describe your expectations about the tip you'll receive from different types of customers.

22. Who tips you the best?

23. Describe some of the main issues or problems that tend to arise with customers.

24. Tell me about how you feel while you're at work or interacting with customers.

  -- Do you feel like you can be yourself at work?

25. Tell me about customers' expectations of you.

26. Do you ever feel offended or threatened by customers' remarks?

27. Describe managers' expectations of how you should handle these situations.

28. How do you typically handle these situations?

29. Tell me about the difference between joking and what you would define as offensive behavior from customers…

30. Do you ever have customers ask you for your number?

  -- Tell me about those situations...

31. What would be a common reason to ask your managers for help with a customer?

32. How do you think supervisors and the company in general view your position?

33. Do you feel valued at work?

34. What is the worst part of your job?

35. What is the best part of your job?

36. Is there anything else you want to add to what we've discussed?

Appendix B: Oral Informed Consent Script

Principal Investigator: Lisa L. Walker
Study Title: Perspectives of Female Servers Working in Male-oriented Casual Dining Restaurants

Institution: Middle Tennessee State University

Participant Pseudonym:

_____ Over 18: Yes _____

The following information is provided to inform you about the interview and your participation in it. I am going to read this document to you and you may follow along on the copy that I have given to you to keep. Please listen carefully and feel free to ask any questions you may have about this interview and the information in this document. You will be given an opportunity to ask questions, and your questions will be answered.

Your participation is voluntary and you are also free to withdraw at any time.

You are being asked to participate in this interview because you are a woman employed as a server at a restaurant of interest in this study. Your responses will be audio recorded and transcribed.

If you should get emotional when sharing your experiences, we can pause to rest at any time during the interview or stop if you choose to do so. However, this is an opportunity to share your experiences and perspectives and hopefully enjoy yourself as well.

You will be compensated for this interview with **a $10.00 gift card to either Walmart or Target** at the end of the interview in appreciation for your contribution to this study.

All efforts, within reason, will be made to keep the personal information in your research record private but total privacy cannot be promised. Your information may be shared with the MTSU Institutional Review Board or the Office of Human Research Protections, if you or someone else is in danger or if we are required to do so by law.

If you should have any questions about this interview please feel free to contact me, Lisa Walker, at (731) 589-1521 **or my Faculty Advisor**, Dr. Jackie Eller **at** (615) 898-2509**.** For additional information about giving consent or your rights as a participant in this interview, please feel free to contact the Office of Compliance at (615) 494-8918.

ITEMS INDICATING INTERVIEWEE UNDERSTANDS CONSENT FORM AND AGREES TO PARTICIPATE:

_____ Do you understand that your participation in this study is voluntary, that you may choose to take a break or stop the interview or withdraw your participation in this study at any time?

_____ Do you freely and voluntarily choose to participate in this interview?

_____ Have all of your questions been answered?

The participant, coded as _____, has answered yes to all four items above.

Consent obtained by:

_____   _____

Date   Signature of Interviewer(s)

_____

Printed Name and Title

Appendix C: Institutional Review Board Approval

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

July 9, 2012

Lisa L. Walker
Department of Sociology
llw3b@mtmail.mtsu.edu , jackie.eller@mtsu.edu

Protocol Title: "Perspectives of Female Servers Working in Restaurants Oriented Toward Men"

Protocol Number: **12-345**

Dear Investigator(s),

The MTSU Institutional Review Board, or a representative of the IRB, has reviewed the research proposal identified above. The MTSU IRB or its representative has determined that the study poses minimal risk to participants and qualifies for an expedited review under the 45 CFR 46.110 Category 7.

Approval is granted for one (1) year from the date of this letter for 25 participants.

According to MTSU Policy, a researcher is defined as anyone who works with data or has contact with participants. Anyone meeting this definition needs to be listed on the protocol and needs to provide a certificate of training to the Office of Compliance. **If you add researchers to an approved project, please forward an updated list of researchers and their certificates of training to the Office of Compliance (c/o Emily Born, Box 134) before they begin to work on the project.** Any change to the protocol must be submitted to the IRB before implementing this change.

Please note that any unanticipated harms to participants or adverse events must be reported to the Office of Compliance at (615) 494-8918.

You will need to submit an end-of-project form to the Office of Compliance upon completion of your research located on the IRB website. Complete research means that you have finished collecting and analyzing data. **Should you not finish your research within the one (1) year period, you must submit a Progress Report and request a continuation prior to the expiration date.** Please allow time for review and requested revisions. Your study expires July 9, 2013.

Also, all research materials must be retained by the PI or faculty advisor (if the PI is a student) for at least three (3) years after study completion. Should you have any questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Emily Born

Emily Born
Research Compliance Officer
Middle Tennessee State University