

The Politics of Service Production: Experiences of Low-Waged Hospitality Work in London

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Declaration

The candidate confirms that the work submitted is his own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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Abstract

This thesis aims to explore the experiences of London hospitality workers through interrogating the nature and politics of the production of a commodified experience. The production and consumption of experience as a commodity is growing on a global scale. However, research on the labour process that contributes to such experiences is both theoretically and empirically underdeveloped. Theoretically, labour process approaches have largely abandoned the labour theory of value, which grounds Marxist political economy and systemic value-form analysis. Empirically, the literature on hospitality work tends to focus on the minutia of employment relations and customer engagement rather than taking a more totalising approach that examines the resultant tensions of the capital-labour relation. This study aims to address these gaps. Methodologically, the research uses a dialectical materialist approach to case-study research. It analyses triangulated data from ethnographic participant observation at three locations, 35 interviews with workers and managers, and company documents from 16 hotels and six agencies.

Hospitality workers' perspectives provide vital insights into the dynamics of the labour market and labour process in service work as well as the broader tendencies of contemporary capitalism by illuminating what is happening on the ground. Through workers' narratives, the research provides an examination of how contractual and social divisions in the labour market limit workers' mobility in the labour process. It contributes to analyses of the interconnected nature of service production, how the role of the customer mediates the frontier of control and the triangulated nature of the effort bargain. The study also an empirical revelation by documenting highly exploitative practices by managers and linking them to the structural imperatives of the valorisation process. Finally, the research offers insights into a new terrain of worker organisation and struggle against managers through the solidarity of the customer. Through analysing these themes with a value-form analytic, this thesis offers major theoretical and empirical contributions to labour process and employment relations research on hospitality work.

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List of Acronyms

AWR – The Agency Workers Regulations
BHA – British Hospitality Association
BOH – Back of House
FOH – Front of House
GVA – Gross Value Added
GVC – Global Value Chains
ILO – International Labour Organisation
LFS – Labour Force Survey
LPT – Labour Process Theory
LPA – Labour Process Analysis
NIC – National Insurance Contributions
NMWA – National Minimum Wage Act
ONS – Office of National Statistics
PAYE – Pay-As-You-Earn Tax
PWD – Posted Workers Directive
SEIU – Service Employees International Union

In the labour process, nature is transformed to fulfil human needs. But this transformation must be carried out under certain social relations which can be seen in the productive process itself, and which define not only the conditions of work and the distribution of the product, but the overall configuration of classes and the division of labour between different activities.

Conference of Socialist Economists (1976)

1. Introduction: The Politics of Low-Waged Service Work

1.1 Inhospitable London

At the core of hospitality work is the imperative to produce positive, “authentic” experiences. For workers, this can be a Sisyphean task due to the indeterminate and subjective nature of interactive service production. Hospitality work is physically and emotionally demanding and poorly remunerated. This research aims to capture the experiences of low-waged hospitality workers in London and explore the underlying elements structuring these experiences using Marxist approach. Driving this research is a political imperative to reveal the exploitative conditions of the industry and draw connections between this exploitation and the particular nature of the work. Incorporating the perspectives of workers themselves using qualitative methods is essential to this task because this level of detail reveals the inherent tensions in the “service labour process” (MacDonald and Sirianni, 1996, p. 6).

At 79.6 per cent, services represent the vast majority of gross domestic product [GDP] in the UK and are extremely heterogeneous, comprising industries from finance to social care¹ (ONS, 2018). Service work represents 80 per cent of employment in the UK and 91 per cent in London (ONS, 2016a). Hospitality work is a particular type of service work and refers to activities in hotels and restaurants. The thesis aims to contribute to the growing literature on service work, by exploring the specific nature of hospitality work and the implications of this for employment relations in the industry. There are relatively few critical studies of the hospitality industry (Cobble, 1991; Sherman, 2007; Whyte, 1948; Wood, 1997) compared to the number of studies of manufacturing. Hospitality work has been virtually ignored from a Marxist perspective. This thesis aims

¹ The service sector is made up of service activities in retail, hotels, restaurants, transport, storage, IT, finance, insurance, real estate, administration and support services, professional, scientific and technical services, education, health, social work, arts, entertainment, recreation, public administration, defense etc.

to address the gap in the literature through examining the case of London hotels. Hotels are the empirical focus of this study because they represent a microcosm of the variety of occupations that comprise the hospitality industry: from waiting tables to bartending, food preparation to room cleaning, and human resource management to customer assistance.

There is a strong public interest in researching the experiences of hospitality workers due to the industry's increasing relevance to the UK economy and labour market. Hospitality is Britain's fastest growing industry and currently the fourth largest industry by employment (BHA, 2017a). Much of this industrial expansion is due to significant rises in tourism and migration to the UK in recent years. However, it also has a higher rate of low-paid work than any other UK industry (Lloyd et al., 2008; ONS, 2017a). The rapid expansion of the hospitality industry in London and its high concentration of low-waged workers highlights the need for more critical research on their experiences.

This thesis explores the notion of experience in three senses. Firstly, the research aims to provide a detailed investigation into workers' experiences of hospitality work. This notion of experience refers to how individual and collective subjects understand and interpret the phenomena that shape their world. It reflects workers' ontological and epistemological positionality through their perceptions of conflict, cooperation, control and resistance in relation to management. Secondly, the research explores workers' production of experience for others, as a consumable commodity. The production of a commodified experience structures the organisation of hospitality work. The research addresses the tensions that arise from the fundamental immediacy and human-centred nature of this commodity. Thirdly, the method of investigation itself entails an *expérience* in the French sense of a scientific experiment. The enquiry into the nature of this work required developing an appropriate methodology and experiencing the work first-hand. These three notions of experience overlap with one another and will be considered simultaneously throughout the thesis.

1.2 Hospitality, Political Economy and the Labour Process

The notion that hospitality work is “a closed industrial and social system sustained and influenced by its own structures and procedures to the near exclusion of the effects of exogenous factors” persists in much of the contemporary literature on the industry (Wood, 1997, p. 9). This literature largely treats hospitality work as a specialist discipline and a unique analytical case, isolating it from other industries and with few exceptions (see Dowling, 2007; Sherman, 2007; Warhurst et al., 2008) insulating it from more critical approaches. *Human Relations in the Restaurant Industry* (Whyte, 1948), was the first study to question this consensus. Whyte used ethnographic methods to study human interaction and production in various restaurants in the United States. His study inaugurated the sociology of service production; however, it lacks a systemic approach that situates the industry within the broader institutional and political economic structures of capitalism. Many contemporary studies of hospitality work similarly lack this systemic aspect, instead focusing on single issues, such as agency supply chains (Clancy, 1998; McKay and Markova, 2010; Soltani and Wilkinson, 2010), migrant labour (Alberti, 2014; Wills et al., 2010), trade unionism (Holgate, 2005; Wills, 2005), low wages (Evans et al., 2007a; Warhurst et al., 2008) and customer interaction (Bélanger and Edwards, 2013; Korczynski et al., 2000; Warhurst et al., 2009). The micro-focus of these studies tends to obscure what hospitality work has in common with other forms of production, largely due to methodological limitations which neglect Marxist political economy and fail to incorporate an objective theory of value based on labour time into their analysis (see chapters two and three for an elaboration of these issues).

Vidal and Hauptmeier (2014) propose that the traditions of comparative political economy and labour process theory would benefit from more engagement with one another. Political economists tend to focus on the fundamental importance of national institutions to capital-labour relations, while labour process theorists and analysts hold that social relations are constituted in the capital-labour relations at the point of production. Their observation that greater engagement between labour process theory

and political economy would be productive is particularly relevant to this thesis, which aims to draw connections between the micro level of production and the macro level of industrial valorisation. Vidal and Hauptmeier (2014) point out that while comparative political economy has neglected the micro-level or work organisation, politics and culture, labour process theory has neglected the macro-level of how institutions influence competition and accumulation dynamics. Comparative political economy and contemporary labour process theory both lack a fully developed and systemic analysis of valorisation under capitalism. Researchers “should explore the links between micro processes and macro structures” including institutions and broader political economic trends (Vidal and Hauptmeier, 2014, p. 23). One of the key aims of this thesis is to counter the claim that studies of the labour process should be narrowly focused on subjective experiences, work processes, and the contingency of the immediate employment relationship (see Spencer, 2000 for a critique of such approaches). Marxist methodological foundations of labour process theory hold that it is a social process tied not only to the immediate process of production, but the overall valorisation and accumulation of capital. This means it already extend beyond individual workplaces and into social and public life.

An approach to the labour process informed by Marxist political economy allows the research to explore how the experiences of workers in the London hospitality industry are shaped by the tensions that result from the production and valorisation of a commodified experience, because it incorporates the concept of value into its method of systemic abstraction. Value is the unifying concept that links human activity in the production of use-values to the capitalist subordination of such activities and to the imperatives of profit-making in market-mediated competition and exchange. As Marx points out, “in capitalist production, the labour process is only the means; the end is supplied by the valorisation process or the production of surplus-value” (Marx, 1976, pp.1001-2). A Marxist approach to the labour process thus recognises the contradiction between the imperatives of the immediate production process and the valorisation process (see chapter two).

A particularly distinct tension between production and valorisation is present in interactive service work. This tension stems from the specifically human-centred, subjective nature of the work as it is mediated through customers' expectations and demands. There are contradictory logics present in the service labour process: a quantitative imperative toward rationalisation and efficiency, versus the qualitative imperative to satisfy customers (Korczynski, 2009a). The tension between quantity and quality is also present in traditional manufacturing (see Braverman, 1974), however it is more immediate and intense in service work. Call centres are a typical example used to illustrate this point (see Korczynski et al., 2000; Taylor and Bain, 1999). One of the defining aspects of hospitality work is the reactive decision-making capacity required to complete tasks efficiently for multiple customers, while expending emotional labour to maintain a positive attitude. Management essentially coerces workers to extract physical and emotional labour to meet customer expectation and demand. The thesis argues that nature of the work itself produces a tension between the capitalist imperative to intensify and prolong working time on the one hand, and the structuring of human interactions so that they appear genuine or authentic on the other.

1.3 Research Aims and Questions

The research investigates the relation between the nature of capitalist service production and the experiences of UK hospitality workers. The research questions include:

Primary question:

- What are workers' experiences of London hospitality work?

Sub-questions:

- What is the relation between the value-form and the labour process in service work?
- How does the nature of the commodity itself shape the service labour process?
- What role do institutions play in shaping the hospitality industry?
- How do hospitality workers navigate the labour market?
- How do hospitality workers navigate the production of experience as a commodity?
- How do hospitality workers navigate the valorisation process and exploitation?

These questions structure the theoretical and empirical aspects of the research. It is important to lay down a methodological framework that integrates value-form analysis to labour process research, since this allows for the systematic development of a Marxist approach to service work and the particular types of service commodities produced in the hospitality industry. The experiences of hospitality workers can therefore be articulated in relation to institutional factors, to customers and to managers. Workplace conflict between workers and managers will be understood in both concrete and abstract dimensions. The primary contribution of the research is to rethink the relationship between production and valorisation in the labour process with regard to interactive service work and the inherent tensions that result.

1.4 Summary of Chapters and Arguments

Chapter two introduces the fundamentals of a Marxist approach to the labour process, including the labour theory of value and the concept of exploitation as the basis for the capitalist's capacity to accumulate wealth. The chapter reviews the debates within labour process theory from Braverman (1974) to Smith and Thompson (2010) and beyond, providing a critique of the rejection of Marx's theory of value (Cushen and Thompson, 2016; Edwards, 1986; Thompson, 1989, 2010) and as a consequence, a Marxist approach to the labour process. In light of this critique, the chapter examines the literature on service work that is influenced by labour process theory, including key concepts such as "emotional labour" (Hochschild, 1983) and further develops a Marxist approach to interactive service work. Re-establishing an approach grounded in the labour theory of value is essential to understand the experiences of hospitality workers as fundamentally controlled by exploitation and the extraction of unpaid labour time. A Marxist approach also recognises the collective nature of such exploitation, understanding the experiences of worker not as isolated individuals, but as collective subjects navigating the structural constraints of capitalist institutions. The chapter thus makes an important theoretical contribution to labour process theory, arguing for the political import of value-form analysis for social science research on work and employment relations.

Chapter three outlines a Marxist methodology and the specific methods of the thesis research. It begins with an exegesis of historical materialism and the dialectical method of enquiry, arguing for the superiority of this approach to labour process research as opposed to those influenced by critical realism. The chapter continues by reinterpreting Burawoy's extended case method (Burawoy, 1998) through the lens of value theory and the dialectical method of enquiry. A dialectical materialist approach to social enquiry entails the development of a theory through the progressive negation of inadequacies based on the use of empirical material. Using a single case embedded design, the research aims to link workers' experiences to broader industrial and institutional factors influencing the nature of hospitality work. The third part of the chapter outlines the empirical methods, discusses ethics and reflects on the researcher's positionality. The data was collected through qualitative methods, which relied on ethnographic participant observation of workers at multiple sites and interviews with workers and managers at major hotels in London. The researcher's familiarity with hospitality work allowed for a deeper engagement with the issues that workers experienced.

Chapter four begins with a broad institutional context to frame the analysis of workers' experiences of hospitality work in the subsequent empirical chapters. It begins with descriptive statistical data that highlights the global rise of hospitality and tourism. This rise is significant because it means that the hospitality industry is a significant contributor to national economies, both in terms of employment and gross domestic product [GDP]. The long-term industrial shift toward services and the rising number of global tourists has led to a rapid expansion of the hospitality industry in the UK. In the wake of the financial crisis, hospitality grew faster than any other industry in terms of gross value added [GVA] as well as employment (BHA, 2017a). As hospitality work has gained a larger share of employment, this growth has contributed to reshaping the UK labour market. Despite reported labour shortages, wages and union representation remain very low, which means that a larger proportion of workers in the UK are experiencing low-wages and insecure employment. Through situating the hospitality industry within the wider political economy of the UK, this chapter provides institutional context and highlights the importance of studying the experiences of hospitality workers.

Chapter five examines how in their attempts to construct a labour market that ensured the value-productivity of their workers, hotel managers used pre-emptive methods of control. The first part of the chapter explores how hotel managers relied on personality assessment algorithms to filter online applicants online and relied on agencies as merchants of labour-power. The second part examines how the hospitality labour market was characterised by contractual segmentation or an *agency division of labour* in which a more secure core of permanent employees was supplemented by a less secure periphery of temporary agency workers. By constructing a labour market in which they could filter workers using personality testing and agencies, hotel managers exercised a pre-emptive method of control. The third part of the chapter analysis ethnographic data from workers which indicated they relied on informal networks which effectively circumvented automated filtering mechanisms. The persistence of informal networks had the effect of deepening social divisions and mobility differentials within the hospitality labour market due to the agency division of labour. By assessing the ways that management actively construct the labour market through filtering mechanisms and the impact of these filters on workers' mobility, this chapter makes an empirical contribution to the labour process literature.

Chapter six addresses the experiences of workers through a commodity-form analysis of the production of the hospitality experience. The first part of the chapter outlines the components of the experiential commodity, how the production of hospitality entails a circuit of service assembly, and how managers set limits to the variability of customer expectation by stratifying market segments. The second part explores how the frontier of control between workers and managers is mediated by customers. The third part examines how workers navigate the interlinked circuits of service assembly in the production of hospitality, how they adjust to the expectations and demands of both managers and customers and how managers leverage the customer as a means of control. The research contributes to labour process theory by outlining how hotel workers' experiences of the production process are structured by the nature of the concrete commodity itself. The subjective variability of producing a commodified experience made it difficult for hotel managers to control the labour process through traditional

Taylorist methods and effectively valorise capital. These difficulties pushed managers to seek additional means of extracting surplus-value, a theme which chapter seven examines in depth.

Chapter seven examines the politics of valorisation in hospitality work by addressing how and why workers experienced exploitation in the hospitality industry. Through value-form analysis, it connects the concepts of fiddles and exploitation in relation to a key finding of the research—that managers were extracting additional surplus-value from workers above and beyond the normal rate of exploitation formalised by the labour contract. After a brief outline of the structure of pay in the hospitality industry, the chapter explores the three methods of extracting an additional surplus-value: the theft of labour-time, the theft of base wages, and the theft of variable wages. Driven by the pressure to meet performance targets, managers coerced workers into expending additional unpaid labour and manipulated institutional rules to appropriate workers' wages. The chapter makes three empirical contributions to labour process research on the hospitality industry. The first contribution is the empirical analysis of the exploitative nature of the valorisation process in hospitality work. A second key contribution of the chapter is an empirical analysis of the *tronc* system, a set of rules which managers use to distribute variable pay. A third contribution is the analysis of worker resistance to exploitation as unions organised leveraging customer mediation against managers to resist wage theft. This chapter builds on the contributions of the previous chapters with regard to the production of a service commodity, the means of management control, and worker resistance in the labour process.

Chapter eight concludes with a summary of the key arguments and themes of the thesis. It begins by outlining the key empirical findings, then outlines the primary theoretical and empirical contributions of the thesis before proceeding with reflections on the methods and limitations, then finally proposing areas for further research. The theoretical contributions mainly stem from the application of value-form theory to labour process analysis, which allows for the study to draw out particular tensions in hospitality work and interactive service work more generally. This approach recognises the difference between production for social use / necessity and valorisation for profit /

accumulation. The former is inextricably bound to the latter in the capitalist labour process, but the nature of hospitality work generates a particularly significant tension between the two governing processes of production and valorisation. The empirical contributions stem from this fundamental insight and the labour theory of value. They include a detailed analysis of the particularly subjective construction of the hospitality labour market, the dynamics of the production of a commodified experience based on a circuit of service assembly, and the systematic analysis of wage theft. The next chapter lays the theoretical foundations for the study.

2. Theorising Production and Valorisation in the Service Labour Process

2.1 Introduction: A Hollow Core

What is the relation between value and the labour process in service work? How does the nature of the commodity itself shape the service labour process? This chapter aims to address these questions in order to develop a theoretical framework for analysing the experiences of hospitality workers in the empirical chapters of the thesis. This theoretical framework will constitute a contemporary theory the labour process grounded in Marxist political economy and the labour theory of value. This approach allows for consistency and causal connections to be drawn between micro- and macro-levels of analysis. The chapter will make theoretical contributions to the literature on the value-form and the service labour process.

The political economy of work is a major area of study that has given rise to a distinct methodological approach called labour process theory [LPT]. LPT analyses the means by which society reproduces the material conditions of its own existence (Armstrong, 1989, p. 308). Since the publication of Braverman's *Labour and Monopoly Capital* (1974), LPT has featured fierce debate (see Knights and Willmott, 1990; Littler and Salaman, 1982; Smith and Thompson, 2010), largely due to the specific political implications of its Marxist foundations. LPT has a lineage going back to the classical political economy of Smith (2008) and Marx (1976), however contemporary LPT essentially developed from the intersection of Marxist political economy (Marx, 1981, 1978a, 1976), the early "industrial sociology" of Elton Mayo (see Ingham, 1996; Smith and Thompson, 2010), and British industrial relations (Kaufman, 2014). All three of these traditions influence the study of work today. This study's research focuses on the Marxist lineage of Braverman (1974) and the debates that followed in the wake of his major contribution, *Labour and Monopoly Capital*.

This chapter argues that contemporary LPT (see (Newsome et al., 2015; Smith, 2015; Smith and Thompson, 2010) has underdeveloped theoretical foundations that undermine its aims, which essentially are to explain the experiences of workers in the capitalist mode of production. The main thrust of the argument is that contemporary LPT relies on a “core theory” (Edwards, 1986; Thompson, 1989) that lacks a systemic theory of the exploitation of labour as the basis for capitalist production and valorisation. The “core theory” takes Marxist terminology for granted, yet rejects certain fundamental tenants such as the labour theory of value and the class system (Edwards, 1986; Thompson, 2010, 2003). Furthermore, rather than focusing on the production and valorisation processes as a unity, contemporary LPT tends to limit its analysis solely to the dynamics of the immediate production process, focusing on the organisation and control of concrete labour. As a consequence, these approaches obscure the domination of abstract labour and the social process of valorisation (Rowlinson and Hassard, 1994; Spencer, 2000a). Contemporary LPT as applied to the analysis of service work (Bolton, 2010; MacDonald and Korczynski, 2009) tends to reproduce these same limitations since it shares the same theoretical foundations. With few exceptions (see Heyes, 1997) labour process approaches have become unmoored from the systematic analysis that Braverman (1974) developed from Baran and Sweezy’s *Monopoly Capitalism* (1968) and Marx’s (1976) critique of political economy. This results in a one-sided analytical paradigm, which prevents LPT to draw causal connections between workplace experiences and the dynamics of value production based on abstract labour time. Finally, contemporary LPT does not contain an immanent political critique or an imperative to overcome the system of exploitation on which capitalist accumulation depends.

This chapter provides a critique of the postulates of the “core theory” and argues that LPT would benefit from a return to Marx’s political economy (Marx, 2016) and value-informed Marxian approaches (Braverman, 1974; Elger, 1979; Friedman, 1977) in the analysis of work. Re-centring labour as the sole source of value production in capitalist society has particular relevance for the analysis of service work because of the labour-intensive and customer-mediated nature of such work. The subsumption of social processes to the imperatives of profit-making, especially with regard to the

commodification of human interaction generates a particularly stark tension between the production and valorisation processes. Without a Marxist value-theory, the underlying forces of exploitation in this tension are left unexplored. Most importantly, without a Marxist value theory, the connections between different forms of surplus – time, labour, and their monetary equivalent – are lost.

The argument is comprised of three parts. The first part introduces Marx’s conception of value and labour. This part has three subsections dealing with foundational concepts for Marxist political economy and LPT including: the commodity-form and the value-form, the four aspects of labour, and the production of surplus-value. The second part of the chapter reviews the emergence of LPT in relation to Braverman, then sets out a critique of the “core theory” paradigm, arguing instead for the political and analytical importance of retaining Marx’s theory of value. The third part contains a critique of LPT-influenced approaches to service work and then develops a Marxist account of the commodification of services, exploring the tensions that customer mediation introduces to the production and valorisation processes. Finally, it concludes with an outline of how these tensions frame a more detailed investigation of the dynamics in later empirical chapters.

2.2 Marx’s Conception of Value and Labour

2.2.1 The Commodity-Form and the Value-Form

Marx’s theory of value (Marx, 1978b, 1972, 1969) and conception of capital (Marx, 1978a, 1978a, 1976) stems from his critique of classical political economy, which is based on a scientific analysis of empirical data from various sources including factory and trade reports. In *Capital* (1976) he argues that the accumulation of capital fundamentally relies on the exploitation of human labour-power to produce surplus-value. In order to make this argument, he begins by introducing the theory of the commodity-form. Marx defines the commodity as an object containing both use-value and exchange-value. Use-value is simply the usefulness of a thing; for example, the use-value of a coat is that one can wear it. Use-value is independent of whether or not the thing is exchanged. Use-value constitutes “the material content of wealth, whatever its

social form may be” (Marx, 1976, p. 126). The point of this two-fold conception is that commodities are not simply produced privately or subjectively, but rather socially, through market exchange. A commodity must contain "use-values for others, social use-values" (Marx 1976 p. 131). The coat is not defined as a commodity by its content or material composition, but rather the *social form* of its use.

The value of this social form of the commodity is what Marx refers to as “exchange-value”. Exchange-value allows for a relation of equivalence. It is the form in which a given commodity “is directly exchangeable with other commodities” (Marx, 1976, p. 147). That a commodity’s value is constituted in exchange is the basis for the “law of value” or the regulative principle of the exchange of the products of human labour in competitive markets (Marx, 1976, p. 702). Exchange-value is represented, in the first instance, by the proportion of use-values of one kind that exchange for another kind. It is the “necessary mode of expression, or form of appearance, of value” and as such mediates all social relations (Marx, 1976, p. 128). When this form of appearance is taken as a natural and totalising fact, this is called commodity fetishism, one of the great illusions of capitalism. In the Addenda to Part III of *Theories of Surplus-Value*, Marx (Marx, 1978b, p. 453) summarises the misconceptions stemming from commodity fetishism:

The form of revenue and the sources of revenue are the most fetishistic expression of the relations of capitalist production. It is their form of existence as it appears on the surface, divorced from the hidden connections and the intermediate connecting links. Thus, the land becomes the source of rent, capital the source of profit, and labour the source of wages.

Against the deceptions of commodity fetishism, Marx argues that wages are actually a portion of the total value created by labour, while rents and profits are merely different proportions of the value produced over and above the value of labour or surplus-value (1978a, p. 453). The twofold nature of the commodity and its fetish character serves as the basis for Marx to introduce the concept of labour-power, which he defines as a human capacity bought and sold “as if” it were a commodity (Marx, 1976, p. 270).

Labour-power is the “the aggregate of those mental and physical capabilities existing in the physical form, the living personality, of a human being, capabilities which he sets in motion whenever he produces a use-value of any kind” (Marx, 1976, p. 270). For Marx, the commodification of labour-power defines the historical emergence of the capitalist mode of production, since it is only in this mode of production that labour-power is sold in such a way. When contracted by the capitalist, commodified labour-power becomes deployed as concrete labour in production, which forms the substance of value in capitalist societies; “labour is the living, form-giving fire; it is the transitoriness of things, their temporality, as their formation by living time” (Marx, 1993, p. 361). The fact that labour-power is a capacity sold by workers to capitalists *as if* it is a definite commodity, introduces a fundamental tension between determinacy and indeterminacy in the labour process. Labour-power is called variable capital because it is a product of definite individuals with variable capacities, yet it is constrained because workers “work under definite material limits, pre-suppositions and conditions independent of their will” (Marx and Engels, 1970, p. 47). To fully understand the historical and conceptual development of this tension and the transformation of labour-power into surplus-value, it is necessary to examine four aspects of labour, which is the task of the next section.

2.2.2 The Four Aspects of Labour

The commodification of labour is the process by which human activity is subsumed into capitalist forms of production. Marx uses two sets of paired concepts or “four potentia” (Elson, 1979, p. 149) to develop his conception of the commodification of labour—private/social and concrete/abstract. It is important to emphasise that these “four potentia” of labour are not different determinate forms of labour, but rather one-sided, relational abstractions that together form a conception of labour as a whole under capitalism. This section examines each potentia and the relations between in order to form the theoretical basis for a value-informed theory of the labour process.

For Marx (1976, p. 165) commodity production is the result of “private individuals who work independently of each other”. Private labour is essentially isolated, individual activity, detached from wider social relations, yet it is still performed in the household or

in the factory. Private labour is private because it does not appear directly as a social relation until the moment of exchange. The market allows the private labour of the individual producer to acquire its social character:

the labour of the private individual manifests itself as an element of the total labour of society only through the relations which the act of exchange establishes between the products, and, through their mediation, between the producers (Marx, 1976, p. 165).

The product of the labour must have a definite type of useful quality to “satisfy the manifold needs of the individual producer himself” as well as satisfy a social need to “maintain its position as an element of the total labour, as a branch of the social division of labour” (Ibid., p. 166). Every specific type of useful private labour must be able to be exchanged with every other type by being reduced to a social magnitude they have in common (Ibid., p. 166). Private individual labour thus “becomes social labour by assuming the form of its direct opposite, of abstract universal labour” (Marx, 1987, p. 275).

In his critique, Marx theorises how to define the social form of labour in capitalist society when workers appear *as if* they are private individuals who operate free from social forms and that social phenomena are merely the result of individual decisions. To address this apparent contradiction, he looks at labour historically, contrasting labour in the capitalist mode of production with pre-capitalist forms of labour in feudalism and the patriarchal family, concluding that social forms of labour in these contexts are merely latent. It is only with the development of the capitalist mode of production that social labour is made explicit through the exchange of commodities, which appears in a fetishised form as a “social relation between things” (Marx, 1976, p. 166). As Marx (Marx, 1987, p. 398) notes in his 1857 *Introduction to the Critique of Political Economy*:

Capital represents both labour and its product as negated individualised labour, and hence as the negated property of the individualised worker. It is therefore the existence of social labour—its combination as subject and also as object—but it is this existence as itself existing independently as against its real moments—i.e. as a separate existence beside them.

Capitalism negates the particular private labour of the individual worker and posits it as “social or combined labour” simultaneously in relation to every other labour.

The concept of private labour overlaps with that of concrete labour since they are both concepts of the subjective activity of particular individuals (Elson, 1979, p. 146). Private labour locates concrete labour, which denotes a process, a specific action or activity encompassing heterogeneous forms—from welding to waiting tables. The concept of ‘social labour’ overlaps with the concept of ‘abstract labour’ since they are both concepts of objective activity determined beyond the scope of any particular individual subject. Both concepts view labour as collective, aggregated and relational. However, abstract labour adds the quality of quantification to the concept of social labour.

Concrete labour refers to the specific, subjective production of use-values in a labour process. It is a transhistorical condition for social and economic reproduction. As discussed above, the social form in which concrete labour historically appears depends on the mode of production. In the capitalist mode, the form that dictates the proportional distribution of labour is the exchange value of its product. For example, as Marx (1988, p. 68) explains in his 1868 letter to Kugelmann:

Every child knows a nation which ceased to work, I will not say for a year, but even for a few weeks, would perish... No natural laws can be done away with. What can change in historically different circumstances is only the form in which these laws assert themselves. And the form in which this proportional distribution of labour asserts itself, in the state of society where the interconnection of social labour is manifested in the private exchange of the individual products of labour, is precisely the exchange value of these products.

The interconnection of social labour depends on the exchangeability of the products of concrete labour. Exchange requires a general equivalent form of value, which has three transformative effects: “use-value becomes the form of appearance of its opposite, value” (Marx, 1976, p. 148); “concrete labour becomes the form of manifestation of its opposite, abstract human labour” (Ibid., p.150); and “private labour takes the form of its opposite, namely labour in its directly social form” (Ibid., p.151).

Abstract labour is, “the designation for that part of the total social labour which was equalised in the process of social division of labour through the equation of the products of labour on the market” (Rubin, 1994, p. 48). Abstract labour thereby serves as a means to reduce the variegated concrete labours in different commodities to their “common quality” of being the social products of human labour-time (Marx, 1976, p. 142). As Marx explains in *Capital* vol. II, “commodities possess an objective character only in so far as they are all expressions of an identical social substance, human labour... their objective character as values is therefore purely social” (Marx, 1978a, pp. 138–9). Abstract labour, as a quantitative magnitude of human labour in general, quantified first as labour-time, allows exchange ratios to be developed within generalised commodity production. The magnitude of abstract labour can only be calculated in its exchange value, which in turn can only be measured or expressed in the form of the universal equivalent, money. As the measure of value, money is “the necessary form of appearance of the measure of value which is immanent in commodities, namely labour-time” (Marx, 1976, p. 188). Abstract labour, as the substance of value, means that the specific physical properties of any given commodity are essentially irrelevant in terms of determining its value-status as a commodity; “the commodity form and the value relation of the products of labour within which it appears, have absolutely no connection with the physical nature of the commodity and the material [*dinglich*] relations arising out of this” (Ibid., p.165). Abstract labour, as socially determined human labour in general, is simply a “value-creating substance” (Ibid., p. 1012) and is “utterly indifferent to any particular content” (Ibid., p. 993). This means that for services, since the commodity is primarily the concrete labour performed, abstract labour in the form of time is a more important factor determining prices of production than in goods manufacturing.

The relation between concrete and abstract labour comes from the philosophical relation between the concrete and the abstract in Marx’s methodology (see chapter three). For Marx, thinking begins from the concrete, which then must reflect back on itself through empirical phenomena at different levels of abstraction to further develop conceptual understanding. Marx (1986, p. 38) gives the example of exchange value to illustrate this dialectical process:

Exchange value presupposes population, population which produces under definite conditions, as well as a distinct type of family, or community, or State, etc. Exchange value cannot exist except as an abstract, one-sided relation of an already existing concrete living whole.

Exchange value is the necessary abstraction of a concrete use-value. In capitalist society, abstract labour dominates, and the social aspect of labour is apparent through the representation of abstract labour in money relations. Capitalism is the form of production in which concrete labour begins as private and through the production and valorisation processes, become social and abstract (see Arthur, 1978, pp. 93–5; Rubin, 1972, p. 70). However, it is important not to misinterpret the dynamic between concrete and abstract labour as a primarily evolutionary relation. It is not the case that labour under capitalism evolves in one direction from the private to the social or from the concrete to the abstract. Braverman, for example, mistakenly claims that the degradation of work through Taylorism and monopoly capitalism transforms concrete labour into modular abstract labour (see Braverman, 1974, pp. 125, 220, 225). Instead of the unidirectional and teleological evolution of labour from concrete to abstract, each aspect of labour is continually reproduced in and through the production and valorisation process as a unity. Concrete labour in production must correspond to a certain quantity of average socially determined abstract labour necessary for the reproduction of the valorisation process (the value of labour) and an excess over it to generate surplus-value, realised in the market. Concrete labour therefore matters only insofar as it affects the total quantity of abstract human labour expended in production. The labour process becomes a site of conflict on the shop floor because the variability of concrete labour directly affects the capacity for the valorisation of capital. Capitalists aim to concentrate and intensify the expenditure of abstract labour and minimise the costs of production, thus maximising the potential for generating profit.

To summarise, this section argued that concrete labour and abstract labour are distinct aspects of a unified process. The capitalist mode of production subordinates the qualitative or concrete aspects of labour to the quantitative or abstract aspects. This process of organising private labour and subordinating, standardising, and intensifying concrete labour for the purpose of measurement and extraction of surplus-labour is

necessary for the valorisation process. Labour process theory originally set out to understand implications of this unified process for the experiences of workers. The next section deals specifically with the process by which unpaid labour time is transformed into profit, which Marx refers to as the valorisation process.

2.2.3 The Production of Surplus-Value

The previous sections outlined Marx's conception of the commodity and labour in order to establish a basis to explore, in this section, the role of labour in the production of commodities and the valorisation of capital. In *Capital* vol. I, Marx argues that surplus-value is produced through the capacity of the capitalist to extract more labour-time, and hence value, than is required to purchase labour-power from workers. This labour-time is not that of private individuals, but rather socially necessary labour-time, which refers to the "labour-time required to produce any use-value under the conditions of production normal for a given society and with the average degree of skill and intensity of labour prevalent in that society" (Marx, 1976, p. 129). In a given labour process, the difference between socially-necessary labour-time and the labour-power expended during the total time of the working day is surplus-labour-time. The average ratio of socially necessary labour-time to surplus-labour-time is what determines the rate of surplus-value. Marx (Ibid, p. 326) defines the rate of surplus-value as the "exact expression for the degree of exploitation of labour-power by capital, or of the worker by the capitalist".

Over the course of the three volumes of *Capital*, Marx introduces an ever more detailed and complex account of the extraction and realisation of surplus-value. In volume I, Marx limits the magnitude of surplus-value to three determining factors: 1) the length of the working day, or "the extensive magnitude of labour"; 2) the normal intensity of labour or "its intensive magnitude"; and 3) the productivity of labour, "whereby the same quantity of labour yields, in a given time, a greater or a smaller quantity of the product, depending on the degree of development attained by the conditions of production" (Marx, 1976, p. 655). Here, he assumes that commodities are sold at their value and the price of labour-power may not sink below its value. In volume II, Marx (1978a), reconstructs the concept of value by introducing the role of money, which

allows for the extension and reproduction of the capital labour relations between different sectors of the economy. It is only in volume III that Marx (2016, 1981) presents the full complexity of the role of labour-power in the production, circulation, and distribution of surplus-value, freed from the assumptions of the previous volumes. Here, surplus-value and therefore profit “consists precisely in the excess of the value of the commodity over its cost price”, in other words, “the excess of the total amount of labour contained in the commodity over the quantity of paid labour contained in it” (Marx, 2016, pp. 99–100). That there is always more labour contained within the commodity than the amount of labour that is paid for by the employer means that unpaid labour is the basis for valorisation. In service work, the commodity is inseparable from the active concrete labour itself, yet still contains unpaid labour.

Every production process requires passive and active components. The ratio between capital’s “passive and its active component, between constant capital and variable capital” is called the organic composition of capital (Marx, 2016, p. 253). Constant capital consists of the means of production: raw and ancillary materials, machinery and so on. Variable capital is the human component. Constant capital “is the instrument needed to squeeze surplus-value out of the variable part of the capital” (Ibid., p. 85). Surplus-value “represents the excess of the value of the product over the price of all its ingredients” i.e. constant and variable capital. The ratio between these elements affects the rate of surplus-value in a way that shows labour is the ultimate determining factor in the valorisation of capital. Marx (Ibid., p. 257) demonstrates that capitals of the same size, “operating with the same working day and the same degree of exploitation of labour” can produce very different amounts of surplus-value when “different quantities of living labour” and hence also different quantities of surplus or unpaid labour are “set in motion” and realised by those capitals. In Marx’s (Ibid., p. 257) words:

Equal-sized portions of the total capital in different spheres of production embody sources of surplus-value of unequal size, and the only source of surplus-value is living labour. At any given level of exploitation of labour, the mass of labour set in motion by a capital of 100, and thus also the surplus-labour it will appropriate, depends on the size of its variable component.

This analysis assumes a given rate of exploitation. However, capitalists often aim to increase the rate of exploitation in order to produce more surplus-value, which can have significant consequences for labour.

Marx sets out two methods by which capitalists can alter the rate of exploitation and each method has particular implications for the labour process and employment relations. The first method is through the production of absolute surplus-value, which occurs through:

an extension of surplus-labour and hence of the working day, with the variable capital remaining the same and thus the same number of workers being employed at the same nominal wage, causes a relative fall in the value of the constant capital compared with the total capital and the variable capital, and thus raises the rate of profit, quite apart from the rise in the rate of surplus-value and the growth in the mass of surplus-value (Marx, 2016, p. 145).

During the production of absolute surplus-value, constant capital remains the same whether work continues for 10, 16 or 24 hours, since the extension of the working day requires no new expenditure on new technology or means of production. The extension of the working day increases output and shortens the turnover period of production, allowing for greater profits in an absolute sense. There are certain limits on the extraction of absolute surplus-value such as the length of the working day, the welfare of workers, and the resistance of the working class. However, these can be overcome through various methods of managerial control and coercion. The working day cannot exceed 24 hours, but the intensity of work can be increased. In the face of time as an objective limit to concrete labour, capitalists will seek to intensify labour through the second method or the production of relative surplus-value.

The production of relative surplus-value does not have the same temporal limitations as absolute surplus-value. For this reason, it tends to become the “dominant method” of increasing exploitation as capitalism develops (Fine and Saad Filho, 2004, p. 43). The production of relative surplus-value occurs through technological changes that increase the intensity and productivity of work. Technological changes can entail either better management through cooperation and a finer division of labour or the introduction of new technology and machinery. New technologies of production allow a greater amount

of raw materials to be transformed into products during a given labour-time. When a greater mass of constant capital is set in motion this often displaces a portion of variable capital into the relative surplus population, increasing the pressure on those in work due to the risk of displacement (Braverman, 1974, pp. 265–77; Marx, 1976, pp. 781–801). When the working day remains constant, “every movement in necessary labour-time is complemented by an inverse, opposite movement in surplus-labour-time” (Marx, 1976, p. 129). In this way, an increase in relative surplus-value also “causes the drive towards overtime and the lengthening of absolute labour-time, whatever the given level of development of the forces of production” (Marx, 2016, p. 146). As Marx discovered through the analysis of the Factory Acts, particular capitalists are always seeking a competitive advantage over one another in order to take an “extra cut” or make an “excess profit over and above the average” either through appropriating additional unpaid labour-time or through leveraging the extraction of relative surplus-value “by reducing wages below the average, or by exceptional productivity in the labour applied” (Ibid., pp. 306-7).

Marx draws extensively on reports from the Factory Acts to empirically explain how the prolongation and intensification of the working day exploits workers and produces surplus-value. He documents the “voracious appetite of the capitalists for surplus-labour” through their own words; “If you allow me... to work only ten minutes in the day over-time, you put one thousand a year in my pocket” (Reports, etc., 31 October 1856, p. 34 cited in Marx, 1976, p. 352). Marx argues that the nature of capitalist production inherently drives “towards the appropriation of labour throughout the whole of the 24 hours in the day” (Marx, 1976, p. 367). For the capitalist, the worker is “nothing more than personified labour-time” (Ibid., pp. 352-53). The Factory Act of 1850 placed specific regulations on the working day and week (Ibid., p. 349). However, capitalists would constantly try to intensify work and steal extra labour-time from workers. Marx even highlights, in the factory reports, the tendency of the capitalists to engage in “small thefts... from the workers’ meal-times and recreation times”; factory inspectors described these as “petty pilferings of minutes” or “snatching a few minutes” (Reports, etc., 31 October 1856, p. 34 cited in Marx 1976 p. 352). Any additional appropriation of surplus-labour-time would yield more surplus-value and therefore profit

for the capitalist. Marx establishes that these tendencies are not simply the result of the moral or ethical failings of individual capitalists, but rather built into the system of exploitation itself.

This section traced Marx's account of the production of surplus-value from the detailed investigation of the working day in *Capital* volume I through the discussion of price, value, and the composition of Capital volume III, in order to foreground the complex dynamics of valorisation. Individual capitalists' methods of accumulating ever-greater profits are complicated and nuanced. Understanding the dynamics of the production of surplus-value i.e. the valorisation process establishes a systemic and structural relation between capital and labour. As argued above, the commodification of labour-power subordinates private labour to social labour and concrete labour to abstract labour in the capitalist mode of production. The capitalist's deployment of concrete labour in production exceeds the necessary labour-time for the reproduction of society, which allows the capitalist to extract surplus-value to make a profit. Outlining Marx's conception of labour and the production of surplus-value establishes the analytical basis to examine the rediscovery of the labour process via Braverman (1974). It is from this basis that the chapter develops an informed critique of the labour process debates, particularly the rejection of the value-form. The second part of this chapter reviews the debates in labour process theory and provides a critique of value-less materialism in order to allow for the development for a Marxist conception of service work in part three.

2.3 Labour Process Theory

2.3.1 Industrial Sociology and the Rediscovery of the Labour Process

Labour process theory [LPT] arguably began with Marx, who was a proto-sociologist of industry in particular and capitalism in general. In addition to the empirical data from the 'Reports of the Inspectors of the Factories...' (1846-1864), he used primary source documents from the 'Children's Employment Commission' (1862-1867), 'Report on the Grievances of the Journeymen Bakers' (1862), and others to develop his systemic

critique of capitalism (Marx, 1981, 1978a, 1976). During the early-twentieth century, Western research on industry and labour was dominated by Taylor's (1911) theory of scientific management, developed from his intensive studies of a steel mill. Taylorism continued through the psychological approaches of human relations and industrial sociology, which began with Elton Mayo's (1949) studies into human behaviour at Western Electric. Mayo influenced early academic "plant-sociology" such as Roy (1954, 1952) and the famous studies of Lockwood (1966) and Lupton (1963) in British industrial relations, a field founded by Sidney and Beatrice Webb (Kaufman, 2014). These approaches were characterised by the "study of social relations in work situations" and aimed to "develop an understanding of the links between industrial systems and wider society" (Eldridge et al., 1991, p. 202).

In these early studies, the goods-manufacturing factory was the primary object of analysis. It was viewed largely as a function of external factors, rather than generative of identities and conflicts in itself with broader social consequences. Braverman (1974, p. 69) argues that "later industrial sociologists took a step backward from Taylor" because rather than recognise a conflict of interest, they interpreted workers' refusal to "work harder and earn more under piece rates as 'irrational' and 'noneconomic'". As capitalism and work evolved over the twentieth century, industrial sociology became regarded as theoretically, analytically, and empirically inadequate to explain new forms of conflict, organisation and production (Hyman, 1982; Smith and Thompson, 2010). This set the stage for the re-emergence of labour process theory as a distinctive paradigm to analyse work.

The publication of Braverman's *Labour and Monopoly Capital* (1974) was a watershed moment in the study of work because he combines Marx's conception of the labour process with an analysis of the historical emergence of Taylorist scientific management. Despite some notable French exceptions such as Gorz (1968) and Mallet (1975), Marxist theories of the labour process had comparatively little impact upon the academic study of work before Braverman (Friedman, 1977). Braverman argues that the capitalist labour process is a unity of the production and valorisation processes, the latter of which "dominates in the mind and activities of the capitalist". Marxists generally agree that the

objective of valorisation “is what fundamentally structures the whole nature and organization of the capitalist labour process” (Cohen, 1987, p. 36). Thus, Braverman makes the specific “manner in which the labour process is dominated and shaped by the accumulation of capital” his central concern (Braverman, 1974, p. 37).

Braverman’s political economic point of departure is Baran and Sweezy’s *Monopoly Capital* (1968), which develops an analysis of post-war American capitalism. They argue that the rise of advertising on the one hand and a greater freedom to adjust prices, production processes, and employment on the other, facilitated the emergence of a new monopolistic or “non-price” competition. This economic environment distinctly favoured large firms, allowing them to accumulate increasingly large surpluses, which became difficult for the system of monopoly capital as a whole to absorb. Baran and Sweezy (1968) argue that a surplus that is not reinvested has the effect of slowing the economy and destabilising the system.

Their thesis was both highly influential and highly controversial among Marxists at the time (Mandel, 1967). It was influential because it bolstered the legitimacy of Marxist economics in the anglophone world, applying some of Marx’s fundamental insights empirically to analyse post-war development in the United States. It was controversial because it interpreted Marx’s “law of value” as essentially “a theory of general equilibrium developed in the first instance with reference to simple commodity production and later on adapted to capitalism” (Sweezy, 1942, p. 53). Thus the myth that Marx forgot to transform inputs was born (Freeman, 2018). A further issue was the lack of micro-level analysis of exploitation at work. By the authors own admission, it “resulted in almost total neglect of . . . the labour process,” a subject at the centre of Marx’s analysis of capital (Baran and Sweezy, 1968, p. 8). Braverman aimed to remedy this neglect through the study of scientific management and the scientific-technical revolution of the labour process. These scientific and technical developments were “part of the new stage of capitalist development” and grew out of monopoly capitalism itself (Braverman, 1974, pp. 175–76).

Braverman examines the movements of labour, as “but another form of the investigation of the movements of value undertaken in *Monopoly Capital*” (Ibid., p. 176). The labour theory of value, as outlined in section 2.2 of this chapter, is therefore central to Braverman’s conception of the labour process. Without the theory of value, the role of the exploitation of labour in the accumulation of capital is obscured because there is no systemic connection between abstract labour, commodities, and money as forms of value in the circuit of capital. The valorisation process, which entails the production of surplus-value and expanded reproduction of capital, facilitates accumulation on a world scale. Braverman’s key argument is that the valorisation process drives the separation of conception from execution in production due to the needs of capital as it expands. He refers to this tendency as the “the destruction of craftsmanship”, which leads to the “degradation of work” for the working class (Ibid., p. 94). His critics often invoke “deskilling” as an all-encompassing summary of his argument, yet this is simplistic and unfair, not least because he never used the term himself. His conception of the degradation of work is more nuanced and his analysis aims to show how capitalism *changed* the nature of skill to accommodate the needs of the valorisation process, rather than the needs of humanity. Capitalist development “systematically destroys all-around skills where they exist and brings into being skills and occupations that correspond to its needs” (Braverman, 1974, p. 57).

Marx and Braverman argue that the organisation of the labour process changes as a result of the drive to make production more efficient for capital by using technological advancements to extract more surplus-value. The capitalist mode of production thus drives an increasingly complex division of labour, which necessarily will require new technologies of control. In order for capitalists to guarantee their control over the production and valorisation processes, managers must undermine effective opposition to this reorganisation of production. Braverman argues that managers achieve this by substituting simple for complex labour. Through the destruction of craft “as a process under the control of the worker”, scientific management reconstitutes production “as a process under his own control” (Ibid., p. 54). To support this argument, Braverman conducts a detailed analysis of Taylorist management strategy in relation to different industries and sectors in the United States.

Braverman's work provoked an avalanche of responses, many of which were critical of the degradation of work or the so-called "deskilling" thesis. Critics generally argue that Braverman's thesis that craft skill is an obstacle to capitalist development is unconvincing and that his account of the control imperative is too deterministic (Knights and Willmott, 1990). The Brighton Labour Process Group (1977) criticises Braverman for moving too directly from an abstract impulsion to control labour-power to deskilling as a concrete managerial strategy. They claim this provides a limited view that fails to locate the development of the labour process within the more complex historical development of class struggle. Elger (1979, p. 64) points out that, while Braverman recognises the distinct forms of absolute and relative surplus-value, the relationship between these forms and the development of the labour process in terms of the formal and real subsumption to capital remains "virtually unexplored". Other criticisms that have been levelled at Braverman include: his approach inflates the role of craft work in industry (Littler, 1982); he fails to consider the effects of a rising organic composition of capital and the tendency of the rate of profit to fall on labour (Nichols and Beynon, 1977); he ignores the role of gender in structuring the capacity of workers "to maintain, develop, extend and reshape their organisation and bargaining power" in the labour process and the labour market (Rubery, 1978, p. 34); and finally that he confuses one particular management strategy for management strategy itself since "Taylorian scientific management is not the only strategy available for exercising managerial authority, and given the reality of worker resistance, often it is not the most appropriate" (Friedman, 1977, p. 80). These criticisms were largely sympathetic and from Marxists themselves. In their wake, however, came harsher critiques from labour process theorists that not only rejected Braverman's thesis, but also its Marxist foundations. The next section addresses these approaches.

2.3.2 The Second Wave and the "Core Theory"

The immediate responses to Braverman mentioned in the previous section have been referred to as the "first wave" of LPT (Thompson and Smith, 2009). In the spirit of Braverman, these critiques rely on Marxist concepts and categories, though they ask

different questions about the labour process and have different findings. The “second wave” of LPT includes canonical studies such as Friedman (1977), Edwards (1979), Burawoy (1979), Pollert (1981), Littler (1982) and Glucksmann [Cavendish] (1982). While there are considerable differences between these scholars’ approaches to the labour process, they do not reject Marxist approaches outright. Many are in fact more critical of Braverman than they are of Marx. For example, Littler (1982, p. 29) states:

It is precisely at this point in exploring the contradictions of each level of capitalist development and of specific managerial strategies that the work of Wright, Friedman and Edwards moves beyond the limitations and theoretical closure of Braverman. In so doing, they return to more useful Marxian method of analysis.

Rather than reject Marx and Braverman, this “second wave” of LPT scholars aimed to build on their developments. For example, Friedman (1977) develops his approach through an expanded critique of managerial strategy and the organisation of work. In contrast to Braverman’s singular focus on the Taylorist strategy of “direct control”, which aims to maximise the “separation of conception from execution of work tasks for the vast majority of workers”, Friedman (1977, p. 48) identifies an alternative strategy of “responsible autonomy”, which provides “workers a wide measure of discretion over the direction of their work tasks” and contributes to “the maintenance of managerial authority by getting workers to identify with the competitive aims of the enterprise”. Burawoy (1979, p. 201) also builds on Marx and Braverman to examine how the production of workers’ consent “is produced and reproduced on the shop floor”. He argues that the production of consent is actually part of the labour process itself. This occurs through the simultaneous “obscuring and securing of surplus-value” (Burawoy, 1985, p. 35, 1979, p. 30). Finally, Littler (1982, p. 34) confronts the problem of the “relative autonomy of the labour process” through the investigation of the complex realities of the historical development of the labour process in capitalist society. These scholars framed the labour process debate throughout the second wave, which established influential reference points for subsequent work.

In the wake of the debates of the “second wave”, certain scholars, particularly Thompson (1989, p. 245) sought a “core theory” for studies of the labour process (Jaros, 2005) that put labour at the centre of analysis (see section 2.3.3). Thompson (1989,

1990), Edwards (1986, 1990) explicitly reject the Marxist foundations of labour process theory. This is evident in both scholars' rejection of the labour theory of value as the basis for prices of production, the nature of exploitation as the material basis for class struggle, the so-called "gravedigger thesis", and Marx's theory of crisis including the falling rate of profit (see section 2.3.3). Both Thompson and Edwards claim that by rejecting what they view as the teleological determinism of "Marxism" they can disentangle the analysis of the relations between capital and labour in the workplace from capital and labour as social relations (see section 2.3.3). Many of their contemporaries cite the core theory as an influential approach (Glucksmann, 2005; Newsome et al., 2015; Sanders and Hardy, 2012; Smith and Thompson, 2010; Taylor and Bain, 1999). Those indebted to the this "core" paradigm have made very important contributions to contemporary studies of work and employment, but not challenged their critique of Marxist foundations. Other challenges to LPT were made by a so-called "third wave" (Smith, 2015) that involved the setting out of "alternative paradigms" such as "flexible specialization" (Piore and Sabel, 1984); "lean production" (Womack et al., 1990); and "Japanisation" (Chris Smith, 1994). However, the "core theory" approach to themes of control, resistance and consent remains central to emergent approaches to service work (see section 3.3.1) including studies of emotional labour (Bolton, 2010, 2005; Bolton and Boyd, 2003; Hochschild, 1983) and aesthetic labour (Warhurst and Nickson, 2007a, 2007b).

It is apparent that contemporary followers of "core" labour process theory (Bolton, 2010, 2005; Newsome et al., 2015; Smith, 2015; Taylor and Bain, 2005, 1999; Vincent, 2011; Warhurst et al., 2009, 2008) have not explicitly challenged the "materialist" critique of "Marxism". Calls for a broadening of the framework had led to critical realism (Thompson and Vincent, 2010) and other approaches to political economy (Cushen and Thompson, 2016), yet have conspicuously avoided engagement with Marx himself. Brook (2013, p. 334) argues the "core theory" can essentially be understood as offering a common set of "sub-Marxist" propositions. These core propositions proceed from the fundamental understanding that labour-power is sold as if it is a commodity, yet can never be fully determined in advance, despite the best efforts of managers. The indeterminacy of labour-power is consistent with Marx's formulation in *Capital* (1976,

p. 271) because if labour capacity were sold in its entirety, then this would entail that an individual worker become the commodity itself – and ownership over an individual constitutes slavery. The indeterminacy of labour-power means that workers sell it as an unrealised capacity to the employer for a relatively specific duration under the pretence of compensation in the form of wages. Employers are then compelled to convert this labour-power into concrete labour by extracting worker effort in the most efficient way possible to facilitate the accumulation of capital (Littler, 1990).

Four core propositions derive from this fundamental conception of labour-power, which multiple scholars have defined as the pillars of the “core theory” (Brook, 2013; Thompson, 1990; Thompson and Vincent, 2010). These propositions are not explicitly Marxist, yet they are partially compatible with a Marxist approach. The first proposition is that the experiences of workers in the labour process should be the primary analytic focus of LPT, since the transformation of labour-power into concrete and abstract labour is the process that generates the (undefined) “surplus” (Thompson, 1990). The second is that the logic of capital accumulation compels industry to perpetually revolutionise the production of goods and services, which places constraints on capital’s capacity to organise the labour process (Thompson and Vincent, 2010). The third proposition is that the necessity to transform labour-power in a way that facilitates accumulation implies an imperative toward employer control through a variety of strategies and tactics in order to reduce indeterminacy (Brook, 2013). Finally, the fundamental indeterminacy of labour-power and the dynamics of exploitation are based on a “structured antagonism” between capital and labour that manifests itself as both conflict and cooperation (Edwards, 1986). Many of the most prominent contemporary labour process scholars accept these four basic “materialist” propositions (Knights and Willmott, 1990; Smith and Thompson, 2010). Yet, as argued in the next section, the acceptance of the “core theory” without a value theory fundamentally limits the capacity of this approach to connect the concrete relations of production to the abstract and social relations of valorisation.

2.3.3 The Hollow Core of “Materialism”

In cutting off labour process theory from its Marxist foundations, the “materialism” that

undergirds the “core theory” limits LPT’s capacity to connect exploitation in terms of labour time to the broader dynamics of capital accumulation. Furthermore, the rejection of Marxist critique forecloses the political prospect of overcoming such exploitation. Marxist political economy provides a systemic basis for understanding the complex social relations linked to the production and valorisation processes. Specifically, a Marxist approach links exploitation in terms of labour time, the organic composition of capital and the rate of profit directly to workers’ experiences of work. Fine (2001, pp. 43–44) argues that Marx’s value theory ties the labour process to political economy in three ways. First, conflict in the process of production between capital and labour is prior to conflict in distribution, in contrast to neo-Ricardian analysis, which flattens these two levels. Second, the accumulation of capital is an absolute imperative for the reproduction of the capitalist system, which conditions social relations far beyond the immediate process of production. Third, there are particular methods by which the expansive extraction of surplus-value is pursued that have a direct effect on the labour process such as the pursuit of relative surplus-value, productivity increases through technological innovation, and the displacement of human labour from the production process.

While contemporary LPT and analysis is deeply indebted to Thompson (1989) and Edwards (1986) whose work formed the central tenants of the “core theory”, their rejection of foundational Marxist concepts such as the labour theory of value undermine the capacity of LPT to provide a systemic political critique. However, the materialist critique of Marxism itself does not hold up on its own terms due to its confused account of exploitation. Thompson (1990, p. 100) locates exploitation in “the appropriation of the surplus-labour by capital based on its ownership and control of the means of production”. “Appropriation” here is essentially a function of property relations. Drawing on Edwards (1986), Thompson (1989, p. 242) claims that, under capitalism “exploitation does not depend on the notion of labour alone creating value”. However, he neglects to provide any further explanation of other potential creators of value and how these might fit into his conception of the labour process. In this account, Thompson evades any substantive theoretical engagement by deferring to neo-Ricardian or Sraffian critiques of Marx’s theory of value such as de Vroey (1982), Hodgson (1982), and

Steedman (1981). However, Thompson (1989) does not elaborate on how they support his position. Instead, he invokes Edwards' (1986) "materialist" approach.

Edwards (1986, pp. 8–9) aims to provide a distinctly "materialist" theory of conflict at work, in contrast to a determinist teleology of class conflict, which he attributes to Marx. The rejection of "Marxism" leads to a confusing tension between Edwards' ad hoc use of Marxist concepts and their lack of systemic coherency. Edwards' approach conflates categories, especially with regard to exploitation, the logic of accumulation, and the impersonal domination of capitalist class relations. This confusion largely stems from his attempt to ground his theory in the work of Cohen (1979) and Roemer (1982). For example, Edwards (1986, p. 67) states, "under capitalism, production is driven by a law of value, namely that the purpose of production is the creation of surplus-value", which suggests that he might invoke value theory; yet this is at odds with the work of those scholars (Cohen, 1979; Roemer, 1982) on which Edwards' conception of exploitation is based. Cohen's (1979) theory of exploitation rejects the labour theory of value and the labour process as the privileged site of exploitation in capitalist production. Instead, he argues that exploitation fundamentally occurs as a result of property relations, through which domination and subordination are reproduced. So-called analytic Marxists such as Wright (1978) and Roemer (1982), as well as neo-Ricardians influenced by Sraffa (Hodgson, 1982; Steedman, 1977) on which Thompson relies, share this rejection of Marx's "law of value". Steedman, (Steedman, 1977, pp. 205–7) for example, claims that since magnitudes in terms of values tend to differ from those in terms of price, Marx's labour theory of value is redundant and must be abandoned.

The analytic Marxist and Sraffian approaches, which form the political economic foundations of "core" LPT, essentially flatten labour process relations into money relations by reducing the value-form to the money-form (Himmelweit and Mohun, 1981; Shaikh, 1981). This flattening conceals abstract labour and therefore the locus of primary exploitation in the difference between necessary and surplus labour-time. Edwards (1986, p. 66) argues that exploitation is "inherent in production relations", the basis of which lies in workers' "lack of effective control of the means of production", which in reference to Cohen, means property relations (Edwards, 1990, p. 138). For

Edwards exploitation concerns the “distribution of the surplus” and the organisation of production (Ibid.). Here again he invokes quasi-Marxist concepts, yet still rejects Marx in favour of a “materialist” approach, founded on the basis of what he calls a “structured antagonism” between two opposing groups; one group owns property and dominates the other, property-less group. Edward’s “materialist” theory claims that, “a theory of exploitation is the necessary basis for a theory of conflict” (Edwards, 1986, p. 53), yet as a result of his reliance on this flattened framework, he fails to articulate a theory of exploitation in which causal connections can be drawn between the rate of exploitation in the labour process, the rate of profit, and the systemic dynamics of labour and capital together.

There are three main issues with Edward’s conception of exploitation. First, he argues that the structured antagonism would remain even if all profits of capitalist firms were distributed to the workers, because production is still organised by the employers in accordance with the needs of the capitalist market (Ibid., p. 65). However, if all profits were distributed to workers, the company would either fail or have to become a cooperative, in which case the relations of production cease to be capitalist. Furthermore, if workers retained the products of their labour in the form of equitable distribution of surplus-value in the form of profits, it can hardly be argued that they are exploited from a Marxist perspective. Edwards thus conflates the abstract domination of the market and valorisation process with the concrete relations of capitalist exploitation in the production process. In collapsing the abstract structural domination of the valorisation process into the concrete particularity of the production process, his conceptualisation of the structured antagonism becomes muddled and is therefore unpersuasive.

The second issue concerns Edwards’ definition of “exploitative production relations”, which he defines as those situations in which a “surplus is produced within social relations of dominance and subordination” where it is impossible to hold the dominant and submissive groups in equivalent positions (Edwards, 1986, p. 66). Here he conflates “production relations” with the specifically Marxist conception of productive labour for capital, since he refers to “exploitative production relations” as those which produce

“surplus-value”, which he does not define (Ibid.). A Marxist approach distinguishes between productive and unproductive labour in relation to “production relations” as a whole, since unproductive workers are still exploited under capitalism even though they do not produce surplus-value. For example, in unproductive sectors like finance, concrete labour produces profits for the firm, but only through appropriating some of the surplus-value produced in other sectors. The production boundary is increasingly relevant to contemporary political economy (Mazzucato, 2018). Edwards, however, eschews such a distinction, opting instead for the categories “exploitative production relations” and “exchange relations” (Ibid.). The latter serves as a category for all forms of circulation and distribution. He does not provide further justification for this recategorisation.

A third issue results from Edwards’ dismissal of the notion of unequal exchange in favour of the concept of “bargaining power”. Edwards remains unconvinced that exploitation exists outside of production relations “for it is not apparent how fair and unfair exchange can be clearly separated” (Edwards, 1986, p. 66). A Marxist approach holds that exploitation also occurs outside of production relations (through what Marx calls “secondary exploitation” via rent and interest), and explains that unequal exchange can be identified through a comparison with the average rate of profit for a given industry in a given country (Marx, 2016, pp. 155–202). Marx notes the importance of unequal exchange or “buying cheap and selling dear” in his discussions of merchants’ capital (Marx, 1981, p. 379). Edwards’ term “exchange relations” does not account for different types of exchange i.e. labour for money (service) versus labour for capital (production), a distinction that is crucial for understanding the commodification of labour in the service society.

As Spencer (2000) has pointed out, the collective eschewal of value theory by labour process theorists has been a major factor in their failure to connect the labour process with broader categories of political economy. Marxian critics such as Rowlinson and Hassard (1994), and Tinker (2002) also argue that in rejecting the LTV, the “core theory” limits its analytical capacity to understand the labour process in relation to capitalism as a whole, undermining its claim that exploitation is inherent to capitalist

production. This has led to a disjunction between the dynamics of labour in the production process and the broader political economy of the valorisation process, which has been termed the “connectivity problem” (Thompson and Newsome, 2004). Attempts to address this problem have spurred a renewed case for labour process theory to “work at multiple level of analysis, thereby rendering more explicit the connections between the dynamics of workplace transformation, political economy and shifting regimes of accumulation” (Newsome et al., 2015, p. 5). However, rather than reintegrating value-form analysis based on Marx’s labour theory of value into the core of LPT, scholars (see, for example, the contributors to Newsome et al. 2015), have tacked on the comparatively recent theoretical project of global value chains [GVC]. While it has the word “value” in it, the GVC approach does not incorporate the labour value theory of classical political economy. Other recent efforts to incorporate political economy include Thompson’s (2013, 2003) “disconnected capitalism” thesis, and other attempts to draw connections between financialisation and value (Cushen and Thompson, 2016). The lack of a clearly defined value theory in these approaches means that as a consequence they seem to implicitly accept neoclassical and “subjective” theories of value (Mazzucato, 2018). This is a problem for LPT, because such theories obscure the fundamentally exploitative nature of production and the classed nature of capitalist accumulation.

In responding to Marxist criticisms (Cohen, 1987; Spencer, 2000a) Thompson (2010, p. 12) argues that Marxists do not “demonstrate causal connections between the ‘value theoretic approach’ and actual outcomes in the labour process”. Yet he neglects to cite which Marxists he is referring to other than Spencer (2000) and further neglects to state any alternative approach. Thompson (2010, p. 12) also claims that because “prominent Marxists within the labour process debate do not use such concepts [value and related terms] in their own work” they must have “limited explanatory power”. This is a logical fallacy; the absence of certain concepts does not mean such concepts necessarily lack explanatory power. Moreover, Thompson fails to recognise that Edwards and others (Bélanger and Edwards, 2013; Brook, 2013, 2009; Newsome et al., 2015) still refer to concepts like “use-value”, “exchange-value” and “surplus-value” in their more contemporary work, indicating a continued yet superficial reliance on foundational Marxist concepts and value theory.

More recently, the important and meaningful analysis of potential relations between financialisation and the labour process (Cushen and Thompson, 2016), appears to repeat the same issues as previous work. Thompson (2013) and Cushen and Thompson (2016) seemingly demonstrate a continued reliance on an implicitly neoclassical conception of value, that is, everything that commands a price has a value. According to such marginalist theories of value, wages are determined according to the productive contribution (marginal product) of labour and profits are the marginal product of capital. Marginalist theories of value are referred to by Mazzucato (2018) as subjective theories of value, because the price and therefore value of any given thing is simply what someone is willing to pay for it. These theories reject the notion of exploitation, but curiously “value gains” are appropriated by shareholders through squeezing “labour costs” and reorganising work in firms across supply chains (Cushen and Thompson, 2016, pp. 358–9). The authors continue to reject the labour theory of value, yet fail to define their conception of value, instead deferring to what they term the “radical accounting frameworks” (Ibid., p. 362), of Froud et al. (2006) and Lazonick and Mazzucato (2013). Refreshingly, Mazzucato (2018), is grounded in the tradition of classical political economy and makes a distinction between value-creation and value-extraction. However, she still does not define exactly what value actually is. Cushen and Thompson (2016) present important and meaningful analysis of potential relations between financialisation and the labour process, however their contribution still lacks a fully developed value-theoretic approach.

This section has argued that the use of Marxist terminology divorced from the totalising system of political economy results in confusion and incoherence; labour process theory should instead return to value-form theory, the labour theory of value, and the Marxian tradition. Friedman (1977 p. 268) in fact explicitly argues against those who suggest that labour process analysis “ought to do away with values altogether and instead deal with only visible categories of exchange such as prices and wages” (though he has seemingly abandoned this approach in later work). Without the labour theory of value, it is unclear why the labour process should be the privileged site of analysis rather than product or financial markets in the so-called “full circuit of capital” (Kelly, 1985, p. 32), a term

Thompson (2010) persists with. The Marxian tradition aims not simply to analyse the world as it appears, but move beyond appearances, i.e. commodity fetishism, to understand and change the underlying and exploitative dynamics of the capitalist labour process. Without the labour theory of value, there is no political imperative to overcome this exploitation. The political implications of the labour theory of value for labour process theory are explored further in the next section.

2.3.4 The Political Implications of Value Theory for Social Research

The previous section argued that labour process approaches influenced by the “core theory” (Bélanger and Edwards, 2013; Edwards, 1986; Knights and Willmott, 1990; Leidner, 1993; MacDonald and Korczynski, 2009; Smith and Thompson, 2010) are incomplete due to the rejection of foundational aspects of Marxist political economy, namely the labour theory of value as a theory of exploitation and the basis for prices of production. This incompleteness has created both conceptual confusion around Marxian approaches and “political pessimism” (Spencer, 2000b, p. 234). In rejecting Marx, this chapter argues that Thompson (1989 p. 246) also rejects the links between the labour process and wider social conflict; “there are simply no necessary theoretical or empirical links between conflict and exploitation at work”. This argument, in effect, reproduces the limitations of early industrial sociology which positioned the workplace as a case study that is isolated from social processes. This section argues that retaining a Marxist approach is of primary importance for the study of the labour process specifically because it makes systemic connections between the workplace and society and allows for the possibility of systemic change. This has important the political implications for social research.

As Diane Elson (1979, p. 172) argues, the theory of value shows that “the process of exploitation is actually a unity” of labour process and money relations. Workers experience these different forms of relations as distinct, yet “are in fact one-sided reflections of particular aspects of this unity” (Ibid.). Labour process relations correspond to concrete labour and the organisation of production and manifest themselves in the struggle over work intensity, time, and interpersonal dynamics

(between workers and managers as well as workers, managers and customers). The politics of the labour process are what Elson (Ibid.) calls a “politics of production”, which concentrates on “trying to improve conditions of production; shorten the working day, organise worker resistance on the shop-floor; build up workers’ co-operatives, produce an ‘alternative plan’” such as co-operatives and socialist organisations. Money relations, defined as those relations directly mediated by the universal equivalent (money), correspond to abstract labour and generally manifest themselves in the struggle over the payment or non-payment of money wages. The politics of money relations are what Elson (Ibid.) calls a “politics of circulation”, which concentrate on changing distribution in a way that is advantageous to workers. For example, raising money wages, controlling money prices, regulating the financial system, establishing a welfare state and so on.

The politics of value combine the struggles over labour process and money relations because value theory “does not pose production and circulation as two separate, discretely distinct spheres and does not pose value and price as discretely distinct variables” (Elson, 1979, p. 172). The labour theory of value acts as a means to unify the private, social, concrete and abstract dynamics of commodified labour in the process of exploitation. A value-informed Marxist analysis therefore incorporates the “subjective, conscious, particular aspects of labour in the concepts of private and concrete labour; and the collective aspect of labour in the concept of social labour” (Ibid., p. 174). Individuals are not simply bearers of the value-form, but rather are dominated by the abstract aspect of labour, which subsumes the other aspects and translates them into money relations. The subjective, conscious, collective, and social elements of human labour have relative autonomy. In this way, Marx affords a material basis for political struggle inherent in the process of valorisation itself. Rather than class struggle entering the analysis as a *deus ex machina*, the political possibility for overcoming the domination of abstract labour is built into the theory itself.

Part three of this chapter applies the inherent political critique of value-form analysis to the politics of the “service labour process” (MacDonald and Sirianni, 1996) Value-form analysis provides a framework through which to understand the relation between

personal, subjective understandings of labour and use-value, and the social, collective understanding of use-value as represented in exchange. It allows us to understand services as commodified use-values and the labour-time that it takes to produce them as productive of surplus-value. It specifically locates the source of company profits in the difference between the capital advanced on both constant and variable components and value of the service-product; “surplus-value represents the excess of the value of the product over the price of all its ingredients, labour included” (Marx, 2016, p. 85). That services are typically consumed at the point of production gives new resonance to the notion that the worker is “nothing more than personified labour-time” (Marx, 1976, pp. 352–53). Based on this Marxist framework, the next section provides a critique of contemporary literature on service work and develops Marxist approach to the service labour process.

2.4 The Politics of Service Work

2.4.1 Labour Process-Inspired Approaches to Service Work

Braverman was one of the few Marxists in the 1970s who recognised the dynamic role that services play in capitalist economies, defining them as the “characteristic form of production of our time, superior to manufacturing and with a greater future” (Braverman, 1974, p. 252). Crucially, Braverman (Ibid., p. 250) reminds us that capitalists do not necessarily care, in the last instance, whether they employ workers “to produce automobiles, wash them, repair them, repaint them, fill them with gasoline and rent them by the day, drive them for hire, park them, or convert them into scrap metal”. What matters to the capitalist is the rate of exploitation, that is, the difference between the prices of the commodities sold (whether goods or services) and the costs of the means of production and labour-power. A service becomes productive of surplus-value when, “the useful effects of labour themselves become the commodity” (Ibid., p. 248). In other words, when the workers do not offer their labour-power “directly to the user of its effects”, but instead sell it to the capitalist, “who re-sells it [their labour-power as a service] on the commodity market”, this is the capitalist form of service production

(Ibid.). In this way, Braverman's approach provides a basis from which to further develop a Marxist theory of service work, in sections 2.4.2 and 2.4.3.

Despite Braverman's emphasis on the importance of services, studies of the labour process were initially preoccupied with manufacturing (Burawoy, 1979; Cavendish, 1982; Friedman, 1977; Littler, 1982; Nichols and Beynon, 1977). However, as services grew to form an ever-increasing share of employment and GDP, researchers from both sociological and labour process traditions repositioned themselves to address new forms of work. Empirical studies into the organisation and experience of flight attendants (Hochschild, 1983), fast food workers (Leidner, 1993) call centre workers (Taylor and Bain, 1999) hotel workers (Sherman, 2007), care workers (Zimmerman et al., 2006) and other services (MacDonald and Korczynski, 2009; MacDonald and Sirianni, 1996) were conducted. Important concepts and findings emerged from this literature, including emotional labour (Bolton, 2010; Bolton and Boyd, 2003; Brook et al., 2013; Hochschild, 1983), the "service triangle" (Leidner, 1999, 1993) and the customer-oriented bureaucracy (Korczynski, 2009a, 2009b; Korczynski et al., 2000). These each offer crucial insights into service work, yet, as elaborated below, they offer only a partial analysis of the nature of service work and experiences of workers. A value-form approach theorises the production of services as commodities, subject to the same imperatives of valorisation that involved in goods manufacturing, yet at the same mediated by the consumer of the service. The rest of this section critically examines the main contributions of labour process approaches to service work including emotional labour, the customer-service triangle and the customer-oriented bureaucracy.

The concept of emotional labour has been tremendously influential on both sociological and labour process approaches to service work. As originally defined by Hochschild, emotional labour is a concept designed to capture the activities of individual workers in the "transmutation" of human feeling, which "requires one to induce or suppress feeling in order to sustain the outward countenance that produces the proper state of mind in others" (Hochschild, 1983, p. 7). Emotional labour entails a "coordination of mind and feeling" drawing on a sense of self and individuality that, like physical labour, can become alienated from the body or mind (Ibid.). According to Hochschild (Ibid., p. 19),

the alienation of such labour occurs when the production of emotion is “brought under the sway of large organizations, social engineering, and the profit motive” (Ibid., p. 19). There are two levels to Hochschild’s concept of emotional labour. The first level involves what she calls “deep acting”, which occurs when the workers believe their own performance as a “natural result of working on feeling” a certain way (Ibid., p. 35) by “directly exhorting feeling” or by “making indirect use of a trained imagination” (Ibid., p. 38). When workers engage in deep acting they do not try to appear happy or sad, but rather have trained themselves to spontaneously express “a real feeling that has been self-induced” (Ibid., p. 35). Surface acting, by contrast, entails deceiving others “about what we really feel” in order to influence them, but it does not involve self-deception (Ibid.). Hochschild uses these concepts to trace the impact of the economic restructuring and the deregulation of US airlines during the 1970s on workers’ emotional labour. She argues that emotional labour was increasingly characterised by surface acting and emotional dissonance, as the discrepancy between workers’ feelings and their emotional labour intensified, which led to conflict and the withholding of labour-power.

Emotional labour became a key concept in the labour process analysis of service work. Taylor and Bain (1999, p. 109), for example, draw on the concept to explain the psychological pressure on call centre workers and how they construct an “assembly line in the head”. Leidner (1993) also uses the concept in her study of the routinisation in fast-food work as a method of quality control. She found that managers aimed to routinise customer interaction and emotional labour to transform “workers’ characters, personalities and thought processes so that their reactions to variable work situations” would be more predictable (Leidner, 1993, p. 37). Macdonald and Sirianni (1996) extend the concept of emotional labour beyond the labour process to devise a social category of work. They classify workers in “front-line service jobs” as the “emotional proletariat” because these workers have little control over how they perform their labour (what to say and how to act) and are under constant surveillance by management and customers alike to ensure that rules are followed (Ibid., p. 3).

Critiques from labour process theorists argue that Hochschild’s concept of emotional labour has a limited capacity to explain both the complex experiences of workers and the

contradictory dynamics of the employment relationship (Bolton and Boyd, 2003; Brook, 2009; Lopez, 2010; Warhurst et al., 2009). Callaghan and Thompson (2002), for example, highlight a normative tendency in the literature that portrays emotional labourers as passive, with managers tending to exert unilateral control over the labour process. Taylor (1998) reformulates Hochschild's dualistic conceptions of deep and surface acting to conceptualise emotional labour as a perpetually incomplete transmutation of feelings, while Lopez (2006, p. 133) argues for a similar reworking of emotional labour as a continuum "with emotional labour at the coercive end and organized emotional care at the other". More pointedly, Brook (2009) argues that Hochschild's theorisation is one-sided, focusing too much on workers' individualised experiences. This produces an analysis that atomises emotional workers and over-emphasises the negative effects on them as individuals.

Hochschild (1983, p. 197) implicitly acknowledges that the tensions that result from the commodification of emotional labour generate resistance to management's control of the labour process:

The company exhorts them to smile more, and 'more sincerely', at an increasing number of passengers. The workers respond to the speed-up with a slowdown: they smile less broadly, with a quick release and no sparkle in the eyes, thus dimming the company's message to the people. It is a war of smiles.

Yet, the contested workplace of the flight attendant is *individualised* and emotional. While Hochschild traces the activities of the emotional workers, she cannot account for how resistance and the subversion of organisational control might result in *collective* empowerment (Korczynski, 2003; Paules, 1996; Sherman, 2007; Taylor and Bain, 2003) or build trade union organisation (Alberti, 2016; Evans et al., 2007b; Wills, 2005). Furthermore, as Brook (2009, p. 26) points out, Hochschild's focus on the "immediacy of the individualised commodification process" fails to locate her analysis in the wider context of social relations under capitalism. Brook contrasts her approach with more Marxist-inspired labour process analysis of call centres (Bain and Taylor, 2000; Taylor and Bain, 1999), yet as argued above, these analysis are essentially incomplete since they neither adopt a Marxist approach nor define a complete alternative.

Bolton and Boyd (2003) use a more Marxist-inspired approach in their study of BA cabin crew. They argue that it is “time to move on” from Hochschild’s analysis because her approach “disqualifies the possibility” that employees may exert an “active and controlling force” with both management and customers. They propose a more detailed typology involving four types of “emotional self-management”: pecuniary, prescriptive, presentational and philanthropic. These each have different “feeling rules” and “associated motivations” (Bolton and Boyd, 2003, p. 295). This typology also distinguishes between emotional labour, which is integral to the capitalist labour process and “emotion work”, which is a part of routine social interaction in the workplace. This offers analytical potential from a Marxian perspective because Bolton (2010) limits emotional labour to activities that the worker engages in commercial service interactions. A Marxist approach holds that only the activities a worker performs as commodified services count as concrete labour that is transformed into abstract labour in the valorisation process. Talking to one’s co-workers is not labour, just as using the toilet is not labour, even though both of these activities occur during a work shift.

However, due to its primary reliance on a symbolic interactionist approach (Goffman, 1990, 1982), Bolton and Boyd (2003) and Bolton (2010, 2005) overstate the capacity and agency of the individual in negotiating emotional labour in the workplace. Bolton claims that workers performing emotional labour “own” the means of production (Bolton, 2005, p. 61) and therefore have increased autonomy in the workplace. It is unclear what Bolton actually means here, since understood from a Marxist perspective, workers are doubly free in that they can sell their capacity for emotional labour but have no means of realising its value; only the capitalist has this capacity. Workers thus manifestly *do not own* the means of production in any meaningful sense whether they engage in manual or emotional labour. The constant capital owned by the company, which includes the machinery as well as the raw and ancillary materials, provides the conditions of possibility for both the variable capital of human labour-power to produce the service commodity and the value of workers’ labour to be realised in wages (see 2.4.2). Emotional labour is not “means of production” but rather a particular feature of concrete labour. Emotional labour is only labour insofar as it assumes a social form, mediated by exchange.

Related and complimentary to theories of emotional labour is the notion of body/sex work (Wolkowitz et al., 2013). Wolkowitz et al. (2013, p. 4) recognise that “bodies and sexuality are peculiar objects of labour due to the social meaning of human bodies, and the social, spatial and organisational contexts and constraints of the situations in which they receive attention”. They argue that bodies are peculiar “materials of production” and that labour process based on bodies are material “in ways that are consequential for the forms of managerial organisation possible” (Wolkowitz et. al., 2013, p. 5). They note seven factors contributing to the rise of body/sex work and the “new trend” that recognises that “the body, emotions, and sexuality are sites of commodification” (Ibid. p.4). This volume makes vitally important contributions to labour process theory, highlighting the contradictory forces that make up emotion/body/sex work, particularly bodies as “a highly varied and changeable material of production” at odds with the necessity of standardisation and rationalisation central to capitalism (Wolkowitz et. al., 2013, p. 13). Yet, like much of the contemporary labour process literature, the analysis is somewhat overly focused on the micro and concrete aspects of the production process to the detriment of some of the macro and more abstract dynamics of the valorisation process. Capitalism is more than the tendency toward standardisation, technological substitution and the profit motive. It is the process by which value is valorised. A deeper engagement with Marxist political economy and labour process theory would provide better balance between the concrete and individual experiences of such emotional and body/sex labour and the abstract and social implications of commodification and valorisation

At a different level of analysis, theories of the “service triangle” (Leidner, 1993) are used to describe the distinctive *organisational* nature of the “three-way contest for control between workers, management, and service recipients” (Leidner, 1999, p. 91). The notion of triangularity is pervasive in discussions of service work (Bolton and Houlihan, 2005; Lopez, 2010) and is an important step in the reconceptualization of customer mediation in the labour process. However, the concept is also problematic because, as Taylor and Bain (2005, p. 264) point out, the triangle is not “equilateral” and

this can obscure power dynamics while downplaying structural factors. For example, in her detailed study of luxury hotel workers, Sherman (2007, p. 20) draws on Hochschild (1983), Leidner (1993), Hanser (2005) and certain elements of Burawoy's (1979) social theory (though conspicuously without his Marxism) to examine the "production of entitlement" in the "service theatre". She uses a symbolic interactionist approach to examine the production of the self along with Weberian theories of normalisation. Her study aims to look beyond "relations of exploitation in production" to instead foreground what she calls "relations of entitlement in production-consumption" (Sherman, 2007, p. 259). Sherman's study lacks any grounding in a Marxian approach, indicated by her primary argument that what is at stake in the hotel is "unequal entitlement to material and emotional resources" (Ibid., p. 259) and that "individual relationships among workers, managers and clients" normalise inequalities such that these "take primacy over class relations" (Ibid., p. 261). She lacks a basic concept of labour as a social relation mediated by the market and the imperatives of capital accumulation. Thus, her analysis is fundamentally limited to the production of consent and conflict on a distinctly individual, private, subjective basis.

Korzynski (2009a) builds on the concept of the service triangle with his notion of the "customer-oriented bureaucracy". Korzynski's (2002, p. 64) normative model indicates that there is a potential for tension to develop between the imperative to maximise efficiency through rationalising the production process and the imperative to respond to customer demands and maintain the "myth of customer sovereignty". For Korzynski, (2002, p. 2) "the role of the customer is the most important unique aspect of service work" and control over the labour process "is best theorized as being informed by the dual logic of customer orientation and continuing rationalization" (Korzynski et al., 2000, p. 684). Yet, like Sherman (2007) and Bolton (2005), Korzynski's approach is built on Weberian (1968) foundations of rationalisation, social status and individual power (Brook, 2007). Weberian approaches lack a sufficient grounding in economic processes, focusing instead on symbolic and subjective phenomena (Brook, 2007).

The limitations of Weberian approaches are most readily apparent in the claim made by many sociologists of work, that the customer contributes to the labour process

(Korczynski, 2002, p. 6; Lachman, 2000; Leidner, 1999, pp. 93–94; Sherman, 2007). The customer may “contribute” in an abstract way in that their demand or preferences might alter the labour process. However, this formulation risks elevating the customer to a “co-producer” of the service. Understanding the customer as “co-producer” has problematic consequences for a theory of service work and reveals an under-theorised conception of capital-labour relations. The first problem with the formulation is that since it understands front-line service workers as inseparable from their product, it suggests that customers perform labour in the consumption that product and therefore participate in the production process. Customer perform no labour in production, since the act of consumption is not the same as the act of production. Production is supply and consumption is demand. The individual worker is separate from the product, which is the effects of the action performed (see section 2.4.3). Consumption is relatively simultaneous with production, but the activity of consumption is not the labour of production. The consumer does not perform any labour that adds to the valorisation process.

The second problem that results from understanding the customer as a co-producer, is that it obscures the material basis for power relations between capital and labour. The commodification of services in the labour process and the fetish quality of commodity relations (see section 2.2.1) under capitalism become flattened into a situation where workers, managers and customers are considered “co-equals, in an economic sense” (Hanser, 2012, p. 299). While it is important that agency and subjectivity are seriously considered within complex power relations, the three groups cannot be considered “co-equals” in any meaningful sense. Customers have a degree of individual and collective power to make demands and influence product markets; however, they act as a mediating variable rather than a causally intervening variable (see section 2.4.3 for a more depth discussion of mediation) since production and consumption are ultimately subordinated to the logic of the valorisation process. This overemphasis on subjective interaction makes it difficult for Korczynski’s approach and similar methodologies to account for collective organisation, especially around grievances that do not relate directly to customer service such as unpaid wages or poor conditions. The reality of shared conflict between front and back of house workers who are part of the same

organisation is not addressed in any meaningful way and customer-worker solidarity is not considered as a potential strategy of resistance.

2.4.2 A Marxist Approach to the Production of Services as Commodities

Much of the literature on the service labour process lacks a clearly defined political economic approach and the engagement with Marxist value-theory remains limited at best. Consequently, a theory of the production of services as commodities remains underdeveloped. This section sets out a Marxist framework that forms the basis from which to further develop a contemporary theory of the service labour process in the next section. The theory outlined here will inform the detailed empirical study of hospitality workers' experiences in chapters five, six, and seven.

As explained in section 2.2.1, the commodity, as a materialisation of labour in the form of its exchange value, is an imaginary and “purely social mode of existence”, which has “nothing to do with its corporeal reality” (Marx, 1969, p. 171). It is “conceived as a definite quantity of social labour or of money” and the concrete labour that produces the commodity “leaves no trace in it” (Ibid.). The concept of a commodity does not exclusively apply to physical goods, just as the concept of production does not exclusively apply to manufacturing. Marx’s analysis may appear to focus on tangible objects, but his framework clearly does not constrain the definition of a commodity in this way. As other Marxists have pointed out (Braverman, 1974, p. 248; Tregenna, 2011, p. 287), the physicality of a particular object or activity neither qualifies it as a commodity nor excludes it from the realm of commodities. What matters is that the process through which the object or activity is produced is subordinated to the capitalist valorisation process. The *form* of the labour process is decisive, rather than its *content*.

To understand the production of services as commodities from a Marxist perspective, it is first necessary to understand the two senses in which Marx uses the term “service”. The first is as a function of a commodity (Marx, 1987, p. 278):

This function, by virtue of which a commodity is only a use-value, an article of consumption, may be called its service, the service it renders as a use-value. But the

commodity as an exchange value is always considered solely from the standpoint of the result. What matters is not the service it renders, but the service rendered to it in the course of its production.

The second sense in which Marx uses the term is as a function of labour-power or “an expression for the particular use-value of labour where the latter is useful not as an article, but as an activity” (Marx, 1976, p. 1047). These activities are “types of work that are consumed as services and not in products separable from the worker and hence not capable of existing as commodities independently of him” but can still be directly exploited in capitalist terms (Ibid., p. 1044). Service as a function of labour-power means it is the particular expression of the use-value of an activity, which can be sold as a commodity and valorised just as if it were a material good or product.

In the time that Marx was writing, services largely remained outside the valorisation process, which meant they were not directly productive of surplus-value. Labour’s capacity to produce surplus-value essentially depends on two criteria: the relationship of concrete labour to the final product in the industrial circuit of capital and the method by which that concrete labour is consumed. If the capitalist purchases labour-power with money capital in order to directly valorise her capital in the industrial circuit, then this labour-power is productive. If an individual purchases another individual’s labour-power with her revenue from wages, this is unproductive labour.² The productivity of labour changes depending on this form determination. As Marx (1972, pp. 160–61) says:

The same labour can be productive when I buy it as a capitalist, as a producer, in order to create more value, and unproductive when I buy it as a consumer, a spender of revenue, in order to consume its use-value, no matter whether this use-value perishes with the activity of the labour-power itself or materialises and fixes itself in an object.

² Marx develops an analytical structure for the different departments of the capitalist economy. Department I consists of all those activities that produce the means of production or constant capital. Constant capital includes the produced inputs whose value is recovered in the output like fixed assets and machinery, raw materials, and some ‘faux frais’ or incidental expenses. Department II consists of all the activities that produce means of subsistence for the reproduction of labour-power or variable capital. Variable capital includes the capital advances to purchase labour-power that has the capacity to add more value than its cost to the value of the output. This distinction establishes the difference between productive and non-productive consumption. Services can be produced for dept. I as well as dept. II since capitalists can buy services as means of production and workers can buy services as part of the necessary means of sustaining and reproducing their lives.

Marx illustrates this point through the example of a schoolmaster. A schoolmaster who instructs others for a fee is not a productive worker. However, a schoolmaster is a productive worker when, “in addition to belabouring the heads of his pupils, he works himself into the ground to enrich the owner of the school” (Marx, 1976, p. 644). In this situation, that the schoolmaster has “laid out his capital in a teaching factory, instead of in a sausage factory, makes no difference to the relation”. Again, it is the form that determines the role of labour in the valorisation process.

In Marx’s time, most service work was not yet subsumed into the capitalist form of production. In the 1860’s there were over a million female servants in England alone, greatly outnumbering factory workers (Marx, 1972). Yet, these services were private and interpersonal, carried out by domestic servants, craftsmen, and other trades workers. Most services, therefore, were not productive of surplus-value. The transport industry is good example, of how a particular service developed through “various stages of handicraft industry, manufacture and mechanical industry” to become a capitalistically organised service moving “either people or commodities” (Marx, 1972, p. 412). It is only when private labour processes are externalised, and craft industries are subsumed into the social form of the capitalist mode of production, that they become productive of surplus-value. As Braverman (1974, p. 196) emphasised:

The work of the housewife, though it has the same material or service effect as that of the chambermaid, restaurant worker, cleaner, porter, or laundry worker, is outside the purview of capital; but when she takes one of these jobs outside the home she becomes a productive worker.

Braverman is ambiguous here about whether he means that domestic servants are productive workers for capital or whether they only become so when employed by a capitalist to perform their labour. It should be emphasised that only the former is true according to Marx’s framework. Simply being paid to perform labour does not mean that labour is productive of value. Payment for service or goods constitutes simple exchange and is not productive of surplus value.

There is an extensive literature over what constitutes productive labour under capitalism (Gough, 1972; Izquierdo, 2006; Mohun, 1996; Savran and Tonak, 1999; Shaikh and

Tonak, 1994). Marxist-feminists argue that domestic labour and the reproduction labour power constitutes value production (Dalla Costa and James, 1975; Fortunati, 1995; Seccombe, 1993), while autonomist-Marxists go further, arguing that all labour is productive (De Angelis, 1995, 2007; Harvie, 2005). However, the Autonomist approaches conflate Marx's production categories (Moraitis and Copley, 2017), and Marxist-feminists tend to conflate the reproduction of labour-power with the reproduction of human subjects. Domestic labour is necessary in order that the workers may live another day; but it does not produce labour-power as a commodity like any other. Labour power is a capacity of a human subject that is variable and is shaped into concrete labour by the labour process (Himmelweit and Mohun, 1977). Not all labour can produce value for capital. Only labour that can be quantified and made commensurate with other labour activities in the market can be considered in the valorisation process.

Productivity for capital depends not on absolute, but relative magnitudes. For Marx (1969, p. 152), productive labour must be “exchanged against the variable part of capital (the part of the capital that is spent on wages)” in an industry that produces more than is necessary for social reproduction. This is the only way labour, commodities and money can be transformed into capital. Labour is productive for capital if it is formally subsumed into the form of capitalist relations, allowing for the establishment of average socially determined labour times and it “produces a value greater than its own” (1969: p. 153). Labour is unproductive for capital if it produces no new value in relation to the total product. Unproductive labours “whether those of a prostitute or of the Pope” as Marx (1969 p. 186) says, “can only be paid for out of the wages of productive labourers, or out of the profits of their employers (and the partners in those profits)”.

This section examined the conceptual distinctions that Marx makes between different types of services and how the form determination is central to service production under capitalism. During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, services in industry were largely conducted by manufacturing firms themselves, rather than outsourced to other firms like they are today. In sum, when the worker sells the useful effects of concrete labour to the capitalist, who then resells this labour on the commodity market producing

more value than is consumed “then we have the capitalist form of production in the field of services” (Braverman, 1974, p. 248). The growth of services in the late twentieth century meant activities previously performed in the home or in firms became externalised. Recently, much of this growth has been in hospitality and other types of services that were previously performed as private labour. The next section provides a more detailed account of the production of value in these industries.

2.4.3 The Production of Value through Services

Without a concept of valorisation, the production process loses its systemic connection to the social form of capitalism. Understanding the social form centres exploitation and in turn the political imperative for overcoming this exploitation. A Marxist approach to the labour process emphasises that issue is not how some specific concrete labour determines the manner in which valorisation occurs, but rather how “valorisation determines what concrete labours are necessary”(Mohun, 1996, p. 43). It is necessary, therefore, to develop a more specific account of the dynamics of valorisation in service production or explore some of the inherent tensions that a value-informed approach exposes. What does it mean to valorise capital through service production and how might emotional labour fit into this process?

Numerous other scholars argue that the service commodity should be defined in terms of the relative simultaneity of production and consumption (Allen and Gay, 1994, p. 265; Urry, 1990, pp. 271–74). Urry (1990), argues that service workers produce cultural meaning and a certain quality of social interaction for consumers. Drawing on Urry (1990), Allen and Gay (1994, p. 266) argue that because the production of service is a “hybrid” relation between “cultural” and economic spheres, it “requires analysis in terms that simply are not present within the dominant discourse of manufacturing”. Allen and Gay (1994) assume that manufacturing discourses are not already culturally situated. On the contrary, consumer needs, tastes and preferences influence goods production, but less directly than service production. While service production requires a particular analysis, it should be grounded in the material and economic rather than the cultural realm. The production of surplus-value in services is of a peculiar type because the

labour represented in the value of a service commodity remains living labour until the consumption has finished. Thus, for a service commodity, the individual use-value tends to vanish with the cessation of the labour-power itself. The result of the concrete labour in production may be an immaterial transformation (in the case of knowledge or emotion transfer), a material transformation (such as the reproduction of a clean room), or some combination thereof that affectively satisfies a psychological or bodily need or desire.

Just as in manufacturing, the production of services requires the input of both constant capital in the form of the raw/ancillary materials and means of production, as well as variable capital in the form of concrete labour. The exchange value of the transformation of both of these inputs is realised when the use-value or the “service” of the commodity itself is consumed. However, due to the relative simultaneity of the final moments of production and the moment of consumption, the contribution of the variable capital cannot be re-circulated on secondary markets. The service commodity is the activity of the transformation of a situation. In the industrial production of services, there are typically multiple steps to this transformation such that it resembles an assembly line. Braverman (1974, p. 361) was the first to note that the reproduction of clean rooms in hotels was “an assembly operation which is not different from many factory assembly operations”. However, in hotels the assembly is not linear like manufacturing, but rather a circuit of interconnected labour processes tied to customer feedback in which consumption levels mediate production. The industrial production of services as commodities should therefore be thought of as a *circuit of service assembly* (see chapter six).

The argument of this chapter establishes that the form of the valorisation process, not the content of the production process, is what ultimately governs the labour process. Yet, within this form, there is a secondary variability in the service labour process, due to the fact that the customer mediates worker-manager relations in the production process as well as capital-labour relations in the valorisation process. Mediation refers to the dominant form through which two relations may be determined. Wright (1978, p. 23) defines a mediating variable as one that “shapes the very relationship between two other variables”. Rather than an *intervening* variable Y, which is causally situated between

two others (X causes Y which in turn causes Z), a *mediating* variable Y causes “the way in which X affects Z” (Ibid.). The customer is not causally situated between two workers or between workers and managers, but rather through their consumption, shapes the relationship between workers and managers. Consumption is a crucial part of the valorisation process (the final sale of the commodity realises its value), which is the primary mediator between labour and capital. Customers influence the capital labour relationship as a variable component of the valorisation process. The more directly customer interaction mediates the production of a service-commodity, the more directly the customer influences the capacity to realise profits and thus the valorisation process as a whole. Customer mediation therefore has significant implications for workers’ control, cooperation and resistance in the production process.

Customer mediation in the production process also has implications for the method of value extraction in the valorisation process. As outlined in section 2.2.3, the extraction of absolute surplus-value depends directly on the duration of labour and entails an increase in total work-time during a given accounting period (Marx, 1994, p. 63). Due to the time-sensitive nature of services, there is a particular imperative that favours the extension of the working day and unpaid working time. This is because of the technical difficulty of extracting more relative surplus-value when the production process is fundamentally tied to human interaction, which places definite limits to intensification. As Rachel Cohen (Cohen, 2011, p. 191) observes, there is a “rigidity” in the ratio of workers to customers or “bodies worked-upon” that limits the capacity to increase the capital-labour. The temporal unpredictability of interactive service work simultaneously makes the labour process less malleable while requiring a high degree of flexibility. It is difficult to achieve increases in productivity through technological substitution or a new technical restructuring of the labour process using existing technologies due to the complex and variable intersubjective qualities of human interaction. For example, in the case of emotion transfer, it is not yet possible to automate the production of affect or positive feelings. Workers remain central to the production process as only human interaction can ensure customer satisfaction. Without satisfaction, the valorisation process in hospitality work collapses.

The capitalist production of services aims to remove as much indeterminacy as possible from the labour process in order to maintain the rate of profit and ensure the quality of the product. As others have observed (Cohen, 2011; Taylor and Bain, 1999; Wolkowitz et al., 2013) the drive toward the removal of indeterminacy in service work manifests itself as an imperative toward consistency with regard to emotional and aesthetic labour, but also the segmentation of customer expectation (see chapter six). However, too much standardisation makes human interaction seem robotic and the customer experience seem too superficial and inauthentic. This points to a particularly prescient tension between the customers' private individual perception of the value of the service and the social or market-mediated perception of the value. This inherent tension is different yet related to the more general structural tension between quality and quantity in labour process theory driven by the profit rate and competition. The successful production of experience is directly mediated by the variable demands and desires of guests; yet the imperatives of the valorisation process place limits on the degree to which success is achieved, insofar as this concrete labour must be subordinated to abstract labour and the production of surplus-value. The subjectivity of the customer constrains the extraction of absolute and relative surplus-value, mediating the tension between quality and quantity of service interactions. The tension between quality and quantity is not new in Marxist analysis of the labour process, however it is more significant in services, which also makes it a more volatile site of conflict. The importance of this tension and the human element will become increasingly apparent in empirical chapters five, six and seven.

2.5 Conclusion: Toward a Marxist Conception of Service Work

This chapter contributes to the development of labour process theory and analysis in three ways: through reintroducing a conception of the capitalist labour process grounded in Marxist political economy and the labour theory of value, by providing a critique of the “materialist” turn that underpins the “core theory”, and finally through conceptualising the service labour process through a value-form analytic. The first contribution entailed a reinterpretation of Marx's conception of the commodity and the value-form in the context of labour process theory. Inspired by Elson (1979), four interconnected aspects of labour (private, social, concrete and abstract) under capitalism

are identified, and of these, the social form of abstract labour is the most important. This social form of labour is necessary both for the initial commodification of labour-power and the exchangeability of labour and capital. Abstract labour is quantifiable labour through time and money, which form the measures at the core of the labour theory of value and the valorisation process. Marx's conception of the labour process as the unity of production and valorisation processes is important for the critique of the "core theory" paradigm in part two of the chapter and the Marxist theory of service work in part three.

The second contribution of this chapter is the development of a value-form critique of Edwards' (1986) "materialism" and the "core theory" of contemporary LPT. Other Marxist scholars have produced similar critiques (Cohen, 1987; Rowlinson and Hassard, 1994; Spencer, 2000a) pointing to Marxism's political implications for emancipation, but this chapter specifically locates the critique in the labour theory of value and updates the Marxist approach, addressing contemporary developments. The critique began through the historical framing of the Marxist foundations of LPT, before focusing on the value-form as the fundamental element unifying labour process and money relations. In contrast to recent attempts to synthesise LPT with GVC research or critical realism, a value-form approach to LPT provides causal connections between exploitation in the production process through labour time and dynamics of accumulation in the valorisation process. The need for a theory of the valorisation process as an integral part of the labour process is demonstrated by the fact that when production relations are examined in isolation (in terms of control, cooperation, consent, and resistance), the systemic exploitation of the capitalist labour process is obscured, which runs the risk of reducing structural constraints to subjective decisions. The loss of a conception of the valorisation process can lead to the legitimisation of the world of commodity fetishism, a world in which "the land becomes the source of rent, capital the source of profit, and labour the source of wages" (Marx, 1978b, p. 453).

The third contribution of this chapter is the development of a specifically Marxist approach to the service labour process, which centres the importance of value-form theory. It began with a review and critique of the non-Marxist literature on service work. The service commodity is peculiar in that its production and consumption occur

relatively simultaneously. The chapter used value-form analysis as a theoretical and political tool to draw out the particularly stark tension between quality and quantity in the production of service commodities. The commodification of the private and concrete interactions between individuals, transforms human interactions into social and abstract labour that can contribute to the valorisation of capital. Through the commodification of private human interactions, the use-value of emotion finds its exchange-value through the social form of the wage. Workers' time performing service labour exceeds the time they would need to earn the wage to reproduce their lives and this surplus-labour is captured in the form of surplus-value and profit.

However, the subjective values of individuals in production are not the same as the valuations of service commodities as a result of valorisation process. Services that involve the commodification of human interaction have a particularly subjective component that distinguishes this work from purely manual labour. The mediation of the customer, therefore, has a more direct effect on the service labour process in terms of both production and valorisation. Customer-mediation has significant implications for workers in terms of their capacity to control the intensity and duration of work, but also in terms of their capacity for resistance. To what extent does the nature of the service commodity itself mediate the labour process and therefore workers' experiences of work? The methodology, research design and methods used to empirically explore this question are outlined in detail in the next chapter.

3. Methodology: Marx's Dialectic through the Extended Case Method

3.1 Introduction

Inspired by the work of Marx, Engels, and Braverman, this study aims to understand “life on the line”, or workers’ experiences of work in the London hospitality industry. To achieve this aim, workers’ experiences must be addressed at multiple levels of analysis, from the micro to the macro. Connecting workers’ experiences in the production process to the valorisation processes requires a methodological approach that is totalising and systemic. Marx developed such a method, which is first and foremost dialectical. This method is a scientific mode of social enquiry; it entails the development of a theory through the progressive negation of inadequacies based on the use of empirical material. Marx’s theory of the labour process systematically connects workers’ experiences of exploitation through the progressive incorporation of increasingly complex qualitative and quantitative data to deepen and refine that theory. Labour process research requires a detailed qualitative investigation of workers’ experiences of the production process. This study proceeds in this spirit using ethnographic methods, which provide the quality of data best suited to understanding workers’ economic experiences of work (Burawoy, 1998, 1979; Cavendish, 1982; Kitay and Callus, 1998).

This chapter makes a methodological contribution to labour process research by tracing a lineage from Marx through Burawoy’s (2013, 1998) “extended case method”, yet re-centring value-form analysis in LPT. The chapter argues that the extended case method (Burawoy, 2013, 1998), when carried out dialectically in the spirit of Marx (Little, 1987), operates as an important empirical application of value-form analysis for social research. A Marxist approach grounded in the labour theory of value understands that exploitation is directly linked to surplus-labour-time, which forms the basis of capitalist social relations. Workplace ethnographies based on participant observation and interviews are ideally suited to exploring such labour process dynamics from the perspective of workers themselves. This research methodology is designed not simply to

analyse the subjective and micro-level, but to connect it to objective macro-level factors. In other words, it connects the particularity of concrete experiences in production to the structural imperatives of the valorisation process.

This chapter contains three sections. The first section reinterprets Marx's materialist dialectic through as an empirical method of enquiry with value-form theory at its centre. This methodological approach offers more direct connections between production and valorisation than recent attempts to integrate critical realism (Ackroyd and Fleetwood, 2000; Thompson and Vincent, 2010). The second section discusses the research design, outlining the application of the extended case method, and the "multiple situated-ness" of the cases (Ó Riain, 2009, p. 304). The third section first outlines the empirical methods, which include ethnographic participant observation and interviews, then discusses research ethics, positionality, and limitations. These three sections combine to offer a methodology and ethnographic approach informed by value-form analysis and dialectical materialism.

3.2 Methodology

3.2.1 The Materialist Dialectic as an Empirical Methodology

"Core" LPT has recently turned toward critical realism as a methodological means to develop connections between the labour process and broader processes (Ackroyd and Fleetwood, 2000; Thompson and Vincent, 2010). Despite critical realists' claims to the contrary (Ackroyd and Fleetwood, 2000), it is unclear why critical realism is superior to a Marxist methodology, especially when it shares similar foundations (Brown et al., 2002). This section argues that critical realism fails to offer the systemic coherency of a Marxist approach to the labour process. It then outlines how Marx's methodology relies on a dialectical process of systemic abstraction that facilitates the development of critical social science research.

Marx's methodology is grounded in what is referred to as the "materialist conception of history", as famously articulated in the 1859 preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (Marx, 1987, p. 263):

In the social production of their existence, men inevitably enter into definite relations, which are independent of their will, namely relations of production appropriate to a given stage in the development of their material forces of production. The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which arises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political and intellectual life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness. At a certain stage of development, the material productive forces of society come into conflict with the existing relations of production or—this merely expresses the same thing in legal terms—with the property relations within the framework of which they have operated hitherto. From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an era of social revolution.

This passage offers crucial insights into Marx's philosophical assumptions about the world and the historical processes that comprise a distinctly social ontology and epistemology. Marx's ontology is materialist. A materialist ontology holds that the human existence in and knowledge of the world are primarily determined by the collective capacity to reproduce the material conditions that satisfying social needs. The social relations that result from the division of labour and ownership in society also conceal underlying processes. Marx's epistemology, as Burawoy (1990) points out, is comparable to contemporary realist empiricism, in that for Marx, scientific knowledge can arrive at approximately true statements about structures that are unobservable, yet these must be evaluated through empirical methods of observation and enquiry (Bhaskar, 1978; Little, 1982). Burawoy (1990) points out that Marx's methodology resembles a research programme in Lakatos' (1978) sense, containing a formal theory and set of broad hypotheses that define a systematic paradigm. These hypotheses direct social scientific enquiry to specific areas, such as state, social, and institutional structures that facilitate the expanded reproduction of capital. However, Marx's ontology, epistemology and methodology are also dialectical and totalising, relying on a process of systemic abstraction (Brown, 2014).

Contemporary “core” LPT is disconnected from the Marxist methodology that informed its foundations. In an attempt to offer an alternative system, scholars of work and employment relations have turned to critical realism as means to draw connections between “core” LPT and broader levels of analysis. Thompson and Vincent (2010, p. 51), for example, claim that critical realism allows researchers to make “meaningful connections between the various layers of the political economy and the forms of social agency situated within specific labour processes”. Edwards (2005, p. 270) similarly argues that critical realism allows industrial relations scholars to think in terms “different levels of causal powers”, while Fleetwood (2011, p. 16) holds that a critical realist methodology will help “synthesise” a better model for labour markets.

Critical realism takes the general position that “knowledge must be viewed as a produced means of production and science as an on-going social activity in a continuing process of transformation” (Bhaskar, 1978, p. 6). Critical realists conceive of the world as an open system that is stratified into multiple levels, each with emergent powers associated with particular structures. Within this broad framework, critical realists also distinguish between abstract and concrete sciences. Abstract sciences use experiments and abstraction to remove extraneous factors “in order to focus upon a specific kind of power and its underlying structural cause” (Brown, 2014, p. 115). Concrete sciences, by contrast, study multiple structures in relation to each other in an open system, beyond the limitations of abstract science. Concrete and abstract can be combined through the synthesis of separate theories of structures and associated powers. Critical realists apply this synthesis to social relations by conceiving them as structures that constrain or facilitate agents who occupy various social positions. Bhaskar (1989, p. 35) distinguishes social structures from natural structures by the capacity of agents to reproduce or transform them through their own activities. This approach appears as if it would provide the sort of philosophical and methodological capacity needed to make “meaningful connections” (Thompson and Vincent, 2010, p. 51) between different levels of analysis. However, there is a critical problem with the critical realist approach in that it produces competing logics between different systems, with no definitive hierarchy.

Brown (2014) provides a systematic critique of critical realism's capacity to advance social research on the labour process. For Brown, the main issue is the inability of critical realist approaches to connect local, specific workplaces to the systemic dynamics of capitalism. Critical realism allows a researcher to uncover multiple structures and powers that interact in unique ways at a specific site. However, at the systemic level, these structures are no longer self-contained, which means that they will fail to form patterns with common logics. For example, the logic that governs the profitability of a firm is systemically linked to the logic of trade in global financial capitalism, yet both logics effect employment relations and the labour process in different ways. In conceiving of social phenomena as self-contained, with independent logics, the critical realist approach actually impedes a systemic conception of capitalism. As Brown (2014, p. 117) points out, "the capitalist firm possesses its characteristic power by virtue of the system of which it is part, not merely by virtue of its own internal structure". The capitalist firm cannot be defined in isolation from other factors; it depends on the mutually constituting presence of property, money, commodities, labour, profits, and the associated activities of actors throughout the system. It is therefore impossible to define any particular element of the capitalist system as an isolated, independent structure; each element depends on all the others. These relations of mutual interdependence are what Marxists refers to as the "totality" of forces and relations of production, cited above as the ontological and epistemological basis for his materialist conception of history (see Marx, 1987, p. 263). In sum, as Brown (2014, p. 122) notes "critical realism must be resisted" if we are to further social science.

Critical realist approaches share some of the deficiencies of the "core" LPT in that they fail to grasp the empirical basis of Marx's dialectical method of enquiry and the labour theory of value to Marx's totalising system. The value-form is the category that mediates all other categories in the capitalist system and places labour at the centre (Brown, 2014). The recent turn toward critical realism by certain LPT scholars (Edwards, 2005; Thompson and Vincent, 2010) illustrates the consequences of LPT without the labour theory of value (see chapter two). Indeed, as Brown (2014, p. 122) points out:

by overlooking the systemic significance of value, applications of critical realism offer a ‘pseudo-systematic’ approach that ironically reproduces the very chaotic conceptions of the system that it claims to eschew.

The impetus to recognise other factors such as gender, race, and national structures as independent strata alongside value demonstrates critical realists’ confusion over the centrality of the value-form as a mediating category and blocks “the dialectic between case study analysis and theoretical synthesis essential to social research” (Ibid., p. 121). Critical realism ultimately proves itself to be inadequate as a method for empirical research because in practice, it isolates “ontology and epistemology” which consequently disregards “the simultaneity and immediacy of the interview experience” (McLachlan and Garcia, 2015, p. 207). The value-form, as it moves through different categories such as abstract labour time, commodities, money, and capital, maps the links between specific workers’ experiences, industries, and the capitalist system as a whole. The merging of “core” labour process theory with critical realism offers a complex and open system of relations with competing logics yet fails to recognise that such logics are subsumed within a materialist totality and subordinated to the value-form.

One of the great strengths of Marx’s method is the dialectical mode of conceptual development from concrete to abstract and back again, which allows for the progressive refinement of systemic analysis. A number of scholars (Storey, 1985; Wardell, 1990) have called for a better integration of Marx’s dialectical methods into labour process research. However, the term dialectical is often used in an imprecise way to caricature or dismiss Marx’s entire approach (Thompson, 1990). Marx (1976, p. 99) himself said that his dialectical method in *Capital*, “has been little understood”. These misunderstandings have persisted over centuries, as demonstrated by Thompson’s claim that “the espousal of dialectics” fails to move labour process theory “beyond the recognition of mutual influence, notably of agency and structure” (Thompson, 1990, p. 99). He claims that a Marxist dialectical method does not address the need for a hierarchy of concepts in labour process analysis while maintaining the centrality of the capital-labour relation. This is a demonstrably false claim, as is readily apparent in *Capital* vol. I. The capital-labour relation is central at all levels of analysis through “class struggle” (Marx, 1976, pp. 344, 476). While the term dialectic can mask differences in methods among

researchers, it does not follow that the term itself is imprecise and should therefore be dismissed as Thompson (1990, p. 99) argues. On the contrary, a revival of dialectics as an empirical methodology can account for contingencies based on the “interplay of structure and action” (Edwards, 1990, p. 127) within the systemic totality of capitalist relations.

Marx argues that capitalism is a historically specific totality of relations based on the exploitation of labour, thus rendering the capital-labour relations as central. His methodology relies on a method of “systemic abstraction” (Brown, 2014; Brown et al., 2002) that has three stages: the starting point, the method of enquiry and the method of presentation. Each of these stages are outlined below. The first stage in the system of abstraction begins with Hegel. Marx was influenced by Hegelian phenomenology, a particular strand of German Idealism, which draws on the dialectical method of classical philosophy (thesis-antithesis-synthesis), yet instead proceeds through determinate negation, or abstract-negative-concrete. However, Marx (1993, p. 101) argues in the *Grundrisse*, that Hegel has dialectics “standing on its head... Hegel fell into the illusion of conceiving the real as the product of thought concentrating itself, probing its own depths, and unfolding itself out of itself, by itself”. Marx’s dialectical method, by contrast, is materialist. The starting point for his method of enquiry is the “the simplest social form in which the product of labour presents itself in contemporary society” or commodity form of value (Marx and Engels, 1989). The commodity form offers an initial insight into how the system integrates multiple levels of abstraction. The commodity is a concrete concept or real abstraction because it represents the essence of a material particular, while simultaneously disclosing an abstract universal. The essence serves three functions: first, as a logical category providing the basic mediations for real abstraction; second, as the actual origin of particulars; and third, as their historical result (Saad Filho, 2002, p. 9). The commodity thus provides the starting point to unlocking the “inner physiology” of capitalism as a production and valorisation process (Ibid.).

The second stage of abstraction is the dialectical method of enquiry. As Marx explains in the post-face to the second edition of *Capital* (1976, p. 102), this step:

has to appropriate the material in detail, to analyse its different forms of development and to track down their inner connection. Only after this work has been done can the real movement be appropriately presented. If this is done successfully, if the life of the subject matter is now reflected back in the ideas, then it may appear as if we have before us an *a priori* construction.

Here, Marx provides a crucial insight into the empirical nature of the dialectical method and the necessity of looking beyond the realm of appearances or commodity fetishism. Dialectics as method of enquiry links the particularity of individuals' economic experiences to the totality of capitalist social relations by examining the underlying forces governing the production and distribution of value. The dialectical method of enquiry begins with the commodity, which is a real abstraction. This "simple" concept is initially introduced without reference to more complex relations. This concept is then proved to be inadequate on its own because it needs a further concept to explain it, which in turn will be proved to be inadequate until the totality of the capitalist mode of production is explained.

Marx uses empirical and historical material to test the potential inadequacy of each concept and their relation to one another. For example, in Marx's (1976 p. 344) chapter on the working day, he examines how labour time is the basis of capitalist exploitation and this leads to an inherent conflict between labour and capital. This conflict lies in the contradiction between capital's claim to the maximum consumption of labour-power (which it purchased as means of production) and the worker's claim to the long-term reproduction of their labour-power. These are "equal rights", yet "between equal rights, force decides" (Ibid.). Hence, the length of the working day is determined historically "as a struggle over the limits of that day" (Ibid.). Conceptual categories can accommodate these contradictions through the dialectical method as this allows for the logical accommodation of contradictions within a system.

The third stage of systemic abstraction is essential to properly comprehend the totality of relations of production. The method of presentation in *Capital* is also dialectical and traces the development of the concept of value through different stages including labour-time, the commodity, money, constant and variable capital, the industrial circuit, and the total process of valorisation. The method of presentation begins from more abstract

analysis and progresses to more concrete analysis, systemically linking the micro-, meso-, and macro-levels of the capitalist system through the value-form. As Brown (204, p. 121) points out, these links “help case study analysis and system-wide theory mutually to inform one another”.

3.2.2 The Labour Process as a Research Problematic

The theory of the labour process, as conceived by Marx, develops through a dialectical approach that recognises the systemic and contradictory forces driving the unity of production and valorisation i.e. the “process of creating value” (Marx, 1976, p. 293). Over the three volumes of *Capital* (Marx, 1981, 1978a, 1976) Marx grapples with increasingly complex empirical phenomena at different levels of abstraction to explain the ordered political economic structures underlying empirically observable social phenomena. From concrete empirical and historical data, Marx constructed a systemic understanding of the general “laws” of capital. He draws on first-hand accounts of working conditions, such as Engels’ (2009) *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, the *English Factory Reports* (1845-64) and the *Children’s Employment Commission Report* (1842) (Marx and Engels, 1987, p. 383). Marx’s (1976, pp. 340–416) chapter on ‘The Working Day’ is the most famous use of this data, which contains a number of different voices, including factory inspectors. Yet, there are also detailed examinations in later economic manuscripts, as evidenced in the economic manuscripts that came to form *Capital* vol. III, where Marx (2016, pp. 186–204) relies on reports such as the *Report on the Grievances of the Journeymen Bakers* (1862), which explores how developments in the transformation of wheat into flour and bread affect the capital-labour relation and can lead to conflicts in the labour process.

As argued in section 2.3.1, Braverman (1974) reignited Marxist labour process theory and analysis by combining Marxist political economy with a historical study of the emergence of Taylorist management. Braverman developed a research problematic based around the “degradation of work” thesis. This thesis, which posits that under monopoly capitalism (Baran and Sweezy, 1968), there is a general tendency for technological development to result in the separation of the conception tasks from their

execution in the labour process. The separation of conception from execution fundamentally undermines workers' control over their labour-power, which makes workers' struggle to maintain control the basis for conflict at work. A Marxist methodology recognises that capitalism structures production in such a way that subordinates concrete labour to the imperatives of the valorisation process rather than allowing workers to organise and carry out their labour themselves according to their needs. Understanding the nature of work under capitalism as beholden to this fundamental tension is what characterises the labour process as a distinctive research problematic.

In the spirit of Marx and Braverman, the research undertaken in this study uses a Marxist methodology combined with a qualitative empirical case study on the nature and politics of hospitality work. The research problematic is inductive and designed to draw out tensions between production and valorisation in the labour process that are specifically related to contemporary experiences of service work. Hospitality work represents a particularly prescient intersection of the production of experience as social activity between two or more individuals and the valorisation of the production of that experience for capital. To study workers' experiences in the hospitality labour process, the research is exploratory in design. The next section discusses the framework for Marxist enquiry in greater detail.

3.3 Research Design: The Extended Case Method

3.3.1 The Extended Case Method

The case study is an empirical enquiry designed to investigate a contemporary phenomenon "in depth and within its real-life context" (Yin, 2009, p. 18). Understanding the phenomenon requires particular data collection and analysis strategies because there will inevitably be "many more variables of interest than data points" (Ibid.). Data collection also requires the prior development of theoretical propositions and methodological considerations. In this sense, the case study acts as a bridge between research design and data collection. Yin (2009, p. 49) provides a typology of cases study

designs, which can be grouped into single-case or multiple-case designs, each with either a holistic (single unit of analysis) or embedded (multiple units of analysis) design. The research design for this thesis was inspired by the work of Michael Burawoy (1998), who developed a particular type of case study termed the “extended case method”, which took a Marxist-inspired approach to social science using “participant observation to locate everyday life in its extra-local and historical context” (Ibid., p. 4). According to Yin’s (2009, p. 49) typology, Burawoy’s “extended case method” constitutes a single-case designed to critically test existing theory and where the case serves a longitudinal purpose.

Burawoy sets his work against earlier studies of industrial relations by Lupton (1963), Cunnison (1966), and Roy (1952). Roy (1952) actually studied workers in the very same machine shop many years before. Burawoy (1979, p. 11) asked the question, “why do workers work as hard as they do?” The thirty years in between the studies forms a central thread of Burawoy’s (1979) methodology, which he continued to develop through a number of ethnographic studies ranging from a Zambian mining company (1972) to an American machine shop (1979) and beyond (Burawoy, 2013, 1985; Burawoy et al., 1991). In *Manufacturing Consent* (1979), Burawoy uses a Gramscian Marxism to develop the extended case method. While working as a machinist, he collected data through ethnographic participant observation. He applied Gramsci’s notion of hegemony to explain the production of consent in the labour process, which made workers complicit in their own exploitation. Burawoy developed the notion of different regimes of control through his empirical observations on the factory floor thus developing his theory of the production of consent. As Vidal (2018) points out, Burawoy (1979, p. 29) wrongly claimed that Marx “had no place in his theory of the labour process for the organisation of consent”, ignoring the relevance of the theory of commodity fetishism in chapter one and the theory of cooperation in chapter seven of *Capital vol. I* (Marx, 1990).

Criticisms of Burawoy notwithstanding, he provided an important methodological contribution to social science research through his extended case method. The extended case method proceeds dialectically by interrogating the approach throughout the

research, searching for ways that the data highlights inconsistencies or inadequacies in the theory (Burawoy, 1998; Burawoy et al., 1991; Wadham and Warren, 2014). As all qualitative studies are either implicitly or explicitly guided by theory (Wacquant, 2002), it is therefore important that researchers self-consciously integrate theory development throughout the research process. The extended case method ensures that research reflexively develops in three steps. These steps essentially echo the dialectical process of enquiry that Marx uses in *Capital*.

The first step is to identify a case and an appropriate theory for it (the starting point). The case should be a social group or phenomenon through which the theory might be explored. In this study, the London hospitality industry is the case and the theory is that the nature of the service commodity itself structures the labour process and workers experiences of work in specifically human-centred ways. It is important that the theory and the case allow for a certain degree of insight into broader levels of relations. In selecting a case, researchers should be aware of its capacity as a field site to build understanding about when the theory holds and when it needs further refinement. The case should also offer opportunities for a progressive focusing of the analysis toward more complex relations, reflecting the Marxist method of presentation discussed above. Focusing allows the researcher to ensure that the volume of data does not overwhelm the process of enquiry (Silverman, 2017).

The second step is to examine in detail the lives of the people in the situation or setting, using the theory to map these empirical phenomena while simultaneously reflecting back on the theory (method of enquiry). For this reason, the extended case method typically relies on ethnographic techniques of data collection and analysis. My study uses ethnographic and interview methods to examine people in different situations in hospitality work, reflecting their experiences back on the theory. As these empirical phenomena are mapped back onto the theory, it can compel the researcher to rebuild the theory from the micro-level to the macro-level, which demonstrates that ethnography is not simply a “quaint technique at the margins of social science” (Burawoy et al., 1991, p. 3).

The third step is to rebuild or re-articulate the theory itself through the data to address anomalies and further develop the theory (method of presentation) and analysis (Wadham and Warren, 2014). Having interrogated how processes actually occur at the research site, the researcher should then aim to examine whether the existing theoretical apparatus satisfactorily meets the aims of the research and how it might be reconstructed to offer better insights (Lichterman, 2002). The research findings led to a reconsideration and reconceptualization of the labour process and the politics of service work (see chapters five, six and seven).

To sum up, the extended case method is specifically designed in such a way that reflects the dialectical method of enquiry. The extended case method uses abstract concepts to understand how a particular empirical situation is shaped by wider structures (Burawoy et al., 1991; Wadham and Warren, 2014). In this way, Burawoy formalises elements of Marx's methodology and makes it useful for contemporary labour process analysis. By examining the experiences of hospitality workers in production, within the context of the hospitality industry at the institutional level, as well as the structural level of the valorisation process, this research extends the extended case method by integrating value-form analysis into the dialectical method of enquiry.

3.3.2 Multi-sited and Multi-situated Case Study

Edwards (1990, p. 11) cautions that narrowly focusing on individual workplaces can leave single case studies "comparatively weak on causal analysis and on what kinds of generalisation can be drawn". One way of overcoming this limitation is by using multiple sites in data collection and analysis. Simultaneously analysing two or more sites considerably increases the analytical power and generalisability of ethnographic research, especially for a particular industry. For example, Scott (1994) examined the consequences of different approaches to the management of industrial relations in large manufacturing firms. With this aim, he deliberately chooses three cases that displayed divergent patterns of relations yet were very similar with regard to their operating environment and physical attributes. This provided a depth of analysis exceeding the limitations of a single case while offering a degree of breadth as well. However, the goal

of the ethnographic case study is not necessarily generalisability, but rather detailed insight into social phenomena. Extrapolation does not depend upon the representativeness of the case, but the “vigour of argument and theoretical reasoning” (Mitchell, 1993, p. 211).

By combining the extended case method with multi-site and multi-situational analysis, some of the limitations of particularity can be overcome. The empirical component of the research therefore uses a single-case embedded design. The case is the London hospitality industry, which contains within it, multiple hotels as the embedded units of analysis. The case is contextualised using descriptive statistics from the Labour Force Survey [LFS], the Office of National Statistics [ONS] and reports from industry organisations such as the British Hospitality Association [BHA]. The qualitative methods of data collection include interviews with workers, participant observation of the workplace and union activities, and textual analysis of company documents.

The single-case embedded design is justifiable when it is “(a) a critical test of existing theory, (b) a rare or unique circumstance, or (c) a representative or typical case, or where the case serves a (d) revelatory or (e) longitudinal purpose” (Yin, 2009, p. 52). The rationale for the research design is twofold. First, it serves as a critical test of existing theory in that it applies a Marxist approach to the labour process in contrast to the “materialist” approach of “core” LPT. A Marxist approach tests the capacity of value as a mediating category to explain the politics of service work. The case study both challenges the “core” theory as well as develops a Marxist approach to the labour process grounded in the labour theory of value. Second, the case is representative of the major trends in hospitality work, since London is a major international tourist destination and has a growing hospitality industry. Third, it is revelatory insofar as the certain observed – namely wage theft in hospitality work (see chapter seven) – phenomena were hitherto largely unexamined by labour process researchers.

Using a single case embedded design, the thesis aims to expose the conflicts and tensions in the industry, not as isolated incidents, but rather as resultant political phenomena related to the nature of service work subordinated to the valorisation process

in an increasingly competitive global economy. Hotels encapsulate the multifaceted nature of hospitality work, in that there is a wide range of human-centred services amalgamated at a single site. Each individual hotel has particular characteristics that define it as a site, such as its size, location, market position, organisational structure and so on. Within this site there are multiple situations, hived off by department, yet at the same time working together to collectively produce the hospitality experience (see chapter six). By exploring different situations in multiple sites across London, the research developed a “multiple situatedness” (Ó Riain, 2009, p. 304). Multiple situatedness afforded access to comparative elements such as organisational dynamics, wages, and attitudes, which offered insights into aspects of workers’ experiences under the surface. This allowed the research to more accurately represent the perspectives of workers themselves and find commonalities between them to develop a holistic understanding workers’ experiences in London hospitality.

The hotels in the study include some of the most iconic and famous in London, which cater to wealthy international travellers and celebrities, as well as establishments that cater to the budget traveller, families and business clients. In the UK, ratings are awarded and managed by four institutions (The AA, Visit Britain, Visit Scotland and Visit Wales). The research was designed to consider market stratification and spanned a range of three, four, and five-star hotels (see Table 3.3.2). Market stratification was used to stratify guest expectations, as the higher the star-rating, the higher the quantity and quality of services (see section 6.2.3). In total, there were 16 separate hotels and six agencies that supplied services and workers to them. There were eight five star-hotels, three four-star hotels, and five three-star hotels. All names of the hotels have been changed to pseudonyms in order to protect both the researcher and the researched.

Three and four-star hotels tended to cater to families, large tourist groups, and business travellers. They would typically have a small restaurant and bar area along with basic room service. Five-star hotels tended to cultivate a high level of expectation by offering a broad range of highly personalised services. They generally featured two to three restaurants, two or more bars, a spa, and luxurious business and conference centres. Three and four-star hotels were located in areas where there was a higher volume of

business travellers such as Kings Cross, Waterloo, and Westminster, while five-star hotels were located primarily in the wealthiest areas of London such as Hyde Park, Kensington, Knightsbridge, Mayfair, Marylebone and the Strand. The five-star range of hotels tended to have a smaller number of guest rooms compared to three and four-star hotels, but they were much larger, more luxurious, and upwards of six times the price (£500 to £700) of most rooms in three-star hotels (£60 to £250). Most of the hotels were part of global hotel chains; some were owned by hedge funds and others by sultans and international royalty. Only First Boutique Hotel was independently owned. However, the structure of ownership and organisation of hotels is very complex (see section 4.4)

The agencies in the study serviced three, four, and five-star hotels, many of which were included in the case study. Some of the agencies operated on a national scale, while others were primarily concentrated in London. They typically offered cleaning and housekeeping services to their clients, but some also provided chefs, servers, and bartenders on demand. Agencies tended to group their clients geographically and would service multiple brands in the same area. Agencies generally offered standardised services to a broad range of hotels with different star ratings.

Table 3.3.2 Hotels and Agencies

Five Star Hotels

Name	Rooms	Services	Workers
Hilltop Hotel	453 guest rooms	Three restaurants, five bars, a 1000-person capacity events and conference centre and a 24-hour business service centre.	Danilo, Riza
Far East Hotel	181 guest rooms	A guest services manager on every floor; featured two restaurants, two bars, a spa, meeting spaces and a ballroom.	Amy
Lux Hotel	380 guest rooms	Two restaurants, a tea room, a pub, a spa and a conference centre.	Valentino
Medina Hotel	157 guest rooms	Two separate restaurants, two bars, a lounge, fitness centre, and meeting spaces with fully customisable “VIP experiences”.	Salvador, Rez, Nyah
Royal Hotel	250 guest rooms	Five restaurants, two bars, a cafe, a spa, and a famous historical reputation.	Sara
All Weather Hotel	193 guest rooms	Restaurant, bar, lounge, spa, fitness centre, theatre desk and conference centre.	Edith

Arabian Hotel	216 guest rooms	Three restaurants, pool, spa, conference centre, ballroom and chauffeured car service.	Sherif
First Boutique Hotel	105 guest rooms	A restaurant, bar, lounge, pool, health club, meeting rooms, cinema, theatre shuttle and a florist.	Mark Luther

Four Star Hotels

Name	Rooms	Services	Workers
Amnesty Hotel	187 guest rooms	Restaurant, bar, meeting rooms and a fitness centre	Ammon
Sandy Hotel	131 guest rooms	Restaurant, two bars, meeting rooms, spa and a fitness centre.	Dante
Last Boutique Hotel	50 guest rooms	Restaurant, bar, pool and a fitness centre.	Sebastián

Three Star Hotels

Name	Rooms	Services	Workers
Vacation Inn	906 guest rooms	Restaurant, pub, business centre, fitness centre and children's centre	Ramon, Lorette
Grand Budget Hotel	108 guest rooms	Restaurant, café and business centre	Elena
Transnational Hotel	706 guest rooms	Wi-Fi, restaurant, bar, meeting rooms and room service	Emily, Fairouz
Empire Hotel	593 guest rooms	Restaurant, breakfast buffet and en-suite bathrooms	Josephine
Perfect Hotel	266 guest rooms	Wi-Fi, restaurant, breakfast buffet and en-suite bathrooms	Edzai

Agencies

Name	Hotels Serviced	Services	Workers
All Service Agency	Over 200 hotels across the UK and Singapore including Vacation Inn, Transnational Hotel and Hilltop Hotel.	Guest room services, linen management, outsourced housekeeping and specialist cleaning.	Nazan, Akram, Elwira, Ramona
KRS Agency	Far East Hotel	Housekeeping staff, services and management.	Edvard
Just Clean Agency	First boutique and Last Boutique hotel among 30 other London establishments.	Managed cleaning service for kitchens, public areas and hotel rooms.	Lala

World Agency	Over 480 locations across the UK including Amnesty Hotels and Hilltop Hotels.	Specialist cleaning services for housekeeping, windows, kitchens, hard floors and public areas.	Damani
New Agency	Perfect Hotel and various other large retail, higher education and food service organisations.	Strategic outsourcing, facilities management, cleaning services, security services, technical services, environmental services and ancillary services	Paola
On the Job Agency	Empire Hotels and large sporting events	Hospitality staffing, training and consultancy for events, contract catering, hotels; contracted training and certification services.	Ignacio

The London hospitality industry is an ideal case for the study of the politics of service work in the UK since it is a major growth industry and one of the largest by employment (see chapter four). Researchers should be transparent in disclosing their reasons for selecting a particular subject and what they expect to find (Lichterman, 2002). This case was also selected due to the highly exploitative nature of the industry (see chapter seven). The research was designed in such a way as to have a broad range of data on the industry, from a variety of sources. The specific hotels and agencies that were included in the case study were selected intentionally, based on market position.

Initial investigations into the hotels and agencies were based on ethnographic enquiry and participant observation (see section 3.4.2), which entailed examining hiring platforms that companies used to filter job candidates according to personality and attitudes toward work. Further investigations into the hotels and agencies were based on data from semi-structured interviews and interviewees were selected based on occupation and hotel (see section 3.4.3). Background data collection on the hotels and agencies entailed textual and visual analysis of online virtual and offline physical environments. The recording of data involved meticulous field notes and the coding of textual and visual materials in NVivo qualitative data software. The contextual data served as a way to triangulate the data from participant observation and interviews. This additional context helped provide a better understanding how workers navigated the labour market and labour process. Through conversations with workers themselves, the research gained insights into the struggle for control over the commodification of the guest experience, production of customer expectation, and workers conflicts with

management (see chapters five, six and seven). The next section examines the specific ethnographic research methods used to collect and examine the data in such a way that reflects back on the central theory of the thesis.

3.4 Research Methods: Ethnography

3.4.1 Ethnography and Access

Burawoy was inspired by the ethnographic work of Max Gluckman and the so-called “Manchester school of social anthropology” in the 1950s (Wadham and Warren, 2014). This group of scholars focused on studying social organisations, exploring what people were “actually” doing, as opposed to what they “ought” to be doing. Ethnographic approaches to case studies allow researchers to understand qualitative complexities of social phenomena and situations. Ethnography “places researchers in the midst of whatever it is they study” (Berg, 2000, p. 133). It “captures and records the voices of lived experience” by going “beyond mere fact and surface appearances” to present detailed accounts of social contexts and subjectivity, exploring the complex relations between people and their environments (Denzin, 1994, p. 83). The aim of ethnography is to “see the big through the small,” to facilitate the “examination of large-scale social issues by means of investigation of small-scale social situations” (Stolte et al., 2001, p. 387). Ethnographic methods thus allow for detailed qualitative insights into the nature and politics of work. By situating ethnographic methods within a case study design, the research can make broader connections to systemic levels of analysis; the micro of the workplace is framed within the macro of international political economy (Burawoy et al., 1991). Through participant observation, interviews, and other forms of qualitative data collection the ethnographer observes how people at the micro-level “respond” to macro-historical, political, and economic forces and through their responses, also shape the historical evolution of those forces. In the case of London hospitality, I examine how workers respond to managers and customers in the production of experience, institutional forces in the labour market, and the imperatives of the valorisation process.

Ethnographic approaches are vulnerable to certain criticisms from social science research methods informed by verificationism and falsificationism (Benton and Craib, 2011; Popper, 1972). One of the principle criticisms of ethnographic methods is that the studies are impossible to replicate, which leads to the charge that the findings are purely subjective because they cannot be independently verified (Edwards, 2005). This criticism is easily refuted based on two criteria. Firstly, this naïvely positivistic view of scientific validity ignores the problems that other methods pose to social science. For example, relying on self-reported survey data can place severe limitations upon the issues the researcher can empirically explore. Social phenomena cannot be isolated in a laboratory. Instead, ethnographers as social scientists evaluate the validity of their data by assessing the care with which it was collected, comparing it to other sources and insider knowledge, then evaluating the arguments. Ethnographic research can achieve greater context by reviewing a broad range of evidence, such as historical documents in company archives, internal memos, minutes from union meetings, and reports on the implications of changes in employment laws.

Secondly, the notion that qualitative research should aim to be free of subjective bias rests on the out-dated assumption that researchers can and should position themselves only as impartial observers of phenomena, who then translate these objective observations into scientific “facts”. Numerous critical ethnographers have commented on this flawed and simplified definition of data collection, pointing out that it completely ignores the political, ontological, and epistemological assumptions bound up in the processes of interpreting and representing data (Alvesson and Deetz, 2000; Ferdinand et al., 2007; Harvey, 1990). Individual concerns regarding research findings are inextricably bound to subjective valuations. No matter how objective a researcher may claim to be or how resolutely they attempt to remain unbiased throughout the research, their worldview and methodological approach and will inevitably influence their research findings.

This study uses ethnographic methods precisely because of their superior capacity to capture the nuances of organisational dynamics, interpersonal relations, and sensitive data. Ethnographies are also highly adaptable and allow the researcher greater capacity

to uncover and explore novel phenomena that might contradict past orthodoxy (Millward, 1992). Ethnographic methods allow for diverse means of data collection and the recording of sensitive data or tacit knowledge that lies under the surface. Accessing such data relies on building a degree of trust between the researcher and the researched, which allows for a deeper understanding of subjects' perceptions, practices, and ways of navigating their environments. Direct engagement with workers and recording their narratives can pose a genuine challenge to the institutional façade (Morris and Wood, 1991). Ethnographic methods also increase the researcher's capacity to capture group phenomena through participant observation (Hodson et al., 1993, p. 398). For example, ethnographic methods can capture worker solidarity as they are sensitive to interpersonal subtlety, historical complexity, and issues around disclosure (Woodcock, 2014).

The reflexive nature of ethnographic research provides more freedom to develop ideas over the course of the fieldwork as they can be adapted to the situation as needed. For this reason, there is a long-established and well-respected tradition of ethnographic research in the field of employment relations. Brannan et al. (2007, p. 369) echo this position, stating that “[t]he changing nature of employment, and the demands placed upon employees, can only be fully understood through the use of ethnographic techniques”. Through directly observing workers in illustrative cases, workplace ethnographies offer vital insights into employment relations (see for example, Batstone et al., 1977; Burawoy, 1979, 1972; Edwards and Scullion, 1982; Leidner, 1993; Lupton, 1963; Roy, 1954, 1952). These studies advanced labour process analysis by exploring organisational culture, attitudes, conflict, cooperation, control and resistance “on the shop floor”. When ethnographic methods are combined with the systemic abstraction of a Marxist methodology as done in this thesis, researchers can connect the details of seemingly isolated phenomena with wider social structures.

There were two stages of ethnographic enquiry in the case study. The first stage entailed participant observation in the labour process itself and union activities, which is a traditional method of ethnographic research on work. The second stage entailed semi-structured, ethnographic interviews with workers, supervisors and managers. The ethnographic interview is an established method of social science research and adds a

crucial level of detail beyond the immediacy of the researcher's direct experience (Johnson, 1990; Small, 2009; Spradley, 1979). Participant observation was limited to the three hotels that the researcher was granted access to by the manager of the temporary staffing agency. Participant observation of workers in hotels lasted four months, while participant observation at union branch meetings, weekly surgeries³, and protests lasted for six months. During these six months, a total of 35 interviews were conducted; 30 of these were with various workers and five were with managers. The following section will discuss participant observation in greater detail.

3.4.2 Participant Observation

Participant observation occurred in multiple sites (hotels) and situations (as a job applicant, as a worker, as a protestor) over a six-month period. The researcher applied to seven job advertisements online through classified sites like Gumtree, which led to five telephone interviews and three interviews in person. The various methods that hotel companies and agencies used to assess candidates are explored in chapter five. During each job interview the researcher disclosed that they were a student studying hospitality work and wanted to observe and understand the industry in detail. No particular interest was shown in the research or motivations, the interviewers were instead interested primarily in the availability to work. The researcher decided to pursue temporary employment with All Service Agency because the agency was one of the largest service providers to London hospitality businesses. Their interview required a brief assessment of skills, which consisted of a series of questions about food and serving methods, the names and placement of plates and cutlery, the names and ingredients in various drinks and how to pour them, as well as other questions about personality and attitudes to work (see chapter five for an in-depth discussion of these filtering mechanisms). Previous experience in the industry allowed the researcher to demonstrate specialist knowledge of serving and cleaning skills such in the interview, which resulted in a job offer. The researcher worked as a hospitality assistant for this agency in order to gain access to

³ Surgeries were the set times that members could meet with union reps and offices to discuss any issues, or grievances they might have.

major hotels, which allowed for the close observation of hotel operations, the organisation of the labour process, and worker-manager-customer relations.

At the agency, the researcher worked three to four shifts a week, which varied from four to twelve hours each. Shifts rotated between a variety of roles including bartender, waiter, hospitality assistant and room assistant for various departments of three major hotel chains. The wide variation in my roles afforded a perspective on the industry that would not have been possible with other methods of enquiry because of the level of detail that participant observation can achieve. The data recorded included observations of the conditions of the building, the number of workers, details about their attitudes toward managers and customers, the organisation of tasks in the labour process, and the way that managers treated workers. Field notes included reflections on the similarities and differences between the agency workers and the hotel employees in terms of what tasks they were assigned, how they were treated, and their attitudes toward each other. Each shift had specific timings and directives for the type of service to provide to guests. Detailed field notes were recorded on the researcher's personal phone during rest periods, toilet breaks, and lunch breaks, which were then compiled after the shift.

Agency workers generally have a precarious relationship to work and were generally more compliant for fear of losing shifts (see section 5.3). As the researcher did not depend on the job for sustenance, the relative lack of precarity provided the freedom to explore different areas of the hotels, talk to workers in the canteen about issues and generally seek out data that could help provide an unofficial narrative of the hospitality industry. The agency position provided access to the back corridors of Vacation Inn, Transnational Hotel, and Hilltop Hotel. At each site, the researcher worked in a variety of roles, sometimes more than one in the same shift, moving from bartender to server. This allowed for the observation of labour processes across a broad range of occupations. Before, during and after the shifts, ethnographic participant observation provided data “under the clean surface” of the hotels (Lundberg and Karlsson, 2011). This “unofficial view” (Calvey, 2008, p. 908) is key to the ethnographic and extended case study method, which relies on or what Shulman (1994) describes as “dirty data”.

This unofficial view is essential in studies of hospitality work, because of the lack of industry regulation (see chapter seven).

Toward the end of this phase of participant observation, the researcher joined the Hotel and Restaurant Workers branch of Unite the Union. With the informed consent of the union organisers and workers, the researcher attended monthly meetings and weekly “surgeries” for six months. These meetings were extremely informative, providing insider information about conflict in the labour process and issues in the London hospitality industry that workers thought were the most important to them. The meetings also functioned as a space in which members could decide on protest tactics and industrial action. The weekly surgeries were the union’s primary means of supporting individual workers through case work, whether that meant helping a worker contest a disciplinary procedure or filing a grievance against a manager or employer. The surgeries were scheduled every Monday from 2-4pm at the Unite central offices in Holborn, London. The observations and conversations with workers and organisers at this site supplemented the “dirty data” from the participant observation in the workplaces. During the six months of participant observation in the branch, the researcher conducted formal, semi-structured interviews with workers.

3.4.3 Ethnographic Interviews

Ethnographic interviews were used as a method to broaden the data collection and anchor it in workers’ lived experiences. Interviews were semi-structured in order to foreground key themes including workers’: understanding of their contract; access to training and mobility; perceptions of the labour process; conception of the product; relations with management; experiences of control and conflict; union involvement. In practice, the topics covered did not follow a strict order, since an open format allows for more “in-depth” (Bryman, 2012, p. 432) exploration of themes. It also aimed to militate against the issue of leading questions that might unintentionally bias data. An open format afforded interviewees more control over what they decide to disclose and what elements they emphasise within the researcher’s framework, thus facilitating the co-production of knowledge. The co-production of knowledge has been shown to

encourage the voices of socially-marginalised people (Hardy, 2010; Hubbard, 1999). Rigid structures of data collection would have undermined the adaptability and exploratory nature of these “ethnographic interviews” (Chen, 2011; Spradley, 1979). They also would have limited the researcher’s capacity to build a base level rapport and trust with participants. As a consequence, this would have limited access to sensitive data integral to the study, such as wage theft.

The majority of worker interviews were conducted at the Unite headquarters in London, since this was a space in which workers would feel comfortable discussing any issues they had with their employer. A minority of interviews were conducted at a café or other public location near to the participant’s workplace. Of the 30 workers interviewed, nine worked for agencies and 21 worked for hotels. Interview participants were sourced through contacts that were made at different hotels and industry events such as the Big Hospitality Conversation (BHA, 2014). The researcher used a snowballing technique from these initial contacts, yet it was difficult to find workers who were willing to talk to me about the issues they faced in the industry due to the precarious nature of the work and the constraints of time and commuting distances in London. To counter the difficulty of access, interviews were conducted near participants’ workplaces after their shift or after branch meetings at the union office. Foregrounding workers’ narratives has political import, since dissenting voices were rarely included in industry reports and professional literature. The British Hospitality Association [BHA], for example, excludes trades unions and other workers’ associations from participating in their events or giving evidence in their reports (Unite, 2016a, 2016b). Attending weekly surgeries and meetings at the union office, supporting members and offering a sympathetic ear built trust with workers and increased access to data.

Of the five managers interviewed, two were from agencies and three were from hotels. Managers were interviewed at their workplaces, generally during their lunchbreaks. It was very difficult to get managers to participate in the research. Managers tend to resist any interference with the productivity of the workplace or public enquiry into working conditions due to their accountability to the company (Calvey, 2008). However, a lack of response could have also been due to the fact that they were under pressure to meet

targets and the interview was a low priority. Of the managers who did agree, they tended to act as ambassadors for their company and avoided discussing issues with staff or criticising their organisation. Workers' perspectives were much more critical and offered a productive and contrasting account of the experience of hospitality work.

To conduct the interviews, I used three different templates for managers, workers, and union activists (see Appendix 3.1). Questions for managers were grouped into six sets of six to sixteen questions dealing with their understanding and perception of: work and strategy; control and decision-making power; staffing and organisation; mobility and training; the product they were selling; and identity and demographic information. Questions for workers were also grouped into six sets of six to sixteen questions concerning the individual's understanding and perception of their: employment and contract; labour and management; control and rights at work; mobility and training; the product of their labour; and identity and demographic information. The questions for union activists were the same as those for workers, but with an added group of questions specifically related to the union and the branch's activities. Interviews yielded data that paints a revelatory portrait of workers' struggles in the industry, directly related to the nature of the work itself and the exploitative practices of employers in the unrelenting process of valorisation.

Interviews with workers generally began by establishing the name of the company that they worked for, their formal job title and their contract. Workers were then asked to describe in detail a typical workday, from the time they arrived at work until they clocked out to return home. They were asked if this pattern changed over the course of the week, month, and year. Based on this information and their evolving description of their work, the questions delved deeper into specific issues related to control over the labour process and conflict with managers. Workers were asked about their shift patterns, hours, the number of people in their department, and their relationships with colleagues. There was typically then discussion their conception of the product of their labour—what the company produces and what customers expected from them and from the experience. The product or commodity sold might seem a highly abstract topic, but

this actually yielded some of the most interesting responses, since individual workers' contributions to the production of the guest experience varied widely.

The researcher's insider knowledge of the industry proved very important here, because it allowed for the demonstration of insider knowledge of the production process and experiences of hospitality work. Using familiar language and industry slang helped build trust with participants, which allowed access to more sensitive data around conflict between workers and managers. Discussing conflicts at work tended to provoke strong opinions from respondents, as they had a variety of complaints about their workplaces and the hospitality industry itself. Establishing trust encouraged them to speak more on these issues, which lead to revelatory data on workplace conflict, involving issues such as intensification, bullying, unpaid hours, management abuse, wage theft and covert resistance. Most workers genuinely appreciated that someone was interested in listening to them discuss their work.

Interview participants were spread across a variety of different occupations in London hospitality including general hospitality assistants, servers, chefs, doormen, receptionists, room attendants, housekeepers, account supervisors, and managers. A range of contracts were represented including self-employment, temporary worker, zero-hours, and full-time permanent employment. Of the interviewees, there were only six white UK citizens; the rest of the respondents had migrated to the country. Some of them had EU citizenship, while others had recently obtained UK citizenship. A few were on commonwealth work visas. Most workers that were interviewed had been in the industry for several years (see Table 3.4.3 below).

Table 3.4.3 Interview Participants

Name	Occupation	Organisation	Ethnicity and Residency	Age	Contract	Wages	Years in Job
Fairouz	Accounts Supervisor	Redline MGMT - Transnational Hotel Group	Moroccan & UK Citizen	43	Direct - Full-Time	£30,000 / year	18
Amy	Catering Assistant	Redline Catering Management	White & UK Citizen	46	Agency - Full-Time	£9.50 / hour	11
Edith	Chef de Partie	All Weather Hotel	White & Polish Citizen	32	Direct - Full-Time	£23,000 / year base + £7,000 service	6
Luther	Chef de Partie	Couture Arms / First Boutique Hotel	White & UK Citizen	28	Direct - Part-Time	£9 / hour	1.5
Salvador	Chef de Partie	Medina Hotel	Spanish Citizen	29	Direct - Full-Time	£1500 / month	2.5
Nyah	Door Picker	TKO at Medina Hotel	Caribbean & UK Citizen	37	Self-Employed	£150 / shift [7-8 hours]	2.5
Valentino	Doorman	Lux Hotel	Italian Citizen	33	Direct - Full-Time	£1400 / month	2.5
Lorrette	Executive Head Housekeeper	Redline Management Group at Vacation Inn	Guyanese & UK Resident	53	Direct - Full-Time	£1700 / month	7
Nazan	Food and Beverage Assistant	All Service Agency	Turkish & British Citizen	22	Agency - 0/3 hours	£6.77 / hour	0.25
Akram	Food and Beverage Assistant & Bartender	All Service Agency then Hilltop Hotel Group	Moroccan & 4 year Diplomatic Visa	21	Agency & Direct	£ 6.89 / hour	0.25
Dante	Food and Beverage Supervisor	Sandy Hotel	Italian & EU Resident	33	Direct - Full-Time	£1600 / month	0.5
Henry	Food Waiter & Union Organiser	Unite the Union	White Irish & British Citizen	67	Agency - 0/3 hours	Retired	5
Edzai	Grill & Breakfast Chef	Perfect Hotel	Black South African & UK Resident	33	Direct - Full-Time	£8.25 / hour	5
Damani	Head Housekeeper (Agency Supervisor)	World Agency for Vacation Inn Group	Jamaican & UK Resident	57	Direct - Full-Time	£ 18,500 / year	2
Daniilo	Hospitality Assistant	Hilltop Hotel Group	Filipino & British Citizen	22	Direct - 0/3 hours	£7.50 / hour	7
Riza	Hospitality Assistant	Hilltop Hotel Group	Filipino & UK Resident	19	Direct - 0/3 hours	£7.50 / hour	1
Emily	HR Manager	Transnational Hotel Group	White British	28	Direct - Full Time	£30,000 / year	2
Georgie	Human Resource Manager	Vacation Inn Group	White & British Citizen	26	Direct - Full Time	£24,000 / year	3
Arnaud	Manager	On the Job	Black French	30	Direct - Full Time	£22,000 / year	2
Mark	Night Duty Security Officer	First Boutique Hotel	White & British Citizen	55	Direct - Full-Time	£27,000 / year	8
Ramon	Night Receptionist	Vacation Inn Group	Catalan & EU Resident	53	Direct - Full-Time	£10.50 / hour [night]	4
Kasia	Night Room Division Co-ordinator	West London Hotel	Polish & UK Resident	35	Direct - Full-Time	£1220 / month	10
Ammon	Operations Manager	Amnesty Hotel	Egyptian & UK Resident	49	Direct - Full Time	£27,000 / year	2.5
Paola	Room Attendant	New Agency	Dominican & UK Resident	51	Agency - 0/3 hours	£9.50 / hour	3
Ignacio	Room Attendant	Empire Hotel London [On the Job Agency]	Spanish & EU Resident	25	Agency - 0/3 hours	£900 / month	2
Josephine	Room Attendant	Saviour Hotel	Jamaican & UK Resident	43	Direct - Full-Time	£1320 / month	4
Lala	Room Attendant	Just Clean Agency for Grand Budget Hotel	Bulgarian & EU Resident	60	Agency - 0/3 hours	£6.50 / hour [illegal]	1
Elwira	Room Attendant & Union Organiser	All Service Agency at Hilltop Hotel Group	Polish & British Citizen	35	Agency - 0/3 hours	£6.77 / hour	2
Elena	Room Cleaning Supervisor	Grand Budget Hotel	Bulgarian & EU Resident	55	Direct - Full-Time	£7.21 /hour	2
Sherif	Room Service	Arabian Hotel	Gambia & UK Resident	42	Direct - 0/3 hours	£1700 / month after tax	6
Sebastian	Senior Sous Chef	Last Boutique Hotel	Spanish & EU Resident	49	Direct - Full-Time	£28,000 / year	3
Rez	Server	TKO at Medina Hotel	Hungarian & EU Citizen	25	Direct - 0/3 hours	£9.50 / hour	1
Sara	Server	Royal Hotel	White & British Citizen	24	Direct - Full-Time	£7.20 / hour base + £600 service = 1550	1
Ramona	Supervisor	All Service Agency	White & Polish UK Resident	28	Direct - Full Time	£21,000 / year	1
Edvard	Valet Assistant	KRS Agency at Far East Hotel	Hungarian & EU Citizen	26	Agency - 0/3 hours	£9.89 / hour [day] + £10.50 / hour [night]	2.5

The researcher transcribed the interviews in full, anonymising all names of participants, hotels, and agencies in order to protect the workers. Anonymisation ensured that no participants were compromised as a result of the research and gave them the reassurance to encourage candour in their responses. The list of “real names” and contact details for all participants remain confidential and stored via a password-protected account on the university server according to the University Data Protection Protocol. These interviews have been coded according to themes that emerged from the conversations as they related to the aims of the research.

3.4.4 Ethics and the Ambiguity of Disclosure

Many of the most famous workplace ethnographies deployed explicitly covert methods (Burawoy, 1972; Cavendish, 1982; Ehrenreich, 2001; Graham, 1995). Today, institutions have more rigorous ethical review procedures, yet this can sometimes produce bias against ethnographic research, due to problematic assumptions about the nature of disclosure and a heightened risk-aversion (Hardy, 2010). Institutions tend to favour overt methods and research designed to test narrow hypotheses, which has made it more difficult to study workplace conflict (Barley and Kunda, 2001; Pollert, 2012). The consensus is that overt research is inherently more ethical than covert research, which they conflate with deception. Yet, as argued below, this is an erroneous assumption. Combined with the tendency of managers to view researchers with suspicion, these issues have made it increasingly difficult for researchers to fully immerse themselves with workers “on the shop floor” (Alberti, 2011; Lugosi, 2006; Spicker, 2011; Tysome, 2006).

Ethnographic researchers tend to share the view that “fully informed consent is often neither possible nor desirable in ethnographic (or, for that matter, other) research” (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007, p. 42). It is widely recognized by commentators on research methods that there is not a clear divide between overt and covert research in the field (Agar, 1980; Calvey, 2008; Gomm, 2008; Herrera, 1999; Lugosi, 2006; Spicker, 2011). This ambiguity arises because of the nature of disclosure itself when communicating with research subjects directly or indirectly. For example, distributing

consent forms to every worker, manager and customer would interfere with the labour process and disrupt everyday tasks. In Leidner's (1999) study of fast food and sales work, customers could not be made aware that research was taking place because this would have affected workers' sales and therefore livelihoods of the workers participating in the study. Furthermore, social conventions and limits to disclosure undermine formal ethical criteria. Overt research inherently involves unacknowledged elements of covert research such as building rapport. As Bourgois (2007, pp. 296–97) asks, "Is rapport building a covert way of saying 'encourage people to forget that you are constantly observing them and registering everything they are saying and doing?'" This study takes the position that it is, and that ethnographic research that uses informed consent still relies on this covert means of eliciting responses. If the researcher cannot assume fully overt ethnographic fieldwork in which participants understand all dimensions of the research (including the political), then any critique of covertness must admit that overt research also contains instances of concealment.

Rather than categorising certain methods of research as overt and therefore ethical, while other research is deemed covert and therefore unethical, research should be understood as situated on a continuum of relative overtness or covertness that shifts over time. For example, informed consent may only be possible after encountering and establishing rapport with research subjects. Lugosi (2006), in his ethnographic study of hospitality work, continually negotiated between concealment and disclosure throughout the fieldwork period. The degree of overtness or covertness in the field was determined individually according to his relationships with specific informants. If few qualitative methods can rightfully claim to engage in full disclosure and informed consent at all stages of the research, then most methods engage in varying degrees of limited disclosure. "Limited" in this case means that the researcher cannot necessarily reveal all aspects of the research at the same time to those in the research environment. Limited disclosure is not covert, but instead conceptualises fieldwork in such a way that more accurately represents of the continuum of overtness and covertness. It is important that limiting disclosure is not misrepresented as deception. Deception occurs when the nature and intent of the researcher is activity misrepresented to manipulate research subjects. By contrast, limiting disclosure enables the researcher to seek informed consent

whenever possible, while maintaining full access to the research site (Lugosi, 2006). While not explicitly named as such, use of limited disclosure was the only way that researchers could obtain insider access to the subjects and data needed to undertake the research (Alberti, 2011; Diamond, 1992; Graham, 1995; Oliver and Wilkinson, 1992; Pun, 2005; Smith, 2007; Woodcock, 2015).

In ethnographic fieldwork, the use of limited disclosure can actually be more ethical than rigid adherence to full-disclosure. For example, in politically-motivated research where there is evidence of exploitative working conditions or violations of human rights, limited disclosure provides researchers access which could be denied if the political implications of such research were fully disclosed. In these situations, research findings can be essential in evidencing the need for policy reforms and enacting greater social protections for workers. In the case of investigating the exploitative conditions in the London hospitality industry, collecting this sensitive data relied on maintaining minimally-altered research sites. Full disclosure in all situations could have altered manager and worker behaviour in such a way that would not have provided accurate and objective data. It is widely acknowledged that awareness of observation tends to affect the behaviour of those observed (Lugosi, 2006). As the objectives of the research required access to a quality of data that revealed an unofficial picture of the hospitality industry, the use of limited disclosure during the fieldwork was justified. Ethnographic research must confront the contradictions between rigid ethics in the abstract and the application of ethics in concrete situations on the ground.

A condition of approval for this research was that it did not use covert methods of data collection in the fieldwork. The research was designed to use overt methods and made sure that, whenever possible, informed consent was obtained from all participants. However, in the field, even when informed consent was obtained, sometimes the lines between covert and overt research were blurred due to the political connotations of the research. The ambiguity in the field meant that there were situations in which the overt methods would be more accurately characterised by the concept of limited disclosure. In certain situations, primarily with managers and supervisors of hotels, the limiting of disclosure meant that while the researcher disclosed their status as a student at the

University of Leeds, the political motivations for the research were not disclosed. This level of transparency reflects the level of transparency in everyday life. Professional environments are not situations that one explicitly makes note of the minutia of one's political opinions. In fact, professional environments often actively discover or even prohibit such expressions. It was also imperative to avoid offending the managers by being critical of the industry or site in which they worked.

3.4.5 Positionality and Limits

(The following section contains a first-person account of the positionality of the researcher).

My previous experience in the hospitality industry as an economic migrant in London largely informed the motivation for the research. It provided the ontological, epistemological, and situational basis for deeper ethnographic engagement with other workers in the industry. In a certain sense, even before the fieldwork began, I had “become of one them”; I had lived “in their time and space”, enduring the physical, mental, and emotional challenges of hospitality work (Alberti, 2014; Burawoy et al., 1991). Moreover, identifying as a hospitality worker myself allowed me to collect data from directly workers as virtual equals, rather than as othered research subjects or indirectly through their managers.

Immersing myself in the hospitality industry allowed me to interpolate workers' experiences in such a way that researchers without such first-hand experience would not be able to. For example, the emotional and social fatigue that accompanies the full-time production of the hospitality experience; the social isolation that accompanies shift work; the unreliability of managers honouring requests for time off; and the financial limitations of low-waged work in London would be less palpable to outsiders. My insider status also guided the collaborative and political nature of my research (Halvorsen, 2015). Both the researcher and the researched shared a political motivation to document and analyse the exploitative nature of London hospitality work, with the hope that research dissemination may contribute to improving working conditions. At

union meetings, pickets, and other protest actions, union members expressed enthusiastic support for the study. This reactivity actually enhanced the quality of data as it gave me greater access to undisclosed details and data that was not publicly available.

If I had approached workers as an outsider or through management, this would have placed me beyond the level of concrete experience shared by workers. An outsider would have been less likely to access certain data, firstly because they would not know what questions to ask and secondly workers would not have felt as comfortable disclosing crucial details about their direct experiences of the poor conditions of the industry. Thirdly, if I accessed worksite purely through managers, this would have increased the likelihood that managers would hide or reduce the worst aspects of the jobs and therefore skew the data. They would also be likely to change their behaviour since they would know they were being observed. If workers saw the researcher as on the side of management, then this would have likely increased the “reactivity” of research subjects in such a way that would have substantially impacted the results of the research (Alberti, 2014; Bryman, 2012). For example, Pollert (2012) notes that while she could move easily between departments, she was constantly questioned and viewed with suspicion by her research subjects in *Girls, Wives, Factory Lives* (Pollert, 1981). This contrasts with the ethnographic approach of Cavendish in *Women on the Line* (1982) that allowed for full immersion in the workplace.

While I immersed myself in the research environment, it was also important to maintain a degree of critical distance. The combination of participant observation in hotels and the union, interviews with workers and managers, and analysis of company documents provided triangulated qualitative data. With only one method of data collection, my understanding of the nature and politics of hospitality work would potentially have been distorted. I foregrounded participants voices while also situating them in context through my tacit and academic knowledge. As Burawoy (1998, p. 15) notes, “situational knowledge” is “always in flux” with regard to broader social processes. This raises the important issues of the limitations of the research project. One important limitation of the research concerns the scope of investigating the “experiences of workers”. Burawoy’s (1991) “unbounded” ethnography, which aims to locate local lived

experience within an extra-local context can lead to multi-sited research that attempts to explore too many factors at once. It is therefore important not to overextend the extended case method.

I limited the study by focusing on the “collective worker” (Marx, 1976) rather than individual workers, on commonalities rather than differences in experiences. This meant that while subjective factors such as race, gender, and migrant status were important and influenced individual experiences of work, they were not the analytical lens through which experience was explored. Workers’ experiences were explored through their relation to the objective factors structuring production and valorisation. I frame the thesis in such a way primarily due to the narratives of workers themselves, who did not see questions of race or gender as the most important factors influencing their experiences of work. Instead, they emphasised the emotional dynamics, the physical strain, and the exploitative nature of the industry as their main concerns. This is despite my concerted attempts to encourage them to address such issues. Some workers did disclose instances of racial insensitivity on the part of management and sexual discrimination, however these were always secondary to their generalised frustration at the low wages and long, unsociable hours of the industry. Exploring workers’ narratives with regard to production, exploitation, and valorisation was the best means of responding to the theoretical interest of my research. The way they navigated control and conflict in the labour process told illustrated particular workplaces, yet also the systemic aspects of capitalism that governed their lives.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter outlined a research methodology that continues in the Marxist tradition of LPT both in spirit and letter. Braverman (1974) and Burawoy (1979) both take up different aspects of Marx’s method. The former extends Marxist theory and analysis through combining Baran and Sweezy’s (1968) political economy with Taylor’s (1911) ideas about scientific management. The latter adapts Marxian ideas to modern social science and refines a particular ethnographic approach called the extended case method. Burawoy (1998) argues that the extended case method can operate as a general logic of

enquiry, designed to accommodate different theoretical perspectives depending on the case and draw out corresponding implications. However, a problem with the aim of “theory reconstruction” is that it can reproduce an erroneous interpretation of the theory itself. As noted in section 3.3.1, Burawoy himself reproduced false assumptions about Marx with regard to the production of consent of the worker. Burawoy’s student Sherman (2007), also proceeds from false assumptions about Marx, dismissing Marx’s theory of exploitation and claiming to reconstruct a theory of hospitality work in which workers are not exploited. A closer reading of Marx’s mature political economy and labour theory of value would benefit contemporary labour process research and avoid the pitfalls of proceeding from false assumptions. Reintegrating value-form analysis into the methodology ensures systemic coherence that is also inherently politically progressive (see section 2.3.4), a capacity which the “core theory” lacks. Whilst “core” labour process theorists (Thompson and Newsome, 2004; Thompson and Vincent, 2010), have tacked on critical realism or global value chains analysis, these approaches fails to systemically integrate a theory of exploitation based on labour time and therefore are lacking when compared to Marxist approaches in terms of their capacity for systemic abstraction and radical political change.

Burawoy’s (1979) extended case method is essentially an application of Marxist dialectics to ethnographic enquiry. By integrating a value-form analysis to the extended case method, this chapter contributes to a renewed Marxist approach to labour process research. Investigating the nature of service work requires a methodology that understands the labour process as both a production and valorisation process, a fundamental tension present in all capitalist relations, yet particularly prescient with regard to the human-centred and variable nature of hospitality service. Through exploring workers’ experiences of hospitality work from a Marxist perspective, this thesis connects the nature of service production to the broader system of capitalist valorisation.

The research uses a single-case embedded design and ethnographic methods to investigate the politics of service work from the perspective of labour, rather than capital. As discussed in section 3.4.4, navigating the realities of hospitality work meant

the researcher had to practice limited disclosure at certain points during data collection, particularly with managers in the application process. Even when using informed consent in ethnographic work, maintaining a rigid boundary between covert and overt research is difficult, especially when there is an ethical imperative to foreground exploitative conditions. This chapter therefore also contributes to literature on research methods by exploring the ethical implications of doing overt research yet trying to uncover “dirty data” (Shulman 1994).

In order to frame the empirical findings and contributions that are the result of the particular methodological approach, research design and methods outlined above, it is necessary to provide a broader political economic context for the rise of the hospitality industry in London. The next chapter outlines the meso- and macro-levels factors structuring the hospitality industry, showing how the local connects to the global. The historical and political economic context demonstrates the relevance of this study with a view toward the subsequent empirical chapters, which explore how workers navigated the particular nature of the production and valorisation of service as a commodity.

4. The Political Economy of UK

Hospitality

4.1 Introduction

This thesis treats hospitality work not as some “special case” (Wood, 1997), but rather as an extension and evolution of industrial goods production into industrial service production. The UK currently has a services trade surplus equal to roughly five per cent of GDP and is one of the largest service exporters in the world (Jones, 2013). Within this overall rise in services, the hospitality industry has grown the fastest (BHA, 2017a). The industry encapsulates many factors that are characteristic of broader shifts in global capitalism toward the generalised commodification of services and human interaction. Tourism and the experience economy are booming. Yet at the same time, contracting-out and industrial fragmentation have become the organisation rule, rather than the exception (Burgess, 2012; Lamminmaki, 2006), which has had an overall negative effect on workers (Weil, 2014). The detrimental effects of fragmentation have been compounded in the recent expansion of the industry in the UK, which has seen a disproportionate rise in the number of low-waged jobs (ONS, 2017a, 2017b; Warhurst et al., 2008).

This chapter aims to provide a meso- and macro-level context for micro-level of analysis in chapters five, six, and seven. It begins by situating the UK hospitality industry within the broader political economy of service production and the global rise of hospitality and tourism. The hospitality industry is defined according to SIC 07 codes and examined according to employment, GDP and GVA contributions. The chapter then outlines some of the structural aspects of the industry that influence the labour process such as organisation stratification, low wages, and lack of union organisation. This empirical background will demonstrate the importance of the hospitality industry to the UK

economy and situate hospitality work in the developmental continuum of value-productive service work in contemporary capitalism.

4.2 The Global Rise of Hospitality

Over the past few decades, there has been a “deindustrialisation” of revolutionary proportions leading to the rapid expansion of capitalist service production. All G7 economies – the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, Germany, France, Italy and Japan – have seen a gradual decline in industries like manufacturing and a rise in services, both in terms of the proportion of their GDP and overall employment (World Bank, 2017). This has been the result of both technological innovation in manufacturing as well as the global expansion of capitalist production. Marx (2016) outlined this tendency in vol. III of *Capital* by showing that competition between individual capitals drives capitalist to expand and capture new markets by producing more commodities in order to increase their share of the total surplus-value of society. Braverman (1974, p. 193) explored this tendency in his chapter on “The Universal Market”:

So enterprising is capital that even where the effort is made by one or another section of the population to find a way to nature, sport, or art through personal activity and amateur or ‘underground’ innovation, these activities are rapidly incorporated into the market so far as is possible.

The expanded reproduction of capitalist relations has been accompanied by the increasing commodification of services, such that nearly every advanced capitalist nation in the world today is essentially a service economy. Net employment growth has been almost entirely accounted for by service industries (Schettkat and Yocarini, 2006)⁴. Hospitality and tourism constitutes the world’s largest service industry and it is a major component of international trade (UNWTO, 2017). Its increasing size is due to the globalisation of production, the increasing accessibility of international travel, and the

⁴ Services correspond to ISIC divisions 50-99 and they include value added in wholesale and retail trade (including hotels and restaurants), transport, and government, financial, professional, and personal services such as education, health care and real estate services. Also included are imputed bank service charges, import duties and any statistical discrepancies noted by national compilers as well as discrepancies arising from rescaling. Value added is the net output of a sector after adding up all outputs and subtracting intermediate inputs. It is calculated without making deductions for depreciation of fabricated assets or depletion and degradation of natural resources. The industrial origin of value added is determined by the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC), revision 3.

growing number of states that have specifically invested in hospitality and tourism development. The global scale of investment has transformed the industry into a major driver of economic growth and infrastructure development, generating new businesses, jobs and capturing revenue from the export of goods and services (Bolwell and Weinz, 2008; UNWTO, 2017).

The hospitality and tourism industries have experienced virtually uninterrupted global growth since the middle of the twentieth century. International tourist arrivals increased from 25 million worldwide in 1950 to 278 million in 1980, to 674 million in 2000, and finally to 1,235 million in 2016 (UNWTO, 2017). As a result, international tourism receipts have surged from US \$2 billion in 1950 to US \$104 billion in 1980, to US \$495 billion in 2000, and finally to US \$1,220 billion in 2016 (Ibid.). Including indirect economic contributions, hospitality and tourism now accounts for roughly 10.2 per cent of global GDP (Deloitte, 2018). Tourism is also a major category of international trade through the export of services. In 2016, this generated US \$216 billion in exports through international passenger transport services rendered to non-residents, bringing the total value of tourism exports up to US \$1.4 trillion, or US \$4 billion a day on average (UNWTO, 2017). International tourism therefore represents 7 per cent of the world's exports in goods and services and grew faster than world trade from 2012 to 2016 (Ibid.). As a worldwide export category, tourism ranks third, ahead of automotive products and food and after chemicals and fuels. In many developing countries, tourism is the top export category (Ibid.).

Hospitality and tourism-related work is a significant source of employment worldwide and has networked effects on the labour market. This means that a single job in the core industry creates about 1.5 additional (indirect) jobs in related industries (Bolwell and Weinz, 2008). As of 2016, tourism generated 108 million direct jobs or 3.6 per cent of total employment worldwide, while indirectly, the sector represented 292 million jobs or 9.6 per cent of total employment (WTTC, 2017). In the hotel segment of the industry, there is an average of one employee for each hotel room. There are three workers indirectly dependent on each person working in hotels including: travel agency workers, public and private vehicle drivers, food and beverage suppliers, laundry and textile

workers, retail staff, airport employees, etc. (Bolwell and Weinz, 2008). Low barriers to entry and low wages tend to encourage the employment of youth, women and migrants. Half of all workers are aged 25 or younger while women make up 60 to 70 per cent of the labour force in the industry (ILO, 2017; Stacey, 2015).

Hospitality and tourism are typically paired together because they include the very similar and often interdependent services. For example, the ILO classifies hotels, restaurants and tourism as one sector that includes: hotels, boarding houses, motels, tourist camps, holiday centres, restaurants, bars, cafeterias, snack bars, pubs, night clubs, catering establishments, canteens, travel agencies, tourism information offices and conference/exhibition centres (Bolwell and Weinz, 2008). Most other non-governmental organisations use this classification system as well (Ibid.). However, the British Hospitality Association (BHA) has a more specific definition, limiting hospitality to “the provision of accommodation, meals and drinks in venues outside of the home” to UK residents and overseas visitors (see Table 4.2). The hospitality classification distinguishes the work from other service-based activities, some of which overlap with tourism, which the BHA define as “the activities of persons traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and purposes other than being employed in the place visited” (Oxford Economics, 2015, pp. 2–3). Hotels are a sub-sector of the hospitality industry, yet they are uniquely positioned to represent it because hotels include a set of labour activities that encapsulate the variety of concrete labour processes required to produce the hospitality experience.

Table 4.2 Hospitality Industry SIC 07 codes

SIC 07 codes	Description	Hospitality sub-sector
5510	Hotels and similar accommodation	Hotel & related
5520	Holiday and other short stay accommodation	Hotel & related
5530	Camping grounds, recreational vehicle parks and trailer parks	Hotel & related
5590	Other accommodation	Hotel & related
56101	Licensed restaurants	Restaurant & related
56102	Unlicensed restaurants and cafes	Restaurant & related
56103	Take away food shops and mobile food stands	Restaurant & related
56301	Licensed clubs	Restaurant & related
56302	Public houses and bars	Restaurant & related
5621	Event catering activities	Catering
5629	Other food service activities [In-house catering]	Catering
8230	Convention and trade show organizers	Event management
7810	Share of activities of employment placement agencies	All
7820	Share of temporary employment agency activities	All

4.3 The Hospitality Industry and the UK Economy

In the UK, services now comprise 79 per cent of value-added GDP (ONS, 2018). The ONS estimates that the contribution of UK service industries to GDP increased from 46 per cent in 1948 to 78 per cent in 2012 (Jones, 2013). This contrasts with a decline in manufacturing, which fell by 25.6 per cent over the same period (Ibid.). The hospitality sector, which is particularly labour-intensive, has continued to grow for the seventh consecutive year in 2016 (BDO, 2017). It has grown at a faster rate than any other sector since the economic downturn, with a gross value added GVA growth rate nearly double that of the manufacturing sector (BHA, 2017a, 2017b). And at 5.9 per cent, its compound annual growth rate (CAGR) was almost double that of the overall UK economy over the past 7 years (BDO, 2017). The hospitality sector has generated £73

billion of GVA in 2016 or just over 4 per cent of the entire UK GDP. This contribution is nearly three times greater than that of the manufacturing of motor vehicles, aircraft, ships, and rail; and roughly six times greater than that of the extraction of oil and natural gas (Ibid.). Including the indirect and induced impacts⁵ of the UK hospitality industry, the GVA rises to £161 billion or 9.3 per cent of the total UK economy (BHA, 2017a). The hospitality industry has a Type I (indirect) multiplier of 1.50, and a Type II (indirect and induced) multiplier of 2.19. This means that for every £1 that the industry directly contributes to GDP, it generates a further 50p indirectly and £1.19 when including the induced impact (Ibid.). Finally, the hospitality sector contributed £38 billion in direct gross tax receipts in 2016, £15 billion in exports and £7 billion in fixed capital investment (Ibid.).

Hospitality accounts for the majority of overseas visitor spending in the UK. It is estimated that the hospitality industry accounted for £15 billion of exports to foreign visitors in 2016, equating to circa 3 per cent of total UK exports (BHA, 2017a).⁶ Hospitality and tourism planning is a significant feature of UK economic policy. In 2013, for example, the BHA successfully lobbied for the simplification of tourist visa applications for Chinese visitors (BHA, 2013; Robinson et al., 2014). The campaign resulted in the adoption of a single application to cover both UK and Schengen requirements (BHA, 2014). Both the BHA and the UK government are aware of estimates that, by 2023, China will be the largest outbound tourism economy in the world, and it is vital for the UK tourism industry to attract these travellers. However, hospitality is largely a domestic-facing industry. UK household spending accounted for 88 per cent of the industry GVA in 2014, with exports to the EU accounting for 5 per cent of GVA, and exports outside of the EU making up the remaining 7 per cent of GVA contribution (BHA, 2017a).

⁵ These impacts are calculated using the ONS input-output tables to calculate a multiplier effect that the hospitality industry has in generating further value in its supply chain, and the wider UK economy.

⁶ Total overseas visitor spending in the UK was estimated at £22 billion; spending on the hospitality industry therefore accounted for almost 70 per cent of total in-bound spend. In terms of the industry's output, 75 per cent of it is consumed by UK households, 16 per cent is intermediate expenditure (consumed by other industries within the UK economy), and only nine per cent of it is exports (BHA 2016, p. 16).

Labour productivity is the output per unit of labour – typically measured as GVA divided by the number of hours worked. It is the most common measure of an economy’s productivity. Since the economic downturn, the hotel sector has returned the highest level of labour productivity growth of any industry (BHA, 2017b). This is more than double the growth rate of the overall UK economy. It is important to note that labour productivity measures generally do not consider the efficiency of capital utilisation. Thus, the capital output ratio should also be considered. The capital output ratio is the ratio of capital input to economic output – typically net capital stocks divided by GVA. As of 2017, the overall UK capital output ratio remained above that of 2008, implying a less efficient use of capital. By contrast, the hotel sector has reduced its capital output ratio by over 10 per cent, showing an improved use of capital at a time when the capital efficiency of the overall UK economy had deteriorated (BHA, 2017a).

It is important to consider both ratios because if the return on capital is lower than the cost of capital (if the increase in GVA as a proportion of the value of the capital investment is lower than the total costs), then this would destroy value despite increases in labour productivity (BHA, 2017b). Since some industries are more labour intensive (and thus require more variable capital and have a higher organic composition of capital), this means that they are structured in such a way that they will tend to have a lower GVA per hour worked. The contribution of constant capital as means of production to the valorisation process is less than in other, capital intensive industries like manufacturing. This points to one of the critical tensions in hospitality work, since “efficiency” often entails “intensification”, yet this can be value-destructive if it ruins the guest experience.

4.4 Organisational Stratification and Ownership

The previous section demonstrates that hospitality is economically significant in terms of its influence on the labour market as well as GDP. Changes to the organisation of hospitality firms have accompanied the growth of the hospitality industry over the past few decades. This section explores the historical evolution of hospitality institutions and organisations in relation the labour process. During the 1970s, there was a wave of

consolidation among global hotel chains. Alternatives to equity participation in ownership structures were a major driver of this international expansion (Dunning and McQueen, 1982). The use of non-equity-based expansion allowed international hotel chains to grow into peripheral economic areas without encountering national barriers to direct foreign investment (Clancy, 1998). Contractual agreements such as franchising allowed international hotel chains to avoid many capital-intensive operations associated with the construction of new hotels and the purchase of existing properties. As real estate and capital markets increasingly converged over the course of the 1980s and 90s, the securitisation of real estate debt and rise of equity markets offered new tools for strategic hotel finance (Singh, 2002). These changes to the financing and ownership structures of hotel properties since the 1970s provided the institutional basis for contemporary organisational stratification and contracting-out.

Contemporary hotel companies are organised with hotel finance at the top of a rigidly hierarchical power structure (Jung, 2008; Mongiello and Harris, 2006). International hotel chains typically centralise accounting processes to a head office, which retains company control, while delegating other tasks and lower-level decision-making powers to the smaller units. In this structure, capital investment flows first from financial suppliers to top management, and then down to the operators. Essentially, the flows of capital investment form a hierarchy of decision-making power and financial constraints under which each subsequent tier operates. For example, as investors inject capital into a hotel company, it grows its bundle of assets (Chatfield and Dalbor, 2005). Top-tier managers then allocate funds to areas they anticipate will be profitable, while the operators who receive this second flow of capital investment must use it to generate the best returns for the top-tier financial suppliers (Andrew et al., 2007; Chathoth and Sharma, 2007). Top-tier managers therefore act as investors once-removed from the core operations, applying constraints to those on the ground, just as external financial suppliers apply constraints on top management. Ground-level hotel operations have relative power to interpret policies handed down to them from top-management, yet financial dominance subordinates each tier of the broader organisation to the valorisation process. The valorisation process thus overdetermines production in the labour process.

As hotels operate in a global market, the demands of various stakeholders often come into conflict with one another over how to optimise profitability. Shareholders' demands for profits push owners to secure investments and make a return, though owners tend to look to short-term rather than long-term solutions (Olsen, 2004). These constraints can cause conflict between top management and operators in addition to the conflicts between lower level workers and management (Mongiello and Harris, 2006). The allocation of funds by financial controllers has important implications for hotel operations, and influences the treatment of both workers and customers (Desouza and Awazu, 2004). Financial pressures for effective "cost control" along with a perceived need to concentrate on firm's "core competencies" have encouraged a tendency to contract out non-core services, from facilities and housekeeping to accounting and even human resource management (Burgess, 2007). Some research has found that contracting-out can enhance business efficiency and profitability, provided there is a high quality of information and strategic analysis accompanying the savings in overhead costs (Graham, 2003; Phillips and Kirby, 2002). However, the more tasks that managers divided among separate companies, the more complex the systems of accountability and management, and the more profits are retained by middlemen at the expense of workers (Weil, 2014). Contracting-out one or more aspects often negatively affect other aspects of the hotel (Lamminmaki, 2006).

Vacation Inn provided an illustrative example of the fragmented structures of contemporary hotel companies. Georgie, (human resource manager, Redline Management for Vacation Inn) explained that the human resource department was contracted out to Redline Management. Before Redline was contracted, Vacation Inn didn't have HR managers on site, but rather had area managers who worked in a centralised role where they supported four or five different hotels. Redline Management placed their managers on site and made them responsible for human resource issues within specific properties. Company directives, policies, employee engagement and so on were all provided by Redline management rather than Vacation Inn. While Georgie reported directly to the general manager of Vacation Inn, she had relative autonomy from the company in terms of decision making at the hotel:

We're given freedom to do whatever we want to do, as long as it makes sense for the business. But if there was [sic] any larger, wider problems that we needed to consult, then we would always consult with the management company. That's how the structure works.

The physical property that Vacation Inn occupied was owned by an asset management company, who had a licensing agreement with Vacation Inn and outsourced the human resource management services to Redline. Hotel employee wages did not come from Vacation Inn, but rather from the asset management company, while Georgie and her divisional director were paid by Redline. The Vacation Inn brand itself was owned by Transnational Hotel Group and was therefore subject to their company branding and strategy. Georgie explained that every year the hotel was audited for a “quality evaluation” to see if they were “actually living up to the brand's standards”.

Transnational Hotel Group did not have control over Redline management or the specific property, but since they owned the brand, they controlled guest experience. These complex and fragmented organisational structures were confusing for workers and made organised resistance more difficult (see chapter five).

4.5 Hospitality Employment from the Core to the Periphery

The rise of labour-intensive service industries like hospitality in the UK appears to confirm Braverman's (1974, p. 264) theory of the “scientific-technical revolution”. The theory, which draws on Marx's (1976, pp. 781–801) conception of the labour market, argues that in the long run, the overall proportion of the population directly involved with advanced manufacturing industries, “eventually shrinks” and is displaced into other industries or into the reserve army of labour. Braverman (1974, p. 264) predicts that the fastest growing sectors in the so-called “automated” age will be those “labour-intensive areas which have not yet been or cannot be subjected to high technology”. Braverman's prediction is particularly prescient when examining the rise of employment in the UK hospitality, a labour-intensive industry which has not yet been subject to high degrees of automation (see section 5.2.2 and 6.4.4). As of 2016, the industrial classification of “Accommodation and Food Service Activities” accounted for 2.3 million jobs, while the wider hospitality industry accounted for 3.2 million jobs or nearly 10 per cent of the entire UK workforce, making it the fourth largest industry by employment in the UK (BHA, 2017a). This is over two and a half times the number of workers in the creative

industries and nearly three times the number of workers in the financial and insurance services sector.

The hospitality industry ranks among the top six employers in every region of the UK and accounts for up to 10 per cent of the regional workforce as of 2016 (BHA, 2017a). Its share of total direct employment is at five per cent or below in only 22 of the UK's 406 local authorities (Oxford Economics, 2015). Urban areas have the greatest number of hospitality jobs, with Westminster in London ranking highest. However, the share of hospitality jobs in proportion to total employment is high outside of London as well, (second, third and fourth highest in the Isles of Scilly, South Lakeland and Eden in the Lake District respectively), which demonstrates the centrality of the industry to many regions across the UK (Ibid.). The UK hospitality industry has an employment multiplier of 1.45, meaning that for every 10 jobs created directly, a further 4.5 are created indirectly (BHA, 2017a, 2017b). When looking at the indirect and induced impact on the wider economy, this increased to almost 6 million jobs, or circa 17 per cent of the total UK jobs (BHA, 2017a). The wider hospitality industry has accounted for circa 15 per cent of the overall UK employment growth since 2009, ranking third out of 14 industries in terms of the total number of jobs created. Employment in the industry has consistently grown at a faster rate than any other sector as well as the overall economy since the crisis (BHA, 2017a). The rise in employment makes the industry a crucial site for theorising and analysing work and employment relations.

Figure 4.5 Hospitality Industry Employment 2017 – Thousands



Source: (ONS, 2017a)

As figure 4.5 shows, the majority of hospitality jobs are in the broad category of kitchen and catering assistants. This category represents entry-level positions in many different types of hospitality work from cafe baristas to canteen servers and porters. Chefs, receptionists, waiters and waitresses, bar staff, managers, financial administrative and housekeeping and related services are among the top occupations by employment. However, these statistics obscure the total number of individuals working in the industry because they only account for contracts of employment. Agency workers, temporary workers, workers on bogus “self-employment” contracts, and informal workers are not accounted for (see section 5.3). The Labour Force Survey (LFS) estimates that there are roughly 865,000 agency workers in the UK, a number that has increased by 30 per cent since 2011; 17 per cent of agency workers are concentrated in London (Judge and

Tomlinson, 2016). The use of agencies has long been “a part of the fabric of hotel operations” (Wood, 1997, p. 2). However, there is a “growing tendency” for hotels to rely on them for “distancing flexibility”, which refers to the contractual convenience of using another company to supply labour (Lai et al., 2008, p. 138). Agency workers are largely stratified along departmental lines. Agencies are most commonly used for housekeeping, kitchen porter and other cleaning roles (Knox, 2010; Wills et al., 2010).

A typical hotel-agency relationship is as follows: a hotel pays an agreed fee, usually equivalent to the sum of agency staff wages and the company’s operating costs, to the agency, which provides the hotel with services and housekeeping staff as needed. Larger hotels tend to maintain between one and six supplier relationships in the interest of sharing risk, since the more suppliers a hotelier has at their disposal, the more control they have over agencies in terms of buying power (Lai et al., 2008; Lai and Baum, 2005). Labour agencies supplying outsourced services and temporary workers take advantage of the seasonal fluctuations of the hospitality industry. They act as middlemen or wholesalers of labour-power, supplementing that of hotel employees on permanent contracts (Deery and Jago, 2002; Kuptsch, 2006).

Hotel managers hire agency workers to militate against recruitment problems as well as protect their own departments from being outsourced. When agencies directly employ the workers rather than hotels, the latter can avoid legal liability (McDowell et al., 2008, 2007). Legal distancing can create organisational barriers between employment contracts and worker, temporary and self-employment contracts (see section 5.3.1). Studies have found that managers use agency staff as a method of control, to prevent employees from “sitting there and doing nothing” and to control their labour costs “down to the last penny” (Lai and Baum, 2005, p. 96). Agencies serve hotels yet also act as “active institutional agents in the remaking of labour market norms and conventions” (Peck and Theodore, 2002, p. 474).

The labour market fragmentation that results from outsourcing and contracting-out has been described in a variety of ways including: a “core-periphery” dynamic (Atkinson, 1984; Harrison, 1994), “centre-periphery” theory (Friedman, 1977), the “attachment-

detachment” model (Mangum et al., 1985), the “micro dual labour market” model (Pollert, 1988, 1981) and the “core/ring” configuration (Olmsted, 1989). These all essentially describe the same thing: a skilled primary labour force with full-time permanent contracts existing alongside an unskilled secondary labour force with part-time or temporary contracts, often in the same workplace. The hospitality industry exemplifies this dynamic, which is partly due to the nature of the work itself. The demand for labour-power can fluctuate rapidly because of the seasonal nature of the industry and the consumer-mediated nature of the product (Krakover, 2000a, 2000b). Hospitality managers can face difficulties in developing systematic responses to the requirements of the market and therefore tend to respond in an ad-hoc manner to the variable demand patterns of customers (Wood, 1997). In order to mitigate against the variable demand patterns of guests, hotels maintain a core-periphery dynamic. The core labour force receives better contractual terms because their labour is perceived as vital to the company due to their skills, company knowledge, and experience. The existence of the core relies on a peripheral workforce with part-time, temporary, or outsourced contracts, which acts as a buffer against turnover as well as a filtering mechanism for the core. Occasionally, some of the peripheral workers move toward the core, yet the movement from the periphery to the core is the exception to the rule (Alberti, 2014; Knox, 2010; Riley, 1980).

The problems associated with the maintenance of a core-periphery dynamic in the hospitality industry include: barriers to entry, low-wages, low levels of organisational knowledge and a lower-quality guest experience (Anderson et al., 2006; Baum, 2006; Dusek et al., 2014; Riley and Ladkin, 2002). Knox (2010) argues the use of temporary working agencies act as a “shackling device” that entrenches divisions in the labour market, rather than providing a means for workers to move from an insecure periphery to more stable full-time work. Soltani and Wilkinson (2010) found that agency workers are relegated to “second-class” status such that their access to the advantages of internal labour markets (such as training, career development and job-related benefits) is likely to be significantly restricted compared to core employees. For example, the research found that housekeeping departments only applied performance-related pay schemes and internal promotion to their core permanent workers, while agency workers did not

receive any training beyond their initial induction (see chapter five). These findings evidence the pervasiveness of the “low-road” practices of flexibility found by Harrison (1994) and supports Geary’s (1992) argument that flexibility is essentially about reducing labour costs and maximising profits.

4.6 Wages and the Earnings Gap

As mentioned in section 4.5, Braverman’s theory of the “scientific-technical revolution” maintains that low-wage service industries act as the “primary reservoir for the absorption of degraded labor [sic] expelled” from industries subject to a high degree of automation like manufacturing (Jonna, 2015, p. 271). The fact that an “earnings gap” has existed between hospitality workers and those of other industries as far back as 1943 seems to reflect the continued relevance of this theory (Johnson, 1983). Hospitality workers have consistently occupied the bottom of the industrial hierarchy for at least the past four decades (Incomes Data Services, 1980, p. 71, cited in Johnson, 1983; see also Clarke and D’Arcy, 2016). Average pay in the accommodation and food services industry is £251 per week, which is £66 less than retail trade and repairs, the next lowest industry, which stands at £317 (ONS 2017a). Research indicates that hotels have used piece-rates as low as £2.17 per room and required workers to clean up to 25 of rooms a day (Lloyd et al., 2013). There is little evidence to suggest that the introduction of the National Minimum Wage (NMW) in 1999 and recent increases have had an impact on the earnings gap (Unite, 2016b; Warhurst et al., 2008). The hospitality industry still has the highest proportion of low-paid workers at 61 per cent (Clarke and D’Arcy, 2016). Roughly 25 per cent of workers are earning near or below the National Minimum Wage (NMW) and 71 per cent are below the National Living Wage (NLW) (Ibid.). The absence of the enforcement of working time and temporary agency regulations enables non-compliance with minimum wage laws and facilitates the systematic reliance on unpaid work-time (Clark and Herman, 2017; Warhurst et al., 2008).

Figure 4.6 Hospitality Industry Hourly Pay 2017 - Median Gross (£)



Source: (ONS, 2017a)

The lack of union density in the hotel sector also contributes to the “earnings gap”. Union density in hotels and restaurants has been low for decades, consistently standing at roughly six per cent (Archer, 2011; Lucas, 1996; ONS, 2016b). As of 2016, union density for accommodation and food services stood at 2.5 per cent, falling from 7.9 per cent in 1995 (ONS, 2016b). As a result, workers have little organisational capacity to negotiate better contractual terms and conditions, let alone higher wages (Soltani and Wilkinson, 2010). Many workers are not aware of the terms and conditions of their employment. Formally employed workers in the hotel and restaurant sector frequently do not receive any written particulars of an employment contract at all. If they are supplied with their contract, it is often well beyond the two months after the start date that the Employment Rights Act 1996 requires (Wright and Pollert, 2006). Lack of

access to their written statement of particulars means that contractual terms and conditions are often unclear to workers, especially migrants, leaving them vulnerable to exploitation by management.

4.8 Conclusion

This chapter provided a broad economic and organisational context for the analysis of workers' experiences of the labour process in the chapters ahead. It began by highlighting the global rise of hospitality and tourism as a significant value-productive industry for both developed and developing nations. It established that, within this global market, the UK is particularly well-situated, with hospitality growing faster in GVA than any other industry in the wake of the financial crisis. Furthermore, the hospitality sector is significant in shaping the UK labour market as it the fourth largest industry by employment. This means that the organisation of work and experiences of workers in the industry can provide important insights into the broader state of service work in the UK.

Organisational stratification, contractual fragmentation and low wages dominate the hospitality industry. These phenomena are not coincidental, but should be understood as indicative of the broader tendencies of contemporary capitalism in general. The rise of the hospitality industry is historically significant. If trends relating to technology and post-crisis economic disparity and precarity continue, then the tensions inherent in the nature of hospitality work, the experiences of workers, and the struggles between capital and labour in this expanding industry represent the present and future of work. Within this context, the research discussed in the next three chapters investigates the dynamics of control in the labour market, the factory-like production of hospitality, and exploitation in the valorisation process.

5. Pre-emptive Control: Constructing and Navigating the Labour Market

5.1 Introduction

How do hospitality workers navigate the labour market? What barriers do they face in their prospects for employment and mobility? This chapter addresses these questions. Research indicates that customers' evaluation of service is significantly influenced by workers' attitudes and behaviour (Bitner et al., 1990; Habel et al., 2016) (Bitnert et al., 1990; Schneider & Bowen, 1993). Hospitality managers therefore pay special attention to worker attitudes over traditional specialist skillsets to ensure they are the "right fit" for the job (Schneider and Bowen, 1993). The delivery of quality customer service plays a central role in hotel reputation and the profitability of hotels (Lee and Ok, 2015; Lyons and Schneider, 2005; Schneider and Bowen, 1999; Urry, 1990). The hospitality industry is also characterised by organisational fragmentation that extends to the labour market itself (Knox, 2010; Lai et al., 2008; Weil, 2014). As discussed in sections 4.4 and 4.5 above, agencies operate as middlemen, marketing their services according to the hotels' need on demand (see section 5.2.3) and having a significant impact on hospitality workers' experiences of the labour market.

A generalised organisation focus on worker attitudes over traditional skillsets highlights the centrality of individual subjectivity to the labour process in the industry. The emphasis on personality contrasts with manufacturing and other types of work in which personality is not as important because the customer is not a central mediator (see section 2.4.3). Service industries revolve around what Mills (1951) calls a "personality market". For Mills (1951, p. 182), a personality market is present in any social situation in which there is a "transfer of control over one individual's personal traits to another for a price, a sale of those traits which affect one's impressions upon others". Mills' rather crude concept somewhat resembles a Marxist approach to the sale of labour-power (which takes the partial transfer of control as given). Hochschild (1983) uses Mills

(1951) notion of a “personality market” as an inspiration for her theory of the managed heart and emotional labour, which addresses the production process. The research therefore takes inspiration from Hochschild and Mills, but reflects their ideas through a Marxist framework, which develops connections between such a personality market and the valorisation process and broader social relations. This chapter examines how hotel managers construct a particular type of labour market by filtering the reserve army of labour according to normative personality types. Constructing the labour market in such a way pushes the commodification of labour-power toward the commodification of subjectivity itself.

The research found that hospitality managers used pre-emptive methods of control such as personality testing and staffing agencies to construct a reserve army with the “right attitude”. Drawing on participant observation of application processes as well as testimony from worker interviews, this chapter explores the implications of these filtering mechanisms for workers experiences of employment and mobility in the hospitality industry. While hotels and agencies used pre-emptive methods of control, some workers managed to circumvent these methods through the use of personal networks. However, workers without such networks tended to be subject to mobility differentials and stuck in agency employment. As a result of contractual fragmentation, the use of agency working entrenched divisions in the labour market since agency workers could not access the same rights, training, and mobility as directly-employed hotel workers.

This chapter is divided into three parts. The first part of the chapter explores the way that hotels use both automated platforms and staffing agencies as labour market filters. It examines the use of such platforms as a method to assess workers’ subjectivity and as a form of normative control. It then discusses the use of agencies as merchants of labour-power, reproducing social divisions of labour. The second part of the chapter examines this division of labour in depth through the concept of the *agency division of labour*, which refers to the contractual stratification in the hospitality industry that is leveraged as a method of control. The third part of the chapter explores how workers navigate these dynamics in the labour market and their variegated experiences of mobility.

5.2 Pre-Emptive Control in the Labour Market

5.2.1 Filtering Personalities as Pre-Emptive Control

The recruitment of front-line staff in the hospitality industry tends to focus on attitudes toward scheduling flexibility and service orientation rather than formal skills or qualifications (Lee and Ok, 2015). Managers prefer to select staff with the required “attitudinal and behavioural characteristics” and “induct them into a quality culture” (Redman and Mathews, 1998, p. 60). This means that hotel recruitment was largely oriented around so-called “soft skills” or an individual’s capacity for “positive attitude and communication” as well as the “ability to work under pressure and be part of a team” (Hilltop Hotel). Hospitality work generally requires adhering to “display rules”, maintaining customer satisfaction while under pressure (Baum, 2002; Wood, 1997). Display rules control all facets of a worker’s presentation and behaviour as they must remain polite and friendly at all times, even in unpleasant situations with irate customers (see section 6.4.3). Research on display rules shows they are an integral part of human resource practices for recruitment, training and performance appraisals (Ashkanasy and Daus, 2002; Rafaeli and Sutton, 1987), yet the specific connections between personality profiles and the nature of hotel recruitment have not been fully explored (Zapf, 2002), especially from a Marxian perspective (Brook, 2013).

Research on call centres has shown employers also aim to recruit individuals who have the “right attitude” i.e. adept social skills and emotional flexibility (Callaghan and Thompson, 2002). This method of identity regulation is an effective means of organisational control (Alvesson et al., 2002). The notion of identity regulation can be extended and applied to the hospitality industry as a managerial technique to secure the “frontier of control”, which refers to the balance between co-operation and coercion in the labour process (Edwards, 1990; Goodrich, 1921). Edwards (1990) develops Goodrich’s (1921) idea of the frontier of control into a concept that describes who holds more “detailed control” over factors like shop-floor rules, the organisation of work tasks, or the movement of workers between jobs. It represents the “results of past struggles and institutionalises certain potential conflicts” that are related to the extraction of effort,

summarising the conditions under which a certain amount of labour is expended each day (Edwards, 1986, pp. 78–9). The emotional nature of hospitality work and the variability of customer demand drive managers to seek methods of pre-emptive control. Pre-emptive control entails the utilisation of various filtering mechanisms beyond the labour process itself, which allows employers to ensure workers have the “right attitude”.

The right attitude refers to those who are predisposed to deference, flexibility and the “soft” emotional skills required by front-line service; it meant that workers could “never say no” (Edvard, valet assistant, KRS Agency at Far East Hotel); it meant that they needed to be responsive and able to enthusiastically negotiate customer demands to maintain the illusion of “customer sovereignty” (Korczynski, 2002). Some workers demonstrated the “right attitude” in their responses to interview questions saying that “talking to customers is the best part” (Riza, hospitality assistant, Hilltop). Danilo (hospitality assistant, Hilltop), for example, strove to go “above and beyond” normal expectations because “helping people out, especially when there is a problem, feels good when you solve it”. Some workers took pride in their roles: “I want to make everyone happy; so people come back because they know when they do come to the hotel and I'm on the door, they'll get looked after” (Nyah, host, TKO at Medina Hotel). Recruitment strategies for both hotels and agencies aimed to find workers who reflected such attitudes. Phrases such as “attitude counts as much as skill” (All Weather Hotel website) and “hire the attitude and train the skill sets” (On the Job Agency website) were pervasive on company websites and literature. Agencies not only sold labour-power to hotels, but the labour-power of particular subjects—those with a “positive attitude”, a “can do approach” and who think that “housekeeping is more than just a job” (World Agency website).

Data collected from company websites and job application portals suggested that hotels’ strategies of emotional engagement with the customer, their “commitment” (Medina Hotel website) and “passion” (Hilltop Hotel) for “delivering exceptional guest experiences” (Medina Hotel and Hilltop Hotel website), was also used to sell an aspirational idea to workers, an opportunity to “build a life-long career with global

potential and a real sense of pride in work well done” (All Weather Hotel website). They used emotive language, evoking ideas of commitment similar to those that they marketed to customers:

We care about your individuality (Royal Hotel website); team members are at the heart of it all (Hilltop website); Our people are united in being proud to work. Their individual hopes, dreams and interests have made us the company we are today (Vacation Inn website).

Research suggests that ethical branding for loyalty cultivation amongst workers is a standard practice in the industry (Kim and Kim, 2016). Hotel websites featured statements by company executives about “transparency and accountability”, “sustainable tourism”, “responsible business” practices, and “dignity and respect” for all employees (All Weather Hotel website). They proclaimed, “equality for everyone, regardless of race, age, gender, gender identity, ethnicity, religion, or sexual orientation” (Media Hotel website), and promised to “promote individuals solely on the basis of their suitability for the job” (Vacation Inn website). Workers who shared the values of the hotel and who maintained an aspirational and positive attitude would be easier for managers to control. These soft methods of control aimed to cultivate brand loyalty by projecting a polished and aspirational image of the organisation and employee potential. The aspirational image is potentially a barrier in itself for certain people who do not share the values of the organisation. The next section explores how organisational values and the filtering of attitudes become codified through online platforms, automating certain aspect of human resources management and presenting barriers to labour market mobility.

5.2.2 Automated Human Resource Management

It has become standard practice in the hospitality industry to utilise personality testing as part of online application processes. In hotels, automated human resource management systems emerged in the early 2000’s as technological developments gave managers a more efficient way to process graduate applications for training programmes (Beal, 2004). Automating these processes allowed human resource managers to streamline recruitment and focus on more productive activities, typically non-routine cognitive

tasks that involve human interaction. Today, employers are using personality tests as a pre-emptive method of control with increased frequency (Youngman, 2017). Since hotel managers tend to value personal attributes more than general mental ability, companies use automated algorithmic methods to collect, evaluate, and sort relevant information about the personalities of each applicant before the interview stage (Tews et al., 2011; Tracey et al., 2007).

Online application platforms allow hotel companies to filter job candidate information into “low bandwidth” and “high bandwidth” data (Autor, 2001). Low bandwidth data are “objectively verifiable information such as education, credentials, experience, and salaries”, while high bandwidth data are “attributes such as quality, motivation, and fit” (Ibid., p. 30). High bandwidth data tend to be hard to verify without direct human interaction, yet hotels have developed sets of questions aimed to collect high bandwidth data through personality metrics, situational-judgement and decision-making capacity. Ethnographic data from participant observation and interviews indicated that industry-leading hotels used two phases of evaluation. The first phase involved a set of questions in which an algorithm effectively operated as a virtual psychologist, evaluating personalities of job-candidates. The second phase involved questions that evaluated situational or job-specific decision-making capacities. These online application systems stored a virtual CV, personal data, and provided internal alerts if a job became available that was relevant to the applicant. Sample questions from four major hotel chains – Amnesty Hotel, Perfect Hotel, Vacation Inn, and Hilltop Hotel – are explored below.

Amnesty Hotel’s first phase of filtering aimed to determine, “the qualities needed for a fulfilling career” and matched individual applicants with available jobs via personality testing. The first section consisted of a series of sixteen “life situations” in which applicants were asked to choose one of two reactions that “corresponded best” to what they would do. This was followed by thirty diverse statements ranging from “Art is important to me” to “I am a calm and peaceful person”. The applicant was instructed to respond on a five-point scale from “completely” to “not at all”. The questionnaire utilised a standard Five-Factor Model (FFM) of personality assessment (Barrick and Mount, 1991) to determine the applicant’s “profile”, “preferences”, and a scale of

“opportunities” at the company. Personality characteristics were paired: “realistic / open minded”, “flexible / meticulous”, “modest / enterprising”, “discreet / friendly”, and “balanced / spontaneous”, while individual preferences were grouped according to “thinking”, “action”, “relationships”, and “logistics”. The applicant’s potential opportunities in hotel positions were then presented according to personality profile and preferences. This process automated the time-consuming labour of human resource managers, yet it also served as a form of pre-emptive control, since individuals were required to essentially undergo a psychological evaluation before even progressing to the interview stage. By filtering job candidates based on personality assessments, employers can engineer the emotional capacity of their labour force as a means to reduce the indeterminacy of labour-power.

Perfect Hotel used a personality assessment for job applicants that consisted of eighteen statements grouped into three categories according to the hotel ethos: “Genuine, Confident, Committed”. Examples of such statements included: “It’s important to me that I do things in the right way”; “I’m always happy and enthusiastic when I start work”; and “I make sure that I treat different people in the same way”. The applicant could respond on a four-point scale ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree”. After completing the personality assessment, the applicant was provided with a profile, which they could then use to apply for specific positions. The resultant personality profiles were used as a means of pre-emptive control to filter candidates for particular jobs. If an applicant did not have the “right attitude”, the system would respond with a message saying, “We are sorry, but you do not fit the candidate profile for our available vacancies”. The research investigated the filtering by creating three separate profiles to apply for jobs and responding to the questions with different levels of enthusiasm for customer service and teamwork. The first profile was the least enthusiastic and received no option to apply. The second profile was a balance of enthusiasm and individualism. The third profile was strongly enthusiastic about service and teamwork. Only the third profile was invited to apply to available positions, which were for a doorman and office assistant.

Vacation Inn used a nearly identical system to Perfect Hotel. The same experiment was conducted with the Vacation Inn application system and even though there were advertised vacancies, only the profile with the most enthusiastic answers in the personality assessment was given the opportunity to apply for positions. The other two profiles received a rejection message that said the responses did not fit the personality profile for the type of people that they were recruiting. The algorithmic personality assessments were designed to filter out candidates with the “wrong” attitude, yet they could clearly be manipulated by workers if they understood the rules of the game.

The second phase of the filtering process entailed a scenario-specific capacity assessment aimed at determining candidates’ capacities for situational-judgement and decision-making. For example, Perfect Hotel required candidates to answer nine multiple-choice questions related to three different job scenarios they might find themselves in. These questions relied on an assumed tacit knowledge and judgement of workplace situations. An example of one of the situational questions is as follows:

- Q: 1) An experienced member of your team has been dealing with a demanding customer. You have every confidence they can handle the situation - but they have asked you to step in. What do you do?
- A) Tell them they have the experience to handle the situation and quickly give them some advice. After all, they are involved in the situation, so it is best that they deal with it.
 - B) Offer to speak to the customer as you have dealt with these kinds of situations before – your team member is going to need some support on this, so they can handle it confidently next time.
 - C) You tell them that they have been dealing with the customer really well and that you are confident that they can make the customer happy. They can come to you if they need more help.
 - D) Tell them to speak to a team member who recently dealt with a similar challenge. It’s a chance for them to learn from each other.

The correct response is not entirely clear; either B or C would seem to be a reasonable response, yet it depends very much on the managerial culture of the organisation. Perfect Hotel’s feedback system indicated that the correct answer was B but did not give further feedback explaining why. The researcher applied to this position twice using two different profiles, the first of which failed to answer questions correctly, while the second was successful and resulted in an interview offer. Candidates were automatically

sorted based on their answers before they progressed to the next stage. While sorting job candidates is a necessary practice in all industries, the hospitality industry is distinguished by the fact that personality is primary elevating attitude over skill, which is viewed as a quasi-inherent or natural capacity of certain subjectivities.

Hilltop Hotels used a similar set of questions designed to assess a candidate's judgement in situations that "staff, guests and customers commonly experience". Candidates were given a situation and asked to indicate the most appropriate response, while considering "the need to satisfy the customer". For example:

Q: 1) From across the lobby, you see a guest drop an envelope without realizing it. The guest is near the lobby door and about to walk outside. What is your best response to this situation?

- A. Pick up the envelope so you can give it to the guest when he returns to the hotel.
- B. Yell to the guest to let him know he dropped his envelope.
- C. Pick up the envelope and hurry to catch the guest so you can give it to him.
- D. Alert the Front Desk attendant to call the guest and let him know about the envelope.

In contrast to Perfect Hotel, Hilltop's platform provided job candidates feedback on their answers, indicating that in this case the most appropriate response was "C". The platform explained that response "A" and Response "D" actually delayed help to the guest when they needed it immediately. Response "B" was also incorrect, because "it is not appropriate to yell across the lobby". The feedback served as a means of inducting job seekers into the company culture and policies. At the same time, it was subject to manipulation as several workers mentioned how they would game the process, attempting multiple applications if they failed to answer correctly (see section 5.4).

After these ten situational questions, there were an additional seventeen questions designed to gather "background information" on applicants, who were instructed to select the one response that "gives the most accurate and honest description". For example:

Q: 11) In your work and school experiences, how did you solve a difficult work assignment?

- A. I carefully thought about the problem and solved it myself

- B. I talked it over with my co-workers, classmates, or friends to help me solve the problem
- C. I talked it over with my supervisor, teacher, or other advisor to help me solve the problem
- D. I did not think about the problem for a few days so that I could solve it with a new outlook
- E. I have not had any work or school experience

The platform indicated that there were not “correct” answers for the background questions. However, hotel managers were interested in “team players” who were deferential, non-combative, and social such that they would be “passionate about delivering exceptional guest experiences” as stated on the Hilltop hotel website. It would be naïve to assume that individuals would always answer truthfully, if it would hurt their chances of getting the job. Research has shown that complex issues arise when personality tests are used to substitute human capacities and judgement in personnel selection (Arthur et al., 2001). Ironically, while management intended to use this data to further filter the labour market, research has shown that many job applicants are motivated to fake or distort their responses in an attempt to match the profile of a strong job candidate (O’Neill et al., 2013). “Faking” is estimated to occur in 30 to 50 per cent of job applicants (Griffith et al., 2007). The circumvention of these filtering mechanisms was borne out in the interview data (see section 5.4.1).

This section explored how hotel managers have developed a method of pre-emptive control through the algorithmic filtering of potential workers, yet it is questionable how effective this strategy is in practice. Hotel managers aimed to hire the “right” individual, the “guest experience champion” who is “approachable, naturally friendly, thoughtful and quick-thinking” (Vacation Inn) and who can produce an experience that is “heartfelt, exceptional and memorable” (Hilltop Hotel). The production of meaningful experiences is a necessarily incomplete and subjective process. Hospitality work relies on tacit knowledge and intuition that is difficult to codify and quantify, which means that the human judgement will remain central in the labour process and labour market. As Polanyi (1967, p. 4) observes, “We know more than we can tell”.

The enduring centrality of human labour-power in hospitality work points to an important tension between the use of technology by hotel managers to reduce the

indeterminacy of the labour process and the failure of that technology to meet the demands of employers. The lack of an effective technological fix to the problem of recruitment in hospitality partly explains the persistence of various “low road” practices in the hospitality industry (Gill and Meyer, 2008). Low road refers to high-control strategies that are designed to produce reliable performance but emphasise cost control and competition based on price. There is not incentive to invest in technological developments to make labour more efficient if labour-power is available at a low price. Despite the widespread adoption of computerised filtering mechanisms for job candidates, hotels in the study continued to rely on agency services and personal networks to recruit labour.

5.2.3 Agencies as Merchants of Labour-Power

Staffing agencies have taken advantage of hotels’ reliance on low-road strategies by offering service and cost-control guarantees. Agencies operate as middlemen in the hospitality labour market, allowing hotels to essentially trial potential employees without any obligation to provide them with the same basic rights as permanent employees. Hotels have historically used agencies in a labour supply chain relationship (Soltani and Wilkinson, 2010), yet there is a growing tendency for hotels to rely on them long-term for “distancing flexibility” which mitigates labour costs through an outsourced company (Lai et al., 2008). Data from worker interviews suggests that agencies were also used as a method of pre-emptive control in the labour market and a disciplinary mechanism in the labour process. This section will explore how agencies shape the hospitality labour market and how they are used as a means to control labour by hotels.

Hotels in the study primarily used agencies for “vendor managed services” (Forde et al., 2008; Forde and Slater, 2011) in which hotels provided agencies with supervisory powers and permanent offices on site. These services were most prevalent in housekeeping and cleaning departments. For example, Damani (Head Housekeeper, World Agency for Vacation Inn) was employed full-time by an agency and supervised agency-contracted room attendants from an independent office in the hotel itself. She reported solely to the general manager of the hotel and the head office at World Agency.

Hotels in the study also used what Forde and Slater (2011) call a “preferred supplier”. In this arrangement, the hotel requests a specific number of workers from the agency each day. All Service Agency, for example, supplied multiple services to Hilltop, from events catering to housekeeping, which they marketed as their speciality; “100 per cent of our operational team and over 50 per cent of our board of directors are ex-housekeepers”. In a preferred supplier relationship like the one between All Service Agency and Hilltop Hotel, the agency catered to all of their client’s housekeeping and cleaning needs, but the hotel also used other agencies if their preferred supplier could not provide staff or services. Chefs, for example, would be supplied by On the Job Agency to Hilltop for “spot contracts” since the agency could “provide an entire front and back of house team to support a banquet for one night”. Ultimately the power resides in the buyer of the service, since hotel companies are much larger than agencies. The power imbalance meant that small agencies had to compete for contracts, which drove down the prices of labour-power.

To acquire contracts from hotels, agencies imitated the rhetoric and recruitment strategies of hotel companies in their online advertisements and at trade fairs like the Big Hospitality Conversation hosted by the BHA. They often used the exact same language, especially when it came to the attitudes of individual workers:

We pride ourselves on working both ethically and legally (All Service Agency); We treat our employees with the respect that they deserve (KRS Agency); We provide polite, punctual people who take pride in their appearance – bubbly vivacious characters (On the Job Agency).

The demand for workers with the “right attitude” directly shaped the stated strategies of agencies that supplied workers to hotels. Just Clean Agency’s sales pitch claimed that they “invest heavily in making sure all of [their] people have the right attitude, skills and guest focus”. Similarly, All Service Agency emphasised the centrality of personality in their selection and supply process; “we get to know what kind of personalities you like”. Some companies went even further and tailored personality types for different roles. For example:

Our skill at matching room attendants with the correct hotel is the benchmark in the industry; We look for people with a ‘team’ personality in the kitchen - as well as an ethic of hard work and a ‘nothing’s too much trouble’ attitude.

On the Job Agency claimed to use separate tailored assessments for different roles and that candidates would complete skill assessments led by industry professionals. Andy (manager, On the Job Agency) described their strategy:

We hire the attitude and train the skill sets. Things like interpersonal skills are a kind of inherent personal attribute that we can’t necessarily train. Our staff provide consistent magic moments...a coffee served with a smile can bring as much enjoyment as a bottle of vintage champagne.

His rhetoric and strategy directly echoed hotel display rules requiring employees to “always smile” (Arabian Hotel) and “first impressions are made with a smile” (Amnesty Hotel).

As evidenced by online branding and managerial accounts, agencies attempted to distinguish their particular service through selling a committed workforce with the “right attitude”. On the Job and All Service Agency, for example, both had online application systems that required the applicant to answer set of questions designed to assess personality characteristics in a similar manner to the hotels discussed in section 5.2.2. However, participant observation and interviews indicated that in reality, “low road” labour market practices primarily characterised agency (Gill and Meyer, 2008). The tests provided by On the Job and All Service Agency were principally comprised of questions designed to test the basic competency in the English language needed for cleaning jobs. For example, a computer screen displayed an image of a vacuum cleaner with four words underneath and job applicants had to choose the correct one. Agencies treated workers as simply “warm bodies” (Parker, 1994) to be sent to hotels to meet their quota. This is partially due to the tight margins and highly competitive nature of agency recruitment. In contracting-out services and recruitment to agencies, hotels also contributed to social divisions of labour between permanent employees and agency workers. This is further evidenced by the poor job quality and treatment reported by workers and reproduced mobility differentials (Alberti, 2014) and contractual divisions of labour explored in the next section.

5.3 The Agency Division of Labour

5.3.1 Contractual Stratification at Work

The labour contract and rights of workers are highly influential in shaping individuals' experiences of navigating the labour market and labour process. The research found that hospitality managers took advantage of the different legal status between employee contracts, worker contracts, and self-employed contracts to control workers. Rights under the Working Time Regulations [WTR] (*The Working Time Regulations*, 1998) are stratified as a result of workers' contractual statuses. An individual is classed as an *employee* if they have an employment contract, which is usually the case if they meet the following criteria: they undertake personal service in return for remuneration; they are subject to a high degree of control by the employer; and the employer is obligated to provide work while the employee is obligated to do that work. Employees are generally entitled to the rights set out under the Employment Rights Act [ERA] as long as they have been continuously employed for a minimum of two years (as of 2012). These rights include a minimum number of paid days holiday each year, rest breaks, and restrictions on excessive night work (*Employment Rights Act*, 1996).

An individual is classed as a *worker* if they have a contract of service in return for remuneration, though without the same degree of control or mutuality of obligation that characterises a contract of employment. *Workers* are not entitled to the full range of protection rights that employees have, including most of the rights under the ERA. However, they are entitled to: the National Minimum Wage (NMW); protection against unlawful deductions from wages; the rights under the WTR; the rights afforded to part-time workers and fixed-term workers; protection against detriment because of 'whistleblowing'; and generally, the protection of the Equality Act (*Equality Act*, 2010). Individuals are not considered workers if they are doing work on behalf of their own business, such as when the employer is a customer or client. These individuals are often classed as *self-employed*, especially if they bid for contracts or give quotes to get work and are responsible for paying their own National Insurance contributions and tax.

Individuals may also be classed as self-employed if they do not receive holiday or sick pay.

The Agency Workers Regulations [ARW] states that after a 12-week qualifying period, agency workers are entitled to the same pay and other “basic working conditions” as equivalent permanent staff (*The Agency Workers Regulations*, 2010). It also entitles them to collective facilities and to information about employment vacancies from the first day of their assignment. Agency workers are entitled to the NMW if they satisfy the definition of “worker” either under section 54 of the National Minimum Wage Act [NMWA] or the agency working provisions in the NMWA (*National Minimum Wage Act*, 1998); similarly, with the WTR. The Posted Workers Directive [PWD] (96/71/EC) ensures that workers who are sent by their employers to perform temporary work in other EU member states must have the protection of the same “floor of employment rights” available to other workers employed in the host country.

The research revealed that some agencies used clauses in their contracts to undermine the rights of workers by classifying them as self-employed. For example, All Service Agency claimed to have “more than 4,500 employees” who serviced “over 6,500,000 rooms each year” for large international clients including those in this study such as Redline Management, Hilltop Hotels, and Transnational Hotel Group. They claimed in their values statement that they did “not engage in any unethical or illegal methods of working such as paying staff by the room cleaned or using self-employed workers”. Yet their contracts for front of house staff (waiters and bartenders) explicitly stated that workers were self-employed:

2.1 These terms constitute a contract for services between the Employment Business and the Temporary Worker and they govern all assignments undertaken by the Temporary Worker. However, no contract shall exist between the Employment Business and the Temporary Worker between Assignments. 2.2 For the avoidance of doubt, these Terms shall not give rise to a contract of employment between the Employment Business and the Temporary Worker. The Temporary Worker is engaged as a self-employed worker, although the Employment Business is required to make statutory deductions from his/her remuneration in accordance with clause 4.1.

The “self-employment” classification nullifies the workers’ rights outlined above. All Service Agency avoided the AWR through a bogus “self-employment” clause and the

statement: “The Temporary Worker is not obliged to accept any assignments offered by the employment business”. The contracts also had no provision for holiday or sick pay:

The temporary worker is not entitled to receive payment from the Employment Business or Clients for the time not spent on Assignment whether in respect of holidays, illness or absence for any other reason unless otherwise agreed.

However, All Service Agency did meet the legal requirement for annual leave “Under the Working Times Regulations 1998, the Temporary Worker is entitled to 5.6 weeks paid leave per year”.

For individuals in the housekeeping department, All Service Agency used an employment contract. However, they found another way to undermine mutuality of obligation between the employer and employees. They did this by only guaranteeing four hours a week on a weekly rota system, which is effectively a “zero-hours” contract (Adams and Deakin, 2014). The agency nonetheless reserved the right to require the employee to work up to and exceeding 37.5 hours per week with no special provision for overtime:

The Company guarantees to provide you with a minimum of four hours work each week. You will not normally be required to work more than 37.5 hours a week. Any hours worked in excess of 37.5 hours a week will be paid at your normal hourly rate of pay.

All Service Agency also took advantage of the clause in the AWR called the “Swedish derogation”. This clause exempts an employment agency from having to pay the worker the same rate of pay as workers who are directly employed by the client, as long as the agency directly employs the individual and guarantees to pay them for at least four weeks. As explored in chapter seven, the data indicated that agency workers were consistently paid less than hotel employees for the same work. The circumvention of labour laws by classifying workers as self-employed and the use of the Swedish derogation institutionalised a contractual rift at the point of hire. Workers were largely unaware of the contractual stratification unless they were part of a union.

Research has shown that agencies can give hotel managers advantages in terms of low labour costs and flexible” contracts that protect “core” departments (Geary, 1992; Houseman, 2001; Lai and Baum, 2005; McDowell et al., 2008). The differences between

“employee” and “worker” contracts gave hotel managers a very effective tool to control labour supply. In preferred supplier arrangements, agencies effectively transferred staff away from direct employment with the hotel to the agency. This was especially common in housekeeping departments. Hotels managers shifted risk and accountability to the agency, so they could say “I have a relationship with my subcontractor” rather than with their employee (Henry, Union Organiser, Unite Hotel and Restaurant Workers Branch). Henry described this as a contractual shift from an “employer-employee relationship” to an “employer-worker relationship”. This is because an employment contract legally implies mutuality of obligation, while a worker contract does not.

Agencies put contractual distance between hotel employees and agency workers that make it easy to filter. Personality and behavioural profiles of agency workers can influence decisions regarding whether to maintain a relationship with them (Soltani and Wilkinson, 2010). For example, Georgie (human resource manager, Redline Management at Vacation Inn) explained that agencies are used because managers didn’t have to do very much work to find or train workers:

We don't have to do much; we would just do a mini interview before formal induction because we know how they work. We just say ‘Ok, we want you in this hotel. Do you want to be here, do you want to be with us?’ and that’s it.

Workers’ experiences of navigating the labour market corroborated Georgie’s account (see section 5.4 for more detailed account). Ramon (receptionist, Vacation Inn) said that hotels used agencies as a filtering mechanism, “as a way of getting to know certain employees” or “try before you buy” labour-power. If the hotel managers liked an agency worker’s “attitude and aptitude for work”, then managers would then “employ them full-time on permanent contracts”. He had worked for two years as an agency worker before receiving full-time employment with the hotel.

5.3.2 Modularity and the Agency Division of Labour

The contractual stratification and manipulation examined in the previous section allowed hotel managers to control labour in a way that adapted to the variability of customer expectation and demand in hospitality. The research found that managers tended

concentrated directly employed workers on permanent contracts in particular departments and roles. Individuals directly employed by the hotel generally had access to internal labour markets and personal development schemes that by default excluded agency workers. Agency workers on non-standard contracts tended to be concentrated in housekeeping departments or in other low-paid manual labour jobs. The concentration of agency and other non-standard employment contracts in specific roles constitutes the *agency division of labour*. The agency division of labour describes not only the detailed division of labour in the workplace, but also the social division of labour in a broader context. The social division of labour is a concept that Braverman (1974) takes from Marx (1976, see pp. 470-80); it refers to the increasing specialisation that arises as a result of the development of the means of production and the exchange between the resultant specialist spheres.

Agencies act as intermediaries that broker the sale of labour-power as means of production to hotels, which then deploy that labour-power as concrete labour to produce the hospitality experience. This labour-power must therefore be modular to accommodate the needs of hotels. Modularity refers to the use of interchangeable parts in the production of an object. Huws (2014) uses this term to describe the deskilled and digitally-mediated labour market. Huw's concept is applied in this study to explain the interchangeability of certain labour processes within hospitality work. Modular labour is bought and sold through agency contracting as well as through interdepartmental contracting within hotels themselves. Departments that were heavily reliant on modular labour tended to be those that utilised low-skilled, non-routine manual labour with minimal guest interaction such as housekeeping and catering events. However, food and beverage departments also occasionally used higher-skilled modular labour for spot contracts to source workers, especially if demand was higher than the primary contractor's available labour-power.

Managers reported that agency workers were primarily used for jobs that required minimal company-specific knowledge about the brand, sales systems, and skill. Hotels in the study were heavily reliant upon computer programs like Micros that required specialist training, which only trained permanent staff could properly master. Concierges

and receptionists for example, needed an in-depth knowledge of the software that Transnational Hotel used to track guests' tastes "from how they take their coffee and eggs, to what sort of amenities to provide in the rooms, and what time they like start the day" (Emily, front office manager, Transnational Hotel Group). Hotel managers needed to employ and train people in roles like this directly because the jobs were:

"based on information in the hotel, like what services are available and at what times. You cannot bring one agency in and tomorrow another agency, it's too much information" (Ammon, operations manager, Amnesty Hotel).

This proprietary knowledge largely prevented hotels from using agency workers in front desk and other roles.

The most consistent use of agency labour was in housekeeping departments. "As is probably quite typical with a London property, 95 per cent of our housekeeping department is outsourced through an agency" (Georgie, HR Manager, Vacation Inn). It was "common to only have supervisors employed by the hotel, but have everyone else agency" (Elwira, room attendant, All Service Agency at Hilltop Hotel). At Vacation Inn, they only employed "six team members" of the housekeeping and the facilities departments directly, which included a manager, assistant manager, and a supervisor for each department. Georgie justified this in terms of flexibility and ease of control; "it is a lot easier to rely on an agency to provide us with the staff that we need on a daily basis; it's easier to control numbers and team members that way". Grand Budget Hotel also "only employed the supervisors" of various departments and used up to fifteen agency staff in housekeeping every day (Elena, room cleaning supervisor, Grand Budget Hotel). The widespread use of agencies to manage room attendants and other cleaning roles was industry standard.

While the use of agency labour in other departments was "not as extensive as housekeeping" (Georgie), managers nonetheless used agencies to supplement or substitute the labour of permanent employees in food and beverage-related roles such as bartenders, wait staff, cooks, porters, and general assistants. For example, before the start of large banquet events at Hilltop Hotel, there were usually around twenty-five to forty agency workers contracted to work a four-hour shift. Their labour was

rudimentary, requiring only basic customer-services skills and the capacity to carry large, hot plates or trays of food if they were providing “silver service” (see section 6.4.2). These workers were treated as interchangeable or even disposable, since they could be “sent home on the whim of a supervisor” (Nazan, All Service Agency at Hilltop). Permanent employees were typically left in charge of the agency workers, maintaining a hierarchy in every occupation. Hotel managers also occasionally relied on agencies to supply cooks or chefs on demand. Agency cooks were contracted to carry out basic tasks on the “mis en place” (daily list of tasks) such as preparing vegetables or portioning ingredients. Managers would order chefs from the agency the day before they needed them or sometimes as late as the morning of the same day for the dinner shift; “You can always choose. You call up and say, ‘I just want a commis chef’ or ‘I want a chef de partie’ and they send someone over” (Edith, chef de partie, All Weather Hotel).

This section explored how hotel managers used agency workers as modular labour to meet their labour needs. The degree of modularity corresponded less to a specific labour process and more to the level of proprietary knowledge that a role required. The institutionalised reliance on agency workers for particular jobs is termed the agency division of labour. The agency division of labour limited workers’ rights and access to resources and generates a social division of labour because workers on agency contracts are concentrated in low-waged roles. Hotel managers used this agency division of labour to their advantage at the expense of workers. The use of agency workers for internal roles also undermined the bargaining power of permanent employees as it allowed managers to cover labour shortages easily, reducing the negative consequences for the hotel that might result from managers dismissing employees or employees withdrawing their labour-power. The consequences of this contractual stratification for workers experiences in navigating the external and internal labour market are explored in the next section.

5.4 Workers Navigating the Labour Market

5.4.1 Circumventing Pre-Emptive Control

Workers' accounts of their experiences of finding employment provided further evidence of the pre-emptive control strategies outlined above. However, these accounts also revealed that automated attempts to filter candidates based on personality assessments were ineffective, as respondents circumvented them through informal networks. Informal methods generally entail using personal networks and favours to acquire employment, while formal methods entail using the services of recruitment companies or answering advertisements in print or online classifieds (Green, 2012). The move to an online job market has been shown to allow jobseekers to identify a greater number of potential jobs in a shorter time and at less cost (Green, 2012). However, the filtering methods companies use to militate against excessive applications has introduced new normative barriers to workers seeking employment in hospitality, without adding any efficiencies. For example, Edzai (grill chef, First Inn) "applied to thousands of jobs" online; "I could do up to 900 easy, just click send". Dante (food and beverage assistant, Sandy Hotel) sent "fifteen to twenty applications a week" for months before he found work. Even with the use of automated application technology for sorting through high and low bandwidth data, the process can be time-consuming and imprecise, having adverse consequences for both applicants and employers alike. This can encourage workers to circumvent formal processes in favour of referrals through social networks (Nunn, 2010).

Studies have shown that between 30 per cent and 50 per cent of jobs in hospitality are filled through the use of informal social networks (Galeotti and Merlino, 2014; Holzer, 1987; Merlino, 2014). There are some distinct short-term advantages to using informal methods of hiring. For example, Luther (chef de partie, First Boutique Hotel) described an informal monopoly situation in his hotel kitchen, where managers relied on a network of Latin American migrants for kitchen porter roles who would also find their own replacements: "These guys had a little monopoly over who got the jobs for these restaurants. If someone was going to quit, they would just get someone else to work for

them”. Workers tended to refer one another to jobs within the industry. Ramon (night receptionist, Vacation Inn), for example, acquired his current job through a colleague’s referral who worked for the same company. Sara (waitress, Royal Hotel) applied directly to the hotel through their website, yet knew someone in the hotel, which she said got her the job. Leveraging personal connections in this way was common. Riza (hospitality assistant, Hilltop Hotels) gained employment through her uncle who worked at the hotel. Rez, (server, TKO Restaurant at Medina Hotel) had a cousin who worked at Medina; “it was friends and family, that's why everyone had connections with everyone; we all had links between each other”. Through informal methods, workers subverted the formal filtering mechanisms that hotel companies had in place.

Informal methods were also used for labour market mobility. For example, Danilo (hospitality assistant, Hilltop Hotel) was offered a supervisory role within the hotel based on his personal connection with a manager. He emphasised his “attitude” and informal connections in justifying his advancement:

We had a connection and we built a friendship. It’s up to you to learn and your job security is sometimes up to you and depends on your attitude. I said ‘I want to learn from you. I want to do this. I want to learn from you. I want to shadow you.’ And he said ‘yes, why not?’ He is now starting to train me as a manager.

Danilo’s account emphasises the importance of personal networks and attitude in navigating the hospitality labour market. For hotel employees, career advancement relied on cultivating informal relationships with managers as a means for internal advancement. Ramon (night receptionist, Vacation Inn) first worked as a kitchen porter, a job he found through a friend in the hotel. From there, he worked in several different roles: “on the executive floor as a waiter and then on to the switchboard and then from the switch board to reception”. He said he never used any formal training programmes, but rather cultivated relationships with upper managers. Similarly, Valentino (doorman, Lux Hotel) advanced from porter through to his position as a doorman through demonstrating his “personal commitment” to the hotel.

Informality can give advantages to those workers who have made connections with management in the hospitality industry, yet this can also bolster social divisions of

labour for those who are unable to cultivate such informal networks. For example, several agency workers noted that they acquired their first job in the UK through a friend, by showing up in person at an agency office. Kasia (night housekeeping supervisor, West London hotel), for example, got a job as an agency cleaner “after two days in the country” because her cousin had started in the same role and still worked at the company. “Almost all people start as agency cleaner; this is the easy way to find some job [sic] in England” she said. Elena (housekeeping supervisor, Grand Budget Hotel) was recruited from Bulgaria to be a domestic servant in London and struggled to find other work due to language barriers. Eventually, another Bulgarian agency worker she knew got her a job as an agency cleaner; “I walked in, the manager interviewed me right there and asked if I could start tomorrow... so I do it” (Elena). Five years later, she was supervising agency workers like Lala (room attendant, Just Clean Agency) at Grand Budget Hotel, who obtained work in a similar fashion. Ignacio (room attendant On the Job Agency) also found work through a friend who told him the address of the agency and he brought his “CV, covering letter, everything” straight to the office. Ramona (supervisor, All Service Agency) explained that the agency preferred to recruit through friends or family, and that the agency provided monetary incentives for referrals, bolstering the reliance on personal networks.

Hospitality workers experiences in the labour market resonate with research on low-waged workers in other industries. Moriarty et al. (2012) found that it is common for companies to use their own employees as recruitment agents, especially for low-paid jobs. Workers in low-waged jobs also tend to use informal methods because this reduces their wage losses in between jobs (Green, 2012; Merlino, 2014). Green (2012) found that jobs gained through informal methods are more associated with unstable employment. However, informal processes can also have unintended consequences that disadvantage certain groups of workers. For example, information about available jobs might become restricted to particular ethnic groups who are already established in the company, creating nepotistic practices (McGovern et al., 2007). This often manifests itself as ethnic concentration within specific jobs such as housekeeping (McDowell et al., 2007). It also allows employers to indirectly influence labour migration by delegating responsibility for selecting the “right” workers to migrant workers themselves

(Findlay and McCollum, 2013) . For example, 37.1 per cent of housekeepers and 75.3 per cent of waiters and waitresses in the UK are EU nationals (KPMG, 2017), with even higher concentrations in London, since roughly 70 per cent of London’s hospitality workforce are migrants (PwC, 2017). Due to the fact that certain departments rely heavily on agencies (Wood, 1997) for both preferred supplier and vendor managed services (Forde and Slater, 2011), informal methods in the labour market are likely to reproduce social divisions of labour, especially between workers on agency contracts and hotel employees.

5.4.2 Mobility Differentials

Smith (2006, p. 391) defines “mobility power” for workers as the “the time involved with network building, the resources used at work for the planning of job moves, and the use of mobility threats to create strategic rewards”. Alberti (2014, p. 11) links the concept of mobility power to migration and employment status (along with the intersections of race, gender, age, and class), to describe the “mobility differentials” of migrant workers. This section builds on these insights, yet focuses specifically on the agency division of labour as a mediating factor for hospitality workers’ mobility differentials in the industry. The research found that mobility differentials varied largely based on the agency division of labour within the industry. The lack of upward mobility for agency workers in turn reproduced social divisions of labour.

There was a stark contrast between the image of mobility that hotels portrayed and reality for workers. Hotels claimed to have a meritocratic ethos, with training opportunities for “local people to start and grow their careers in the hospitality industry” (Vacation Inn). However, workers’ experiences contradicted these meritocratic claims. As Henry (organiser, Unite Hotel and Restaurant Workers Branch) explained: “of course they still all say that they want to train you and improve you. But you look at the operations and management of the industry and it’s all very male ...mainly white British”. Ramon said that there was little prospect of advancement to an upper management role without a degree in hospitality or business management, the fees and time for which are prohibitively expensive for the vast majority of workers. Henry

commented on the disconnect between managerial rhetoric and reality, as “less and less people are making it from the bottom ranks and most people now are coming in through graduate traineeships”. The agency division of labour marks these mobility differentials, which were reproduced through differences in access to training, personal mentorship and networks.

Hotel training programmes relied on third-party e-learning platforms, who would embed each hotel’s brand identity into a custom programme. These programmes aimed to channel individuals’ emotional intelligence toward a particular “service orientation”, that is, how an employee regards customer expectations when delivering the hospitality experience (Lee and Ok, 2015). E-learning platforms were structured in such a way that employees could complete training at their own pace, automatically generating results and feedback after each course. For example, Sherif (room service, Arabian Hotel) used a programme called Crab Ink (a pseudonym), which provided “courses to get the maximum return on investment for every minute-hour learners spend on learning”. Crab Ink guaranteed that companies who used their service “have constantly shown a reduction in operational costs, an increase in profits, a decrease in staff turnover, and an increase in sales.” This reflects a growing trend of externalised training programmes based around e-learning (Cobanoglu et al., 2007; Kim et al., 2011).

The shift to such platforms may offer hotel employees opportunities for advancement, however agency workers had limited access to such platforms. While some agencies in the study offered their own limited training, they charged workers fees for it. Agency training services thus profited not only from their clients, but from individual workers themselves. Agency workers generally receive less training than their permanent colleagues in the same workplaces (Tregaskis et al., 1998). However, charging agency workers for training is an unexplored phenomenon (see section 7.4 for more in-depth exploration). On the Job Agency claimed to provide “flexible training solutions” through a range of certified qualifications that could be completed online. These included short courses on food hygiene, health and safety, first aid, personal licensing, and accredited classroom-based training. The Agency also worked with clients to “plan, develop, and run bespoke training courses”. However, if agency workers wanted to participate, they

were charged fees ranging from £13.75 (Ex-VAT) for an online “CIEH Introduction to First Aid Awareness” to £206.00 (Ex-VAT) for a “Level 2 Award for Personal License Holders APLH”. Some of these fees would be prohibitively expensive for many agency workers, whose average earnings are just above the minimum wage (Forde et al., 2008).

5.4.3 The Agency as a Shackling Device

Due to the persistence of informality in the labour market and hotel companies’ reliance on agencies as a filtering mechanism, a core-periphery dynamic characterises work in the hospitality industry. Contractual stratification thus acts as a “shackling device”, entrenching divisions in the labour market, rather than providing a means for workers to move from an insecure periphery to a stable core (Knox, 2014, 2010). While migrant agency workers sometimes used “transnational exit” (Alberti, 2014, p. 12), to free themselves from the cycle of low-waged precarious jobs, many did not have that option. Agency workers often treated hospitality work as a “stopover” to better jobs yet got “stuck” (Janta et al., 2011; Janta and Ladkin, 2009; Kelliher and Riley, 2002). The consequences of the agency division of labour were readily apparent to hotel employees and agency workers. Workers and employees, each with different rights, worked alongside one another performing the same concrete labour. “Most of the agency workers” at Hilltop “have had their jobs for years” (Danilo, food and beverage assistant, Hilltop). They are the same people, “doing the exact same work as the regular employees do” (Danilo). For example, Lala (Room attendant, Just Clean Agency) worked full-time for the agency at the same hotel for three years yet was never offered direct employment. Damani (head housekeeper) worked for eight years as a housekeeper at Vacation Inn, but was never offered a permanent contract.

Elena (housekeeping supervisor, Grand Budget Hotel) felt trapped in her job. She was a supervisor with over five years’ experience, but earned only £7.20 per hour. She tried several different hotels in London, but they were all the same:

If you are too tired or disappointed, you leave, and you go to another hotel because you think you will find more fairness you won’t. All hotels are the same. You go in a circle. There are no better jobs. Same conditions.

From Elena's perspective, "The agencies are useless". Edvard (valet assistant, KRS Agency) worked for two and half years for the same agency at Far East Hotel, doing the same job as hotel employees but without the stability or benefits of an employment contract. He was frustrated with the hotel management, who claimed that the maximum number of positions for his role were filled; "if someone would leave, then I could apply for the position, but otherwise I am stuck; I don't feel secure". The agency refused to give Edvard (valet assistant, KRS Agency) the same pay and benefits as hotel employees, which is illegal under the AWR (2010) because he worked for the company over two years.

The insecurity that accompanied agency work could lead to other difficult legal situations. Workers reported multiple cases in which colleagues were discovered with "fake documents" that they had purchased. In one case, this led to the hotel cancelling their contract with the agency and all the housekeepers losing weeks of work (Kasia, night room division coordinator, West London Hotel). She said her colleague had "bought Portuguese passports for her sister and her mama", both of which worked for the agency. When hotel managers discovered this illegal activity, "80 per cent of staff were cut, many of which were legal" (Kasia). There were also cases of "pay to work" arrangements that exploited the precarious position of migrants and the fact that there is little oversight in the industry (Migration Advisory Committee, 2014). At Empire hotel, Ignacio (On the Job Agency) said that a few of his colleagues had paid to get permanent positions with the hotel; "they got their position in the hotel from agency, so they pay, I don't know how much, £500-£600, so they get a permanent job with housekeeping". When he first arrived in the UK, a friend told him that he had two options, "just go straight away to the staff office or you need to pay to the agency...and you can get a better position". This speaks to the growing issue of the enforcement of labour law and the continued issues faced by migrant workers in the UK at the hands of gangmasters. In 2013, an employer could expect an inspection from HMRC once every 250 years and a prosecution once in a million years (Clark and Herman, 2017; Migration Advisory Committee, 2014).

The disregard for both employment law and ethics speaks to the problems of

subcontracting in an industry already known for its exploitative conditions and lack of accountability. The agency division of labour not only limited professional advancement, but also deepened social divisions through wage differentials. Lala (room attendant, Just Clean) considered the use of agencies a “parasite system” and thought they had no place in the industry; “We don’t need agency [sic]. We don’t need someone to sell me. I know my value. I don’t want these agencies that just rob the people”. Agencies are used by hotel managers as a means to filter the labour market, yet ultimately serve as a shackling device for workers. The exploitative conditions of the industry are exacerbated by the agency division of labour, which limits the mobility and employment opportunities of workers without the informal networks or resources to circumvent the filtering mechanisms hotels have in place.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter examined how online application platforms and staffing agencies were used as a means of pre-emptive control at the level of labour market before workers were engaged at the level of the labour process itself. Part one of this chapter explored how automated recruitment processes in hotels were designed to filter the attitudes of potential employees. Part two of this chapter examined the contractual basis for the agency division of labour, which represents both detailed and social divisions of labour as theorised by Braverman (1974) and Marx (1976). Part three explored how workers navigated the labour market in relation to these pre-emptive controls, how they circumvented some of the pre-emptive controls, yet in relying on informal networks, actually reinforced the mobility differentials associated with the agency division of labour. Employers leveraged the contractual status to secure a higher rate of exploitation, a theme explored further in chapter seven.

Managers’ recruitment strategies were shaped by their reliance on automated personality and decision-making assessments designed to pre-emptively limit applicants who did not fit into a normative profile i.e. those deemed capable to adhere to company “display rules”. These automated programmes were designed to produce taxonomies of applicants that ensured the “right” reserve army of job seekers. In addition to these

automated filtering methods, the research found that hotels externalised recruitment by using agencies as an additional means to filter workers. Hotel managers divided the labour market by relying on staffing agencies to supply workers for modular jobs that required minimal proprietary knowledge of hotel systems. The institution of this division of labour presented a number of issues for workers. The manipulation of contractual terms and conditions undermined workers' rights and fragmented the labour market. However, the data indicated that workers largely circumvented automated filtering mechanisms through informal networks. There is an enduring tension between the formal rules for finding employees with the "right attitude" and the informal realities of workers' behaviour as social subjects, who rely on each other to navigate their working lives. Yet the same reliance on informal methods also exacerbated the stratification caused by the agency division of labour.

This chapter contributes to research on hospitality work by exploring the means of pre-emptive control that hotel workers had to navigate in the labour market. The effects of these filtering mechanisms are underexplored in the labour process literature, especially from a Marxist perspective. Managers attempted to influence the reserve army of hospitality labour by drawing on personality and situational metrics to hire employees and used agency workers to supplement the core workforce. These pre-emptive strategies were driven by the imperatives of the valorisation process. This chapter also makes a contribution to the literature on the enduring and under-researched phenomenon of agency working in the UK by developing the analytical framework of the agency division of labour. While there is a literature exploring the use of agencies in hotels, this literature does not examine the contractual aspects of mobility differentials in sufficient depth. The agency division of labour allowed hotel companies to make up for labour market shortages as well as trial potential employees before entering into a formal contract. Furthermore, neither personality testing nor agency divisions are explored as method of pre-emptive control aimed at constructing the labour market in favour of employers rather than employees.

Pre-emptive control at the level of the labour market has implications for the means of direct control in the labour process itself. The logic that drives managers to filter

workers and maintain a divided labour market is reflected in the labour process itself in the way that the hospitality experience is commodified and produced. Managers seek to reduce the variability of customer expectation and the indeterminacy of labour power. Workers in production must navigate between the demands of managers and the demands of customers. The triangulated struggle between managers as agents of capital, customer as variable subject and workers' is explored in the next chapter.

6. The Hotel as a Factory: Assembling Meaningful Experiences

6.1 Introduction

How do hospitality workers navigate the production of experience as a commodity? The notion that “it’s all about the experience” (Danilo, hospitality assistant, Hilltop) was repeated idiom throughout the research. The production of experience as a commodity was not the initial focus of this study, yet it became increasingly central to workers’ experiences of work. This chapter develops this prosaic idea in greater detail, drawing directly from participant observation in hotels and interviews with workers and managers. The research found that workers saw themselves as responsible for providing a “certain standard of contemporary life and service” (Ammon, Operations manager, Amnesty Hotel), which resonates with Hochschild’s (1983, p. 6) insight that, “in processing people, the product is a state of mind”. However, this chapter argues that the production of the hospitality experience as a commodity entails more than simply a mental or emotional transformation. It requires a circuit of interdependent concrete labour processes to assemble multiple material and immaterial components. Such components construct a temporal environment for guests with defined start and end points. The research terms this process the *circuit of service assembly* because the commodity is the experience of the intersection of physical spaces, objects for consumption and human interaction assembled according to a timeline mediated by consumers.

The circuit of service assembly is similar to the assembly lines of goods manufacturing in that it involves a detailed division of labour and each task is dependent on the completion of the other tasks. Yet due to the nature of the experiential commodity, the circuit of service assembly must be more flexible and dynamic than goods manufacturing, since it must be produced according to immediate customer demands and expectations. The production of a commodified hospitality experience is fundamentally mediated by the consumer, whose tastes and expectations add another

element of variability to the labour process. Variable capital in the form of labour-power must accommodate the variability of customer expectation in production. Hotel managers therefore attempt to standardise guest expectations through various strategies of codification. In this way, hotels produce the manner and means of consumption of their commodified experience. On the one hand, the successful production of experience is directly mediated by the variable demands and expectations of guests. On the other hand, the imperatives of the valorisation process place definite limits on the degree to which this success can be achieved; workers' waged labour is absolutely subordinated to the production of surplus-value.

This chapter argues that the experiences of hospitality workers in the labour process were primarily shaped by two interconnected tensions that revolve around the production of a commodified experience. The first tension concerns the relation between workers and customers in the production of experience, while the second tension concerns the relation between workers and managers over such that the production of experience is subordinated to the commodity-form and the value-form. To make this argument, part one of the chapter outlines the components of the experiential commodity and the circuit of service assembly, while recognising the role of market stratification in setting the parameters of guest expectation. The second part of the chapter examines how managers and workers define the frontier of control in relation to customer influence on the service labour process. The third part examines how workers navigate the circuit of service assembly and production of experience. It explores the provision of hotels services, the effort bargain (see section 6.4.3) and how, with few exceptions, it is managers who ultimately control the labour process by leveraging customer mediation to their advantage.

The chapter builds on other conceptions of the production of the hospitality experience (Sherman, 2007; Whyte, 1948; Wood, 1997) and service work more generally (MacDonald and Korczynski, 2009; MacDonald and Sirianni, 1996), by integrating a value-informed analysis of the production of services as commodities. It makes a conceptual contribution to labour process research by interpreting hospitality work as the production of a commodified experience. It makes an empirical contribution to labour

process research by examining how the detailed division of labour and control is mediated by the customer, but not controlled.

6.2 The Experiential Commodity

6.2.1 The Components of the Hospitality Experience

The idea that a hotel “should be a place to have memorable experiences” (Edvard, valet, KRS agency for Far East Hotel) was ubiquitous throughout the research. The experience is the primary product. While the criteria that determines a “memorable experience” is ultimately subjective, it typically means that guests are exceptionally satisfied with their service and leave with a positive impression of the hotel. Every company—from five-star luxury hotel brands, to three-star budget chains, to the agencies that supplied temporary staff—sold their capacity to produce “authentic” (Hilltop), “unique” (Arabian Hotel) and “unforgettable” (Perfect Hotel and Hilltop Hotel) experiences. Hotels and agencies occasionally used exactly the same language in their aim to “create unforgettable memories” (On the Job Agency and Vacation Inn). The production of memorable experiences is what drives the economics of hospitality, since customers who experience emotional engagement are more likely to repurchase and recommend it to other people (Hosany and Witham, 2010; Pine and Gilmore, 1999).

To understand the experiences of hospitality workers in the labour process, it is necessary to disassemble the component parts of production and examine the tensions that arise as they are subordinated to the imperatives of the valorisation process. Producing memorable experiences requires a detailed division of labour that is highly responsive to the fluctuations of customer demand. The detailed division of labour describes the disaggregation of all the “processes involved in the making of the product into manifold operations performed by different workers” (Braverman, 1974, p. 50). According to Marx (1976, p. 475), the detailed division of labour is “mediated through the sale of the labour-power of several workers to one capitalist” who then organises these workers’ concrete labour into one labour process, usually with the help of managers who ensure the transformation of surplus-labour into surplus-value and profit.

Workers produce the experiential commodity through the assembly of different service components in the detailed division of labour. These components include the reproduction of physical environments, the cultivation of affects and the provision of supplementary services. The primary components in this assemblage are the accommodation services. These are primary because accommodation tends to require the largest capital investment (in land, buildings, and labour-power) and is the main source of profit for hotel companies, since room revenues generally contribute between 60 and 80 per cent of total revenues (Kinnard Jr. et al., 2001). The secondary components include the provision of food, beverages and supplementary services (the number of these services increases with hotel rating), which contribute 10 to 20 per cent of total revenues (Ibid.). Table 6.1 represents the general elements that comprise this experiential commodity.

Figure 6.1 The Experiential Commodity

EXPERIENTIAL COMMODITY	- PRIMARY COMPONENT	- SECONDARY COMPONENT
- TANGIBLE ASPECT - SEMI-VISIBLE PROCESS	- ROOM REPRODUCTION	- FOOD AND BEVERAGE PRODUCTION - SUPPLEMENTARY SERVICES
- INTANGIBLE ASPECT - VISIBLE PROCESS	- RECEPTION SERVICES	- SERVING FOOD AND BEVERAGE - INTERACTIVE SERVICE

Each component has both *tangible* (material) and *intangible* (immaterial) aspects such as the quality of the bedding and level of human attentiveness in service interaction. The tangible or material aspects of the experience, like the cleaning of rooms and the preparation of food, are produced by concrete labour that is invisible or semi-visible to guests. The intangible or immaterial aspects of the experience, like positive service

encounters and memories, are necessarily produced by visible concrete labour. The tangible and intangible processes weave together to produce the hospitality experience. This basic typology is present in all hotels, yet varies according to market stratification, defined by the star-rating system (see section 6.2.5). Guests' expectations are subjective and complex. Due to this subjective variability, the production of experience must operate on a dynamic reproductive circuit, where tangible and intangible elements are continually mediated by customer demand and expectation. As Kasia (head housekeeper, West London Hotel) noted, "it's not like you're making a pen or a truck; it's our job to make sure that room is fresh, and the guest is happy every single time".

6.2.2 The Circuit of Service Assembly

Braverman (1974, p. 361) notes that the reproduction of clean rooms in hotels is "an assembly operation which is not different from many factory assembly operations". While it is an assembly operation, the reproduction of the hospitality experience clearly diverges from the linear processes of manufacturing. The relative simultaneity of production and consumption of services means that the customer adds a secondary element of variability to the variable capital of workers in the labour process. Belanger and Edwards (2013, p. 441) define "front-line service" as work in which the "contribution of the front-line employee to the labour process and the creation of use-value appear at the same time". However, the contribution of any worker to the labour process appears at the same time as that contribution's use-value because this is the value-contribution of concrete labour. The detailed division of labour assembles the contributions of workers in the labour process such that they produce a commodity, which only exists insofar as it is a unity of use *and* exchange value. There are very few situations in which a service commodity is solely reliant on the activity of the front-line worker. Approaches to service production should therefore consider the detailed division of labour. In the case of hotels, the experiential commodity is produced via a circuit of service assembly or the detailed division of interconnected labour processes that are mediated by guests.

The circuit of service assembly can be illustrated by observing the typical experience of a pair of guests. They arrived at a four-star hotel and were greeted by the doorman, who guided them through the hotel foyer to the concierge, who knew them by name because he had already accessed their profile in the hotel database. Based on records of their purchase history and preferences from previous stays, the receptionist had directed room service to prepare their room with extra pillows and a bottle of wine. After they checked in, a luggage porter brought their bags to the room in anticipation of a tip, which the couple obliged. After settling in, the guests contacted reception to book a table at the hotel restaurant. Meanwhile, beyond the visible spaces of the hotel, housekeepers, room attendants, maintenance workers, and porters worked to reproduce the physical environments to guests' standards of expectation. In the hotel restaurant, the couple were greeted and seated by the host. They placed their orders with their waiter who told a joke, complimented their clothes and discussed menu options in an effort to build a positive rapport and transform their interaction into a memorable experience (in anticipation of a tip). The waiter relayed the drink order to the bar and the food order to the chefs, who had spent the morning preparing for the dinner service. Once the food and drinks were finished being prepared, the waiter delivered them to the table with enthusiasm and completed the transaction with a specific temporal window.

The labour process in the hospitality industry is set in motion through the guests. Their expectations must be anticipated by workers, and relayed by *front-of-house* [FOH] employees to the *back-of-house* [BOH] where the tangible aspects (rooms or food ingredients) of the experience are transformed into service commodities for guests' consumption. These tangibles are then provided to guests via the FOH who expend emotional labour in creating positive interactions. Front and back of house thus have a symbiotic relationship mediated by customer feedback and workers' capacity to personalise an encounter. The irreducibility of subjective preference requires workers to continually re-evaluate and update service provision at different points in its delivery. The variability of customers' expectations points to one of the fundamental tensions between the production process and the valorisation process in hospitality: the customer accentuates the indeterminacy of labour-power.

6.2.3 Stratified Markets and Experiences

The production of memorable experiences requires appealing to the individual tastes and expectations of guests. If the aim of the production of the hospitality experience is “guest satisfaction”, then their individual evaluations will necessarily have a degree of subjective variability. The imperative to adapt the hospitality experiences to differences in guests’ social and economic status was also a crucial part of this production; “you have to adapt the product; different guests, different wants, different needs” (Danilo, hospitality assistant, Hilltop). Hotel managers use market segmentation strategies to services offered brand aesthetics and economic strata to differentiate between economic strata of hotels as well as manage expectations of what type of hospitality experience customers will receive (Lee and Jeong, 2014; Miao and Mattila, 2013; O’Neill and Mattila, 2010). Expectations are structured by economic, cultural, and social factors such that the end product is greater than the sum of its parts (Athiyaman and Go, 2003). As Luther (chef, Couture Arms at First Boutique Hotel) explains:

Overall, you are producing an atmosphere. The object is part of a larger experience. And also, you are producing the way the customers see themselves as consumers, how they might see themselves in the world and what their desires are.

To successfully valorise capital through the production of experience, hotels must sell an idealised environment that appeals to individual customers’ sense of identity. However, identities, tastes, and expectations can vary widely from one individual or social group to another.

To militate against the variability of customer identity, hotel companies have developed a system to shape the object, manner and means of consumption by stratifying the market according to socio-economic status. The different levels of service and customer expectation are codified through the star-rating system: the higher the star-rating, the higher the quality and quantity of hospitality services offered (see appendix 6.2).⁷ Three-star hotels offered basic services such as a clean room and an en-suite bathroom. Most three-star hotels either did not have a hotel restaurant or had a basic menu and casual

⁷ This study was limited to three, four, and five-star hotels.

pub service. They generally catered to business travellers or “holiday makers of all varieties” such as tourist groups and families. This entailed a focus on comfort, affordability and a “personal approach helping guests to visualise their home away from home” (Georgie, HR Manager, Vacation Inn). Grand Budget Hotel, for example, welcomed guests home as if they were part of a family; “Welcome to our home. You are more than just a guest. You are a member of our family”. Grand Budget Hotel managers attempted to evoke an air of authenticity; “A warm welcome, a helping hand, and a genuine smile as you arrive. This is not something we train, it is something you feel, a *vibe* in the air”. The expectation of quality, affordability, and a casual air of authenticity were central to the three-star experience.

Four-star hotels generally catered to corporate business travellers, conferences, and wealthier individuals by cultivating a higher level of customer expectation and offering more personalised services. For example, Hilltop Hotel offered flexible function rooms for up to 1,250 guests, a 24-hour business centre, valet service, fitness room, 24-hour room service and two restaurants, open to both residents and non-residents. These additional services required more specialised roles and therefore created a greater division of labour within the hotel, expanding the possibilities for production and consumption. At the four-star Transnational Hotel, there were up to three concierges working together with the doormen, luggage porters and front office during the busiest parts of the day to facilitate the reception of guests. The concierges were expected to use the hotel’s data on guests’ preferences and purchase history to cater to their tastes; “we can read his reference profile, his billing, even what credit card he used” (Emily, HR Manager, Transnational Hotel Group). The three-star Grand Budget Hotel, by contrast, did not employ a doorman or luggage porter, and the roles of concierge and reception were combined into one front office position. The higher the star rating, the higher the number of front-line service staff and therefore the more attention that individual guests will receive.

Five-star hotels appealed to the global social and economic elite by selling “the feeling of being special and of being pampered” to their guests (Edvard, valet, KRS agency for Far East Hotel). All Weather Hotel maintained “elegant surroundings of the finest

quality”. Five-star service meant that guests could expect “caring and highly personalised 24-hour service”, seven days a week, to fulfil nearly any request (All Weather Hotel). Similarly, Arabian Hotel promised guests they would “engage with their own individual tastes and interests by providing insights into the cultural heritage of our local communities” thereby leveraging cultural capital to appeal to bourgeois taste (Bourdieu, 1986). Their mantra “Imaginative and Exhilarating [sic] experiences in Culturally Connected [sic] environments offering Thoughtful and Generous [sic] service” was a three-pronged branding exercise to appeal to guests who saw themselves as part of an elite and sophisticated class. Workers at five-star hotels described how management would customise any aspect of the experience for VIP guests. Royal Hotel, for example, regularly redecorated entire suites for some guests who specified everything from the colour of the walls to the height of the toilet. Providing the experience of being “treated like a rich person” also extended to the style of service, which meant workers had to provide a “higher level of formality and deference to guests” (Sara, server, Royal Hotel). Five-star hotels thus distinguished themselves not only by greater quantity of services, but by appealing to the bourgeois taste of guests.

This section demonstrated that the production of the hospitality experience as a service commodity in a sense, “creates the consumer”. In other words, the capitalist production of hospitality “not only supplies a material for the need, but it also supplies a need for the material” (Marx, 1993, p. 92). Consuming the hospitality experience entails the use of accommodation, food, and beverage services. Producing these services for profit takes them out of the sphere of private provision and into the social provision mediated by the market and subordinated to capital. To standardise the service, companies must set the parameters of expectation through the star-rating and brand. In this way, the production of these social use-values shapes not only the object of consumption, but the “manner of consumption and the motive of consumption” (Ibid., p. 92). If capitalism produces the object, manner and motive of consumption, then hotels do not simply satisfy guests’ expectations and demands, they produce those very expectations and demands. Capitalist production also produces the consumer; in service work the manner of consumption directly feeds back into the production process and, as a consequence, creates a circuit that affects valorisation. The relation between production and

consumption highlights a particular three-way tension between workers negotiating the subjective parameters of customer expectations in the labour process, the employer's strategy of setting those parameters such that they can valorise capital, and customer demands as a variable factor affecting both of these elements. The next section explores how workers, managers and customers construct the frontier of control in the production of the hospitality experience.

6.3 The Frontier of Control and Customer Mediation

6.3.1 The Frontier of Control in Producing Experience

The production of commodities relies on a balance between co-operation and coercion in the labour process (Burawoy, 1979; Hyman, 1989). The negotiated borderline between workers and managers that determines this balance is referred to as the “frontier of control” (Goodrich, 1921). This border is “more a matter of accepted custom than of precisely state principle” (Ibid. p. 56). It is a “shifting line in the great mass of regulations” (Ibid. p. 62) that describes who holds more control in the detailed division of labour. Workers' power to shift the frontier of control lies in the degree to which they can determine shop-floor rules, the organisation of work tasks, the movement of workers between jobs, and so on. The frontier of control is also historical in that represents the “results of past struggles and institutionalises certain potential conflicts” related to the extraction of effort, summarising the conditions under which a certain amount of labour is expended each day (Edwards, 1986, pp. 78–79). The frontier of control is a classical concept that should be retained since its analytical utility is not predicated on the problematic “materialist” conception of exploitation (Edwards, 1990, p. 130). It describes what Marxists refer to as the balance of class forces but is focused more specifically on the detailed division of labour in the workplace and the production process itself.

The frontier of control as applied to service work must account for the influence of the customer. As discussed in section 2.4.1, much of the labour process literature on service work conceptualises the capital-labour relation in terms of a triangulated power relation

in production between workers, managers and consumers. Leidner's (1999, p. 91) conception of the "customer service triangle" recognised the "three-way contest for control between workers, management, and service recipients" while others (Bain and Taylor, 2000; Bélanger and Thuderoz, 2010) built on this idea by exploring how the dynamics of control in service delivery change in different circumstances. However, these approaches overstate the role of customers by elevating them to a "co-producer" of the service. As a consequence, this approach reproduces commodity fetishism by obscuring the material basis for power relations between capital and labour. The idea that customers contribute labour to the labour process creates a situation where workers, managers and customers are considered "co-equals, in an economic sense" (Hanser, 2012, p. 299). As argued in section 2.4.1, while it is important that consumer agency and subjectivity are considered within complex power relations, yet there is no material basis for considering workers, managers, and consumers "co-equals" in any meaningful sense. A value-informed approach to the labour process shows that, while customers influence production, the frontier of control is ultimately a struggle between workers and managers. The consumer does not perform any labour as part the valorisation of the service.

The frontier of control thus remains as a boundary between capital and labour. The negotiation between managers and workers that determines the role of the customer should be considered another element of detailed control. Managers and workers set the parameters of expectation, which sets limits to both variable capital (as labour-power) and variable consumption (as consumer demand). Company "display rules" and other forms of regulation in the labour process are part of the frontier of control between workers and management. Customers do not contribute labour and thus do not *participate* in this negotiation like workers, but rather *mediate* it through feedback. As argued throughout this thesis, the subjective variability of customer expectation and demand adds another level of indeterminacy to capital-labour relations such that the customer mediates the dynamics of production and valorisation. Mediation refers to the form through which two relations may be determined (see section 2.4.3). The next section examines the degrees of customer mediation.

6.3.2 Degrees of Customer Mediation

The delivery of customer-service always involves a certain degree of the commodification of human interaction; yet, as discussed in the sections above, not all workers in the assembly of this service directly interact with customers, which means that some labour is in a more immediate relation with its consumption (and subsequent realisation as value). The different degrees of mediation directly affect the service labour process and the organisation of work. This section explores how the customer mediation affects workers in the labour process at three different levels.

First-degree customer mediation operates at the level of direct interaction between workers and customers, that is, when workers respond immediately to customers' demands. This type of mediation is bound up with the production of the intangible aspects of the hospitality experience. Workers in front of house roles, such as doormen, concierges, receptionists, servers and bartenders were generally the most affected by first-degree mediation, as they dealt directly with guests on a routine basis. From a worker's perspective, this type of mediation reflected the fundamental tension in the service labour process: that workers have to navigate between customer expectations and the expectations of their managers acting as agents of the valorisation process. For example, Ramon (night receptionist, Vacation Inn) said "some of the guests behave like they are the owners of the hotel, so it's sometimes like I have two bosses". Danilo (hospitality assistant, Hilltop Hotel) expressed a similar sentiment: "You are working with the managers and you are working with the guests; but you must always give both of them what they want". These encounters are also mediated by money relations (see section 2.3.4) in the form of service charges and tips. Unlike in the United States, where tipping is essentially understood as a relatively autonomous gamified exchange between customer and worker (Sherman, 2007), in the UK, service charges and tips are controlled by managers using a *tronic* system (see section 7.6.2).

Second-degree customer mediation operates at a level once removed from direct interaction between customers and workers. It occurs when workers' concrete labour is carried out in response to guests' demands, but does not consist of the commodification

of emotional labour. This type of mediation corresponds to the production of the tangible aspects of hospitality experience, such as the reproduction of clean rooms or preparation of food, processes in which workers are largely invisible to customers. Despite being one step removed from customer interaction, workers' concrete labour is nonetheless dictated by customer expectations and demands. For example, there is a hierarchy of guest importance in hotels and this hierarchy dictates the organisation and pace of work for room attendants (see section 6.4.1). Similarly, if the restaurant is busy, chefs have to work just as fast as servers in the preparation and delivery of food. For example, Edith (chef de partie, All Weather Hotel) and Luther (chef, First Boutique Hotel) both noted the necessity of improvisation to produce specials as the raw materials that they used to create menu items ran out. Edzai (breakfast cook, Voyager Inn) would sometimes improvise certain variations on the menu for customers if he had the ingredients; "there's always one or two guests who ask for something not on the menu, and we can never say no".

Third-degree customer mediation refers to organisational responses to aggregate consumer demand. It describes what industry literature refers to as "seasonality" (Baum, 2006, 2002; Boon, 2006; Jolliffe and Farnsworth, 2003), and situates this phenomenon within the continuum of customer-mediation as described in this section. This type of mediation directly impacts the available hours for work and therefore workers' wages. For example, the busiest season for the London hospitality industry is in the summer due to the influx of overseas tourism. Edvard (valet, KRS Agency for Far East Hotel), worked six days a week during the summer, but only worked three during the winter. During the autumn, winter and spring seasons, hotels maintained a corporate client base for business travellers. Managers said they received corporate bookings sometimes for "100 nights, sometimes 200 nights, sometimes even 300 nights" (Emily, HR Manager, Transnational Hotel). These clients were the "bread and butter" (Ammon, operations manager, Amnesty Hotel) and they were stratified between market segments (see section 6.2.3). The third degree of customer mediation operates at level of abstraction twice removed from the direct interactions between workers and guests in the hotels. It serves to connect the micro-level of the workplaces to industrial factors related to the growth of hospitality and tourism sector more broadly.

The multiple levels of customer-mediation described above required that workers throughout the circuit of service assembly adapt their concrete labour to customer expectation and demand. These three forms of mediation operate together to structure the inherently subjective and therefore variable nature of the service labour process. Variations in the season, in customer demand and personal taste have significant effects on workers' experiences of work. The next section examines how workers navigate the production of experience as a commodity through the circuit of service assembly, while responding to customer mediation and negotiating the frontier of control with managers.

6.4 Navigating the Production of a Commodified Experience

6.4.1 The Circuit of Accommodation Services

The provision of accommodation is the foundation of the hospitality experience in hotels. Both workers and managers viewed accommodation as the most important service that the hotel provided; “without a doubt, the bedroom is the most important thing to make a hotel function” (Lorette, head housekeeper, Vacation Inn). Hotels were not simply for guests to “eat at the restaurant or to sit in the bar and have a drink” but rather to provide an environment for rest; “at the end of the day, we’re selling sleep, we’re selling someone a bed” (Georgie, human resource manager, Redline Management at Vacation Inn). The production of accommodation services entailed organising the labour process according to departmental clusters including housekeeping, front office operations and reception services. This section examines the circuit of service assembly in accommodation services.

The intangible aspects of the primary component of the experiential commodity included the reception services, which required communicating with other departments to organise the circuit of service assembly a significant amount of emotional labour (Pizam, 2004). The roles included: office managers, who supervise and coordinate the various functions of the other roles; concierges, who in addition to assisting with check-in and out, provide general assistance on demand; doormen, who greet guests and

arrange taxis, supervise parking valets and luggage porters. The doorman, concierges and receptionists were guests' first and last points of contact, facilitating guests' entry and exit from both the hotel as well as the experience of hospitality itself. This work is generally regarded as some of the most important in the hotel, since the "service encounter" is crucial for guest satisfaction and the profit chain (Schneider and Bowen, 1999; Urry, 1990).

Valentino (doorman, Lux Hotel) and Ramon (receptionist, Vacation Inn) noted that this "first impression" was "crucial". Doormen always greeted guests "with a smile" provided care as they passed through the doors of the hotel. There was a stoical nature to their work, as the appearance of fatigue could give guests the "impression that you don't care, that you don't focus or pay attention" (Ramon). Doormen arranged transport, baggage handling, and valet services. Concierges and receptionists introduced guests to the hotel and made sure to look after them during their stay. Ramon (receptionist, Vacation Inn) explained that reception was the brain of the hotel, where knowledge of individual preferences, timing of arrivals and departures and management of expectations converged. While providing guests with positive encounters and special treatment, they also received and distributed information to other departments, operating "as a team across the entire hotel" on a dynamic circuit of service assembly. Emily (front office manager, Transnational Hotel Group) stressed the importance of interdepartmental cohesion to assemble and deliver consistent and quality service: "you have to coordinate with everybody—the switchboard, the duty manager, concierge, room service, maintenance, porters from public areas".

Employees involved in guest reception were expected to use hotel databases, which created detailed profiles for each guest stating their tastes, preferences, and how often they stayed. These were consulted before guests' arrival in order to instruct other departments on how to prepare their room and other services. The information contained within them varied depending on the star-rating of the hotel. Three-star hotels retained more basic information such as contact information, age, purchase history, and so on, while four and five-star hotels catered to business and luxury travellers who expected a more personalised experience. Hotel employees would record and store data of a highly

personal nature such as: how a guest prefers to be greeted, a description of their car, the name of their driver, what time to send breakfast, how they liked their coffee, how many pillows to provide and even the names of their children and pets. This data is important for managers and workers alike to maintain guest satisfaction by tailoring the labour process relative to the individual expectations. Research has shown that these interpersonal relations determined customers' impression of the quality of the hospitality experience even more than the physical spaces and amenities offered by the company (Hartline et al., 2000). The "brain" of the hotel directs the other departments to assemble the services that produce the experience.

The tangible aspects of this primary component of the hospitality experience included the reproduction of a clean room with fresh bedding and private bathroom facilities. The reproduction of hotel rooms is highly physically intensive and regarded as low-skilled and low-status in hotels. The number of rooms cleaned in a standard seven to nine-hour shift averaged between 15 and 20 yet could go much higher. For example, Elwira (room attendant, All Service Agency for Hilltop Hotels) cleaned "up to 17 hotel rooms a day", while Lorette (executive head housekeeper, Real Management Group at Vacation Inn) said her staff were required to do 18 rooms. There were different classifications of rooms depending on size and the extend of accommodation services. Larger executive rooms or suites typically counted twice for cleaning purposes (Josephine, room attendant, Saviour Hotel). Floor supervisors inspected each room after it was cleaned and would report back to reception when it was ready for the next guest. The number of rooms that supervisors checked varied widely from one respondent to another; Elena (Grand Budget Hotel) checked 70 rooms per day, while Damani (World Agency for Vacation Inn Group) said she checked up to 95 rooms per day.

Concrete tasks and labour-time per room varied according to whether it was a "departure" room or a "stay-over" room. A departure room had to be fully reproduced to standard, which entailed vacuuming, wiping and sanitising the bathroom, as well as providing fresh linen, towels, soaps, and other amenities. A "stay-over" room just required a general tidy, making the beds, fresh towels and so on. Ignacio (room attendant, On the Job Agency for Empire Hotel) said he could clean a stay-over room in

seven or eight minutes at his fastest, however it usually would take “fifteen minutes for a stay-over, and twenty-five for a departure, if you want to do the job properly”. He said he sometimes spent up to an hour on a single executive room. Housekeeping workers also all described some form of hierarchy in room preparation according to the importance of the guest. VIP guests came first, then special requests from regular guests, then arrival rooms for new guests, which usually had to be ready by noon. The head housekeeper assigned workloads based on daily reports from reception that indicated the number of departures, stay-over rooms, and “queue rooms”. Queue rooms were those that had to be prepared as soon as possible due to the arrival of VIP guests or to appease a regular guest who was being demanding. There were sometimes nearly “20 queue rooms around 11 o'clock”, which often intensified the pace of work to a point that the head housekeeper would have to help out (Lorette, executive head housekeeper, Real Management Group at Hilltop). Ramon (receptionist, Vacation Inn) said that each day required a careful negotiation of room priority and workload with the housekeepers, especially during peak times, when guests would threaten to leave a bad review or ask to speak with a manager if their room was not ready when they expected it to be.

The sudden intensification had repercussions down the circuit of service assembly, driving workers to use “fiddles” to keep to their quota. Lupton (1963, p. 182) defines workers’ fiddles as a “form of social adjustment to a given job environment”. Room attendants used various fiddles to cut down their labour-time for each room. For example, if there was a mark on the linen, Elwira (room attendant, All Service Agency for Hilltop) would “use soap to rub it out”; if the shower “looked like it hadn’t been used”, she wouldn’t clean it; she wouldn’t vacuum “unless there’s visible dirt or crumbs” and would sometimes pick up trash with her hands instead. Elena (supervisor, Grand Budget Hotel) noted that the workers she supervised “made mistakes all the time” due to work intensity, which meant sometimes work just didn’t get done “because they lose too much time”. She would sometimes do the work for them, but there was never enough time; “I can’t spend more time doing that than checking the rooms”. As long as the appearance of cleanliness was maintained for guests, workers could use fiddles to meet their room quotas. The guests never knew the difference between a room that was properly cleaned and one that was not. Managers pushed workers to maintain these

quotas as they were crucial for the overall workflow of the hotel, but managers also received bonuses for meeting certain targets (see section 6.4.3).

6.4.2 The Circuit of Food and Beverage Services

The hospitality experience is anchored in accommodation services, yet guests also expect the provision of food and beverage as secondary component of the commodified experience (see figure 6.1). Food and beverage services are secondary because hotels profit largely from the provision of accommodation services. Food and beverage departments are generally organised into sub-divisions such as events catering, the hotel restaurant and the bar. Larger hotels have multiple events venues, restaurants and bars for guests to enjoy. Each subdivision typically has their own set of managers, supervisors and wait staff (sometimes called hospitality assistants or servers) that work together, yet different departments often share workers and resources. This section examines how the circuit of service assembly operates in the production of food and beverage services.

Waiters, servers, and hospitality assistants provided the intangible or emotional aspects of the secondary component (the provision of food and beverage) of the hospitality experience. Front-of-house workers had to be highly adaptable to fluctuations in customer preference and behaviour and in the circuit of service assembly, while ensuring that every interaction was positive. Positive effects were, according to Sara (Server, Royal Hotel), “the main thing that makes people feel welcome”. “Front-line” service workers (Bélanger and Edwards, 2013) were keenly aware that guest satisfaction was paramount to the hotel’s reputation. Guests needed to “know they’ll get looked after” because “they are paying for that experience” (Nyah, host, TKO Medina Hotel).

The experience of food service came in different forms: buffet, plated or silver. Three-star hotels typically had a buffet-style or set-menu service in a casual dining environment. Buffet service meant that there was minimal human interaction and often the chef would also serve customers. Four-star hotels had a more formal dining experience with plated food. Plated service meant that food was fully prepared and

portioned by the kitchen staff in an assembly line of different stations in the kitchen (discussed in more detail later in this section). Five-star hotels typically offered modern plated services at luxury restaurants, however some also offered “silver service”, a formal way of distributing food aimed at guests who preferred an older style akin to domestic service. Workers sometimes referred to silver service as “butler” service since it entailed plating the food in front of customers from large heavy trays. Servers would hold the tray with the left hand and serve food by holding a serving-fork and serving-spoon in pincher formation with the right hand. These different forms of service reflect the commodification of class-based experiences that are integral to the hospitality industry as a whole. The more luxurious the experience, the more likely that the performance of class-based experiences reflect real socio-economic class antagonisms (see section 6.4.3 for a more detailed discussion).

To maintain the circuit of food and beverage service, FOH workers had to remain in synch with the kitchen, as customer demand increased in waves or “rushes” (Sara, server, Royal Hotel Group). Peak times represent the intersection of the different levels of mediation, where FOH and BOH would be engaged with first order and second order mediation, respectively. At the hotel restaurant where Rez worked, once the dinner rush hit, “it's about four, five hours non-stop work...you're on the floor and you don't move from your tables”. The work was not easy; “to arrange a workload for 10 tables of different people with different orders and remain cheerful—it's quite intense” (Sara). The work intensity would alternate between these “rushes” and times when there was less customer interaction, yet these times were spent cleaning, preparing tables and restocking work stations with polished cutlery, glasses, menus and so on in anticipation of the next influx of customers. Shift structures mirrored these rushes and were staggered, because the restaurant would get busier as the day progressed. Sara explained that workers would begin their shift “at six am and there’s people that come in every half an hour as the place fills up with customers”.

During dinner service, Rez (server, TKO Restaurant) was required to “turn tables”, which meant that guests had a maximum time of two hours for their meal. He said the “high turn-rate” made the service feel quite mechanical, “like a production line” (Rez).

In most restaurants, wait times for seating (16.3 minutes), ordering (4 minutes), receiving the bill (4.9 minutes), and paying (4.4 minutes) needed to keep within a particular window of customer expectation otherwise the restaurant's reputation would suffer, negatively affecting profits (Hwang and Lambert, 2009). The maximum time limit of two hours in TKO Restaurant meant that there was a quantitative limit to the quality of the service—even if customers wanted to spend more money and time at the restaurant, they were generally not permitted to do so. This limit increased the pressure on employees to deliver service in such a way that made it difficult to maintain the appearance of genuine interaction. The tension between the efficiency of “turning tables” and the subjective elements of social interactions and customer expectations represents a concrete example of the inherent tensions in the hospitality labour process. FOH workers have a limited amount of emotional capacity and labour-time to transform the guests' state of mind. In the restaurant, production was in constant flux relative to the inputs of the kitchen (in terms of both means of production and labour), the servers (in terms of capacity to manage tables and orders) and customer demand (in terms of attention). If timings were off, this could have direct monetary consequences for workers through an extension of work time, or a reduction in service charges and tips.

Kitchen teams formed “the heart of the hotel” (Edith, chef de partie, All Weather Hotel), giving life to workers and guests alike through the necessary means of reproduction such as food. Hotel chefs produced the tangible aspects of the secondary component of the commodified experience through the preparation of food, while kitchen porters reproduced the capacity for this production. The basis for the organisation of food production in hotels originates from the French “partie” system, which entails a division of labour according to the type of food on offer (Cousins and Foskett, 1989). This system involves considerable specialisation and interdependency, and is essentially a version of “just-in-time” production on a smaller scale (Cheng and Podolsky, 1996). As Luther (chef, First Boutique Hotel) explained, “there was a rational division of labour, but chefs would frequently move around between different sections”, adapting labour-power according to the secondary mediation of customer demand. This meant that each chef would prepare their “station” for a particular task, which they would execute “on the line”, during each service.

The detailed division of labour “on the line” would deepen depending on the service and scale. For example, Edzai, (grill chef, Perfect Hotel) often worked with only one assistant during the morning, preparing the set breakfast menu at his three-star hotel. Edith (chef de partie, All Weather Hotel), by contrast, worked with a team of five to ten other chefs at her five-star hotel, preparing elaborate three-course meals for dinner service. A typical day began by examining the “*mise en place*” or plan for the day and “dividing up the labour” of preparation and assembly in each departmental subdivision such as “banquet service, in-room service, or the restaurant” (Edith, chef de partie, All Weather Hotel). This evolved over the course of the week as the head chefs worked out from the available raw materials and anticipated guest demand what they were going to prepare (Luther, chef, Couture Arms at First Boutique Hotel). Chefs generally had “a lot of autonomy and responsibility”, yet they were ultimately accountable to their colleagues since “everyone would know if we weren’t prepared as it would cause delays throughout the service” (Luther, chef, First Boutique Hotel).

There was a very small window of time that customers would expect to wait for their food. Research indicates that from ordering to serving food, the mean average satisfactory wait time was 15.3 minutes, while mean average unsatisfactory time was 23.7 minutes (Hwang and Lambert, 2009). The nature of the commodified experience meant that customer demand would peak at certain times throughout the day, subjecting chefs to “extremely intense and highly stressful” periods of work (Luther). Less intense periods were for preparing for the next high-intensity period. Workers called these cycles “waves” (Edzai, grill chef, Perfect Hotel) and they dictated the rhythm of the shifts, requiring workers to be “very flexible, elastic in trying to always make sure that guests will be happy” (Edith). For example, Edith typically organised banqueting services up to week in advance, as that was when they received their “pack of banqueting contracts” with all the orders. However, “orders can come on the same day, like two to three hours before, or one day before” (Edith), so they would have to adapt very quickly in order to satisfy their clients, whose demand can shift at the last minute. If one sub-division didn’t have the necessary ingredients, they would try to source ingredients from other areas or “make a menu for the client from the products we had”

(Edith). Food production was at once factory-like in its assembly of different components, and yet artisanal in its improvisational nature, mediated through the variable demand patterns of the customer.

Sections 6.4.1 and 6.4.2 examined the circuit of service assembly in accommodation and food and beverage services respectively. Each section illustrated how the nature of the commodity meant that while customers mediated production, yet they did not contribute labour to the production process in any meaningful way. They also demonstrated the collaborative nature of accommodation and food services, a theme which is underdeveloped in much of the literature on service work (Korczynski et al., 2000; Sherman, 2007; Taylor and Bain, 2005). The concrete labour that produces seemingly independent services components are actually all part of an interconnected process of service assembly. Guests do not pay for a bed to be made separately from the service they receive by the concierge or the luggage porter; they do not pay a service charge independently from the cost of their meal. The circuit of service assembly is responsive to the variability of consumer expectation and demand. The process is a circuit because it operates in a relational and temporal sequence mediated by customers. The specific order and results of the labour process that constitutes the sequence can be continually altered or revised according to customer feedback. Sometimes the temporal sequence comes into conflict with the subjective aspects of workers' concrete labour. The next section examines how workers navigate situations in which the production of a positive or memorable experience comes into conflict with the demands of managers and the needs of the valorisation process.

6.4.3 The Triangulated Effort Bargain

This section examines how hospitality workers navigated the physical and emotional demands of production in the circuit of service assembly. The detailed divisions of labour outlined above separate the more physically intensive nature of BOH work from the more emotionally intensive nature of FOH work. Different forms of labour effort combine through worker-guest interactions to produce “the actual sense of being taken care of” (Nyah, host, TKO at Medina Hotel) and the “recipe” of the brand (Brakus et al.,

2009). However, due to the interconnected circuit of production, the labour of both FOH and BOH is mediated by customers and controlled by managers. The nature of producing a commodified experience requires workers to negotiate tensions that result from conflicting demands between workers and managers. The literature on service work characterises this relation as a “customer-service triangle” (Lopez, 2010), where each agent acts as a “co-equal” in determining the labour process. However, the data from the research demonstrates that managers have far more influence over the organisation of production than customers. While customers mediate the labour process, managers control the number of workers and therefore the intensity of production as well as the emotional effort required to maintain a positive encounter and guest experience.

Reproducing the hospitality experience requires manual, emotional and aesthetic labour. Manual labour is simply the physical activity essential to concrete labour. Emotional labour, as defined in chapter two, “requires one to induce or suppress feeling in order to sustain the outward countenance that produces the proper state of mind in others” (Hochschild, 1983, p. 7). Emotional labour occurs when there is non-correspondence between the company display rules and workers’ actual feelings in relation to customers during the production process (Brotheridge and Grandey, 2002; Hochschild, 1983). Aesthetic labour occurs when employees are required to regulate their bodily appearance to a certain standard that employers’ use to attempt to gain competitive advantage (Warhurst and Nickson, 2007b). These different aspects of concrete labour are often performed simultaneously in the production of a commodified experience.

As noted above, the production of the hospitality experience required normative controls over behaviour that are tailored to organisational standards for emotional expression and guest interaction (Ashforth and Humphrey, 1995; Ekman and Friesen, 1975). These “display rules” codify workers’ appearances and behaviours in a given situation (Ashforth and Humphrey, 1993; Barsky and Nash, 2002). As Nyah (host, TKO at Medina Hotel) said, management control “everything from your physical appearance to the way you speak”. Aesthetic display rules required adherence to strict, gendered policies around appearance. For example, at Royal Hotel, managers required male

employees to be clean shaven, have short hair, wear formal trousers, and specific shoes; female employees had to wear makeup, have long “natural-coloured” hair, wear a skirt with skin-coloured tights and wear heels at a specific height; workers felt like they had “gone back to the 1950s” when working (Sara, server, Royal Hotel). At some restaurants, it was as if “the servers were a kind of commodity and they sold the experience of being around beautiful people” (Nazan).

Workers had to maintain the perception of customer sovereignty; “the guests are always right. Whatever they want, you have to give” (Danilo, food and beverage assistant, Hilltop Hotel). Grand Budget Hotel’s mantra, “we are all here to have fun”, aimed to relieve guests of the burden of acknowledging the fact that workers were contracted and paid provide guests with memorable experiences. Maintaining the ruse of labour as pleasure or enjoyment is fundamental to hospitality work. Rez (server, Medina Hotel), for example, said the “TKO experience” required servers “to be amazing, to be playful, to tell jokes, tell stories and have fun” during every encounter. Any overt reference to the contractual obligation of producing positive service interactions and memorable experiences would highlight the fundamentally commodified nature of the experience, potentially ruining the enjoyment or pleasure for customers.

Adherence to emotional display rules meant that workers had to convey enthusiasm at all times: “As soon as I arrive at the door, I must forget who I am and put on a smile” (Valentino, doorman, Lux Hotel). For up to twelve hours standing outside, “whether it’s minus ten or plus forty degrees Celsius”, Valentino had to maintain a polished appearance and positive demeanour. His discipline was almost militaristic; “sometimes it feels a little like being in the army because you always have to have a certain type of behaviour” (Valentino). It was not enough to say, “Good morning, welcome to the hotel”; he had to do tailor every interaction such that it seemed “authentic”. He could not break character. In this way, managers encouraged a form of “deep acting” from workers that was more than just emotional effort (Hochschild, 1983).

Riza (hospitality assistant, Hilltop Hotel) exemplified deep acting in emotional labour by striving to make guests feel “overwhelmed by the service”. For Riza, “guest interaction

is the best part of the job because of the feeling of responsibility and care” that came with it. Hospitality was “all about how to read the guests”, how to “understand their body language” and “how to respond” accordingly. The production of memorable experiences required continual engagement to determine a guests’ emotional state and make a connection. Sometimes guests “are very energetic and sometimes they are down; we have to figure it out” (Riza). Riza would aim to transform their emotional state, “with a smile and a compliment about what they were wearing”. Workers played to guests’ egos by “saying they looked young even when they are not young” or bolstered their individual sense of identity by “saying a man looks handsome in his suit”. These somewhat superficial compliments were the first step toward constructing more authentic interactions. Sarah (server, Royal Hotel) would establish rapport with a compliment before politely asking questions about the background of a guest: where they were from, what they enjoyed for fun, or other questions related to personal history. These were designed to emotionally engineer a connection and would sometimes develop into casual flirting. People always had a “story to tell” (Riza). Front-line service workers could determine the success of the connection by the level of personal detail that a guest disclosed. If they opened up to workers, this was an “authentic” and “meaningful” interaction. Riza genuinely enjoyed these interactions, but the real motive was the reward of a “good tip and good feedback”.

Customer reciprocity in the service encounter mediated the labour process and the effort bargain. Workers fiddled with the frontier of control, adapting official procedures to reward certain guests or expended less emotional effort in the performance of labour. The worker’s pursuit of gratification through positive customer feedback creates a reciprocal loop between emotional labour and guest satisfaction. When customers were smiling, this “actually made it feel a lot better to work and helps get you through the day” (Danilo, hospitality assistant, Hilltop Hotel). Danilo and his colleagues would try to “go above and beyond” the normal expectation so that customers would reciprocate with “positive feedback” toward them, since managers would reward employees for exceptional performance. The friendlier a guest was, the more effort that Danilo and his colleagues would expend for them:

The nice people, even if they don't give us tips or anything, we would go above and beyond for them because the way that they acted was like they respected us and it made us feel good, made the job feel worthwhile, rewarding.

This effort bargain was thus triangulated through the reciprocity of customer feedback. The specific form the effort took would vary depending on the concrete labour performed; in the cloakroom, "if there is someone who has been good to us or made our life easier" Danilo would remember and serve that person before other guests who might have waited longer. If the bar was especially busy, but a friendly tipping customer wanted a drink, Akram (Hilltop Hotel) "might serve them first instead of another".

By contrast, when customers were "arrogant", the circuit of positive feedback ended, and the amount of effort expended in the labour process generally increased. Edvard (valet assistant, KRS Agency at Far East Hotel) said they were never allowed to say "no" to a guest, a rule repeated by nearly every worker interviewed. Even if they knew "the guest was wrong" they would "have to pretend that they are right or accept what they say and offer an alternative" (Edvard). When customers were verbally abusive or treated employees with disrespect, they had to ignore it. Workers continually had to maintain service standards, at the expense of their own emotional well-being; "it does hurt us, but all you can do is smile and do the best you can to not show it. Sometimes I have to go to the toilet to calm down" (Danilo). The toilet was often the only place workers could go to escape the pressure of social interaction and managerial surveillance. They would sometimes use this as an opportunity to collect themselves before engaging with customers again, especially if there was a conflict.

During conflict situations with guests, workers at Hilltop Hotel were trained by management to "apologise with authority", which was an emotional manoeuvre meant to placate irate guests. Danilo explained that "you have to get down on their level, but don't go below their level" because acting too servile actually encouraged abuse and some customers "just don't want to be told that the thing they want they cannot have". To apologise with authority, an employee needed to avoid focusing attention or blame on colleagues and the customer; instead they would distract the customer with alternatives like a room discount, a free bottle of wine or a replacement meal: "you distract them, placate them, and solve the problem as soon as possible" (Riza, hospitality

assistant, Hilltop Hotel). In this way, the effort-bargain operative in the front-of-house also affected the labour process in the back of house. Placation techniques also would occasionally fail because when customers refused to respect the employee and “only believed the managers” (Riza). When the relations between the customer and worker broke down, managers would step in as the authoritative force to defend workers. In situations where customers were behaving unacceptably toward workers, managers would reassert the authority over the labour process by manipulating the customer back into their role as a mediating rather than an intervening variable.

This section examined the so-called “customer-service triangle” (Lopez, 2010). It questioned the degree to which “the role of the customer” makes the nature of service work into a “customer-oriented bureaucracy” aimed at reproducing “the enchanting myth of customer sovereignty”(Korczynski, 2002, p. 64) . Maintaining the ruse of customer sovereignty was merely a means to an end, which is set by management, as Belanger and Edwards (2013) also argue. Workers’ conflicting emotional reflections indicated that “deep acting” does not fully capture the range of emotional effort involved in hospitality work, which can vary in reaction to both managers and customers. Managers set the terms of engagement, yet workers negotiated the production of experience as individual and collective emotional subjects to meet customer and demands. The tension between workers’ aims to provide a quality experience for guests and the demands of managers to adhere to strict display rules under increasing intensification in analogous to the tension between production and valorisation in the labour process. Workers’ control over production can come into conflict with the managerial demands for valorisation. The next section examines another dynamic of the triangulated relation between workers, customers, and managers. It examines how managers used to customer as a technology of control over workers in production.

6.4.4 Customer Mediation and Technologies of Control

As discussed in section 6.2.3, the production of hospitality entails shaping the manner and means of consumption. Maintaining the parameters of customer expectation in the face of worker agency can be a difficult task for managers. To militate against this

variability, hotel managers made use of dashboard technologies, both as a means of measurement and mechanism of control (Hall, 2010). Dashboard technologies are tools that measure the inputs and outputs of a system to monitor labour productivity and the firm's competitiveness, often in real time. The quantification and measurement of concrete labour has been integral to labour process analysis at least since Braverman (1974) if not Marx (1981). Historically, the development of technologies of measurement and automation in industry has led to productivity gains and labour displacement (Autor, 2015). However, when the product is an experience, the human-centred nature of the commodity means that the service can be difficult to automate. Furthermore, low wages do not encourage the substitution of constant capital in the form of automated machinery for variable capital in the form of human labour-power. Yet, even if wages were higher and the full automation of hospitality work was more financially viable, this justification ignores the nature of the commodity itself. Technology in the industry has therefore developed in ways that facilitate the accumulation of data from workers, customers and managers.

Recent research has highlighted a tension between technology as a coercive means of surveillance and technology as a protective or performance-enhancing element in the workplace (Rosenblat et al., 2014; Thompson and Harley, 2007). Through company dashboard systems managers can construct an "electronic panopticon" (Sewell, 1998) that consists of transaction databases, extensive CCTV networks and online review platforms to monitor workers' activities, training, and performance. In most hotels, managers could "practically see anything" (Mark, security, First Boutique Hotel) as there were cameras for "all the floors, all the back of house, the health clubs, swimming pool, and all around the outside...46 cameras". However, hotels are increasingly using smart-phone apps and web platforms linked to customer feedback systems to document and appraise performance (Neirotti et al., 2016). Perfect Hotel, for example, required employees to sign in and out of their shifts and breaks through an app, which could also track their location in the background.

Workplace surveillance has increased recently through hotel management making use of workers' personal data, biometrics and even engaging in covert surveillance (Ball,

2010). Most hotels in the study were implementing fingerprint identification systems for security access. Each time a worker accessed a door or entered a guest request into the computer, it was linked to their name, fingerprint, and employee transaction data. Hotels typically used a networked software system such as Micros, which was interfaced to a transaction management system like Opera (Ammon, operations manager, Amnesty Hotel) to track service delivery. Transactions, employee requests and customer feedback were stored in these systems, which managers would then process and write up into daily reports (Valentino, Lux Hotel). Reports from the system were audited by corporate operations managers every day to “compare what employees charged hotel guests versus what was actually paid” (Ammon). This tracking and auditing made it so that management would know exactly who made any mistakes; “There is no ambiguity” (Ammon).

The increasing technological mediation the labour process meant that workers had less control over their labour and less opportunity for resistance, since management could easily track customer feedback, which was used as a “form of surveillance” (Ramon, receptionist, Vacation Hotel). The customer feedback system was “the heartbeat” of the hotel (Fairouz, accounts supervisor, Transnational Hotel Group). Hotel reputation is a crucial element for its success (Shapiro, 1982), especially online (Yacouel and Fleischer, 2012). After their stay, customers filled out online feedback forms and left ratings on booking platforms or travel sites. According to Ammon, hotels used this data for performance metrics. If the hotel “got low marks, some people would be punished” by losing their bonuses or extra benefits (Fairouz, accounts supervisor, Transnational Hotel). Georgie (HR manager, Vacation Inn) had a “scorecard split into different sections that corresponded to different departments, which all had to be green for workers to be eligible for the benefits”. If employees received positive feedback they would be rewarded with titles like employee of the month, cinema tickets, or payment in kind like a free diner for two. Appraisals were computerised and workers would be required to complete them on their own time every few months. For example, every three months, Amy (Catering assistant, Redline Catering Management) was required to answer a series of questions through a computer programme about how she approached people and how she “reacted in certain situations”. If she answered incorrectly, she

would be assigned a personal development plan or could even be given a disciplinary. In this way, computer-based monitoring and feedback systems allowed for managers to leverage control over production through customer feedback, thus militating against the variability of both workers and consumers in the labour process.

6.5 Conclusion

Research on hospitality work and service more generally has tended to examine the nature of such work in specific occupations, which can isolate the broader interconnected processes that contribute to the production of the service. The findings of this study have pointed toward a different conception of service work, namely how the production of hospitality as a commodified experience entail an assemblage of different concrete labour processes. The production of experience entails the reproduction of hospitable environments and the transformation of the emotional state of the guest so that they have a positive impression of their stay. Semi-visible workers transformed the physical spaces and consumable materials into the tangible aspects of the product, while visible workers transformed affects and atmospheres through their interactions with guests to ensure satisfaction. Analysis the labour process in such a way yields unique insights into the frontier of control. Managers use the star-rating system to set the parameters of customer expectation and control the manner and means of the consumption of the commodified experience. Production was influenced by different degrees of customer-mediation, yet the frontier of control was ultimately negotiated between workers and managers, with the latter dominating the relationship. Workers navigated the interconnected circuits of accommodation and food and beverage services by collectively triangulating their efforts to satisfy both guests and managers in the circuit of service assembly.

This chapter explored the politics of service production through workers' experiences of negotiating the secondary variability of customer mediation in the labour process. The value-productiveness of an interactive service is highly reliant on the subjective aspects of human interaction, so the details of the worker's testimonials are directly relevant and revealing of the emotional cost of providing that service. The contributions are twofold,

and each have political implications for the study of service work. First, the research develops a more dynamic understanding of the nuances of production when the commodity is subjective experience. Disassembling the circuit of service assembly in hospitality work allows the analysis to show that the component parts of the experiential commodity had different distributions of customer mediation and required different forms of labour. The content of the experiential commodity ultimately determines production in the service labour process. However, the form of capitalist service production itself is also overdetermined by the mediating force of the customer. Unlike in goods production where consistency tends to be coterminous with uniformity, producing hospitality services has variable degrees of customer-mediation, which makes consistent quality more subjective and contingent. Just as the labour contract can never be fully specified in advance, the service interaction also cannot be fully determined in advance. The hospitality experience is therefore a unique type of commodity.

Second, the research re-locates the frontier of control in hospitality work as a boundary between workers and managers. The degree of customer mediation in the labour process is ultimately controlled by managers who monitor workers through customer feedback systems to ensure the appearance of authenticity, quality and consistency. Reducing indeterminacy in the case of hotels entailed leveraging customer mediation as a means of surveillance and control over the guest experience. Workers' capacities to personalise the experiential commodity and create a memorable experience were ultimately subordinated to the imperatives of the valorisation process imposed by managers as agents of capital. The next chapter explores the crude methods managers used to extract surplus-value in the hospitality industry and how they are tied specifically to the nature of the experiential commodity.

7. The Politics of Valorisation in Hospitality Work

7.1 Introduction

How do hospitality workers navigate the valorisation process? In more political terms, how do they cope with exploitation at the hands of management? Historically, workers have demanded “a fair day’s wage for a fair day’s work”, but, as Engels asked in 1881, “what is a fair day’s wage, and what is a fair day’s work?” The answer, that the “workman gives as much”, while the “capitalist gives as little, as the nature of the bargain will admit” indeed reveals a “very peculiar sort of fairness” (Engels, 1881). A Marxist understanding of the labour process recognises that this peculiar sort of “fairness” constitutes the exploitation of labour and is built into the structure of the capitalist valorisation process. Capitalist exploitation relies on the extraction of unpaid labour, which is transformed into surplus-value and profit (see section 2.2). This chapter aims to explore the experience of hospitality workers in navigating the valorisation process. It examines how managers, as agents of capital, used increasingly crude methods to extract unpaid labour-time and dispossess workers of their wages. The extraction of time, the non-payment of entitlements and the administrative theft of wages are unified by the concept of value and the accumulation of surplus-value.

The dynamics of exploitation provide crucial insights into the fulcrum of control and resistance in hospitality work and the service labour process more broadly. In hospitality work, the frontier of control is triangulated between workers, customers and managers due to the nature of the commodity itself and the circuit of service assembly (see chapter six). Worker fiddles are a method through which workers have historically negotiated the effort bargain (see section 6.3.3). The first section of this chapter contrasts this traditional framing with the research findings—that managers were routinely engaged in activities that constituted wage theft in the form of time and money. After a brief explanation of pay structures in hospitality, the chapter continues with a presentation of the research findings regarding exploitation. Exploitation based on unpaid labour is the

basis for the extraction of surplus-value, yet the research revealed that managers were extracting an additional surplus-value from workers through various methods. Each of these methods are examined in relation to the frontier of control. Managerial control over workers took different forms depending on the particular concrete labour performed and the form of worker remuneration. Additional unpaid hours were extracted from workers using intensification, the manipulation of contractual terms and the threat of redundancy. Management appropriated workers service charges and tips through the *tronc*⁸ system, which is supposed to be a formal means of distributing wages, yet was used as a means to obscure income and deny workers control. The chapter concludes by examining worker resistance in the face of exploitation. Despite workers lacking formal collective bargaining or control over the labour process in any meaningful sense, workers managed to leverage customer mediation for the purposes of solidarity and resistance to wage theft.

7.2 Fiddling with the Extraction of Value

Chapter six examined individual worker fiddles in the production of experience. The research found that collective worker control was largely absent, as is typical of the hospitality industry, with its low levels of unionisation (Wills, 2005). Individual fiddles, by contrast, were present in various forms: from time-saving manoeuvres like not vacuuming the carpet of a room if it seemed clean, to so-called “pilferage” of soaps, food, and other products (Mars and Mitchell, 1974). Fiddles have traditionally been understood as a form of worker resistance to management at the frontier of control (Ditton, 1977; Henry and Mars, 1978; Mars, 1994). Fiddles are a means of “social adjustment to a given job environment” (Lupton, 1963, p. 182). There is also a literature on employee theft, yet it is largely written from the perspective of management, with the aim of understanding why employee “pilferage” occurs and developing strategies to reduce it (Krippel et al., 2008; Payne and Gainey, 2004; Poulston, 2008). Reasons for “pilferage” include: perceptions of unfair or inequitable employment conditions (Greenberg, 1990); high staff turnover (Thoms et al., 2001); a lack of trust in the

⁸ The term *tronc* derives from the French “*tronc des pauvres*” referring to the poor box or alms box that used to be found in French churches.

workplace (Niehoff and Paul, 2000); organisational dishonesty (Cialdini et al., 2004) and stressful working environments (Lo and Lamm, 2005).

Neither the literature on fiddles nor the literature on pilferage addresses the theft of time and money by managers in any depth (Ditton, 1977; Henry and Mars, 1978; Mars, 1994). Furthermore, these discourses do not incorporate a discussion of how fiddles, pilferage, or wage theft operate with regard to the valorisation process, which accounts for the transformation of values to magnitudes of time, commodities, and money. This study contends that a further distinction should be made between fiddles in the production process and fiddles in the valorisation process. Fiddles occur in the production process through workers adjusting the amount of effort they perform, but they can also occur in the valorisation process through the wage relation. In production relations, workers augment their effort to retain surplus-value in the form of labour-time. In relations of valorisation, fiddles adjust the value represented in its money form (Elson, 1979). Workers can augment the capture of surplus-value by retaining time, wages in kind (commodities like food, soap, towels, and alcohol) or cash (through tips or other means).

A key research finding from the data was that managers, as agents of capital, manipulated the labour process to extract additional unpaid labour in the form of time and wages. There has been limited research on the extraction of unpaid labour and there is no specific dataset on unpaid wages (Clark and Herman, 2017). Official survey data on non-compliance with minimum wage laws are recorded by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs [HMRC] and reports of unpaid overtime are recorded in the Labour Force Survey [LFS]. This data can be used to estimate the scale of unpaid wages. However, primary source data is limited to Clark and Herman's (2017) interviews with workers and their survey of Employment Tribunal [ET] judgements. Their research touches on similar themes of exploitation yet does not examine unpaid labour from an explicitly Marxist or a labour process perspective. Systemic connections to exploitation in service work as an expression of the tendencies inherent to the capitalist mode of production are therefore beyond its scope. Furthermore, Clark and Herman (2017) do not examine the manipulation of the tronc system as a method of wage theft.

The systemic aspect of exploitation in the capitalist mode of production drives the theft of labour-time and wages, which means that the additional extraction of surplus-value is not necessarily a deliberate strategy of control by managers, since they too are subject to the structural imperatives of the valorisation process (see chapter two; Marx, 1976). Some managers were incentivised through bonus schemes to organise production in such a way that facilitated the theft of unpaid labour-time and wages. Evidence from the research also indicated that managers continually compelled or coerced workers to perform additional unpaid labour beyond the normal terms of the labour contract. The revelation of managerial manipulation leading to the additional extraction of surplus-value is a significant empirical contribution of the research. The next section outlines the structure of pay in the hospitality industry in order to frame further explorations into the causes and consequences of unpaid labour-time and wage theft in London hospitality work.

7.3 The Structure of Pay in the Hospitality Industry

In productive industries, company profits essentially represent the surplus-value produced in the labour process, though value is not the same as profit (Marx, 2016). A Marxist approach to wages holds that workers' total pay represents only a portion of their total value contribution in the labour process (Marx, 1976). The literature on hotel workers' pay frames payment systems in different ways. Mars and Mitchell's (1974) "total payment system" is comprised of wages, subsidised food and lodging, tips and pilferage. Johnson (1983) argues that additional payments should be included in the total payments system such as seasonal bonuses, productivity payments, relocation expenses for workers and company cars, expense accounts, share options, public school fees and allowances for managers. On payslips, a distinction is made between basic hours and service charges and tips. This study uses a simplified system of base pay and variable pay since this is what workers and managers themselves referred to when discussing their wages.

Base pay was comprised of hourly wages or salaries, and holiday entitlements, while the category of variable pay included any of the following: mandatory service charges; discretionary service charges; gratuities paid to the employer as part of a credit/debit card payment; cash gratuities paid into a staff box; and cash gratuities handed directly to an employee. HMRC (2015, p. 4) defines a tip/gratuity as an “an uncalled for and spontaneous payment offered by a customer”, while a service charge is defined as an “amount added to the customer’s bill before it is presented to the customer”. Service charges can be mandatory or voluntary, but it must be stated clearly. The forms of payment are all variable because they are directly tied to customer satisfaction and demand. Workers with more direct contact with customers generally depended variable pay more than base pay for their social reproduction and subsistence. The categories of base pay and variable pay allow the framework to highlight how workers’ experiences of pay and wage theft differed according to the degree of customer mediation in the circuit of service assembly.

Previous research has found evidence that hourly-paid and salaried hotel workers work unpaid overtime and through unpaid breaks (Warhurst et al. 2008). This suggests a need for further investigation into the particular methods of exploitation and their consequences for workers, a task which my research takes up. Through examining the manipulation of base and variable pay, the chapter outlines how managers extracted *additional* surplus-value from hotel workers. It is additional surplus-value because it is beyond the normal rate of extraction as established by the contract. A key finding was that the method used to extract unpaid labour tended to be tied to the type of concrete labour performed and the type of contract under which that concrete labour was carried out. The first method was the theft of labour-time through the unpaid extension of the working day, which made visible the normally obscured extraction of surplus-value. The second method was the theft of base wages through the non-payment of holiday entitlements and the charging of hidden fees. The former in effect extended annual work-time, while the latter in effect reduced wages below the value of labour-power. The third method was the theft of variable wages, which relied on the manipulation of tip distribution systems mediating customer payments to workers for service. The theft of service charges and tips effectively lowered wages and increased the rate of unpaid to

paid labour-time. The pervasiveness of these methods represented the institutionalisation of wage theft in the London hospitality industry. Each method of extracting an additional surplus required a particular means of managerial control, which was also used as a disciplinary mechanism for workers. Managers exercised detailed control through intensification, contractual manipulation, and the tronc system respectively (see section 7.4.5). These dynamics will be further elaborated below.

7.4 The Theft of Labour-Time

7.4.1 “As Business Needs Require”: The Extraction of Unpaid Labour-Time

The most common method managers used to extract additional surplus-value from workers was the deliberate mis-measure of labour-time. Workers’ contracted and paid hours were generally below the hours they actually worked. This section examines the extraction of unpaid labour-time from salaried employees, hourly-waged employees and agency workers. For salaried hotel employees, starting work early and leaving late without receiving any extra remuneration was a normal expectation.

In reception, they do overtime, and they never get paid for it...in the kitchen, they regularly do 10-15 hours and get paid for 8...in accounts I had a contract of 39 hours but used to do a minimum of 50 (Valentino, doorman, Lux Hotel).

Managers would use an employee’s willingness to work unpaid as a means to evaluate commitment and career-focus. For hourly-waged employees and agency workers, by contrast, managers relied on more covert methods. For example, after reviewing the payroll and account records, Dante (food and beverage supervisor, Sandy Hotel) discovered that most employees in his department were regularly working up to three unpaid hours a week beyond their normal contracted hours. Dante investigated the discrepancy with his workers and found that they were not aware that they were being paid for less hours than they worked. Agency workers, especially room attendants, regularly performed additional unpaid labour because they could not complete the amount of work assigned to them, a strategy deliberately deployed by managers. Agency workers on zero-hours contracts were often required to arrive an hour before their shift, but not paid for any of this time, further widening the pay gap and contractual

stratification at work. Several detailed examples of each of the above methods are further discussed below.

For salaried employees, their contract was a major factor that contributed to the additional extraction of unpaid labour-time. Salaried employees had a stated number of hours in their contract, but these were rarely kept to, and employees were discouraged from claiming time off in lieu. Employees were thereby compelled to contribute unpaid labour-time, often in anticipation of professional advancement. For example, when Valentino worked as an accountant in the hotel's finance department, his manager made him opt out of the EU working time regulation (which is illegal) and his contract included the clause "or as business needs require". According to Henry (union official, Unite), this clause "destroys the normal terms of a contract". The company could expect these employees to work extra hours and refusing would lead managers to question employee commitment. Furthermore, the administrative hurdles to claim the extra pay discouraged workers from doing so. For example, Valentino's case had difficulty with his workload but was intimidated by his manager and therefore afraid to claim the extra hours. Valentino started work at least an hour earlier than normal nearly every morning because management required detailed financial reports by 8:00 am. Writing these reports often took more than an hour, so on Sundays he worked unpaid to complete them for the previous weekend, otherwise he would have to arrive at 5:00 am on Monday to finish them on time. His salaried contract was for 37.5 hours a week, but his workload required 50 or 60 hours of work, which meant 12.5 to 22.5 hours of unpaid labour-time. These extra hours constitute the extraction of additional surplus-value in the labour process.

The extraction of additional unpaid hours from salaried workers was particularly common in kitchens, which are known to have an extreme work culture (Burrow et al., 2015). According to a Unite member survey, 44 per cent of chefs work an average of 48 to 60 hours each week (Unite, 2016b). Similar to Valentino's experience as an accountant, chefs were usually on salaried contracts, which stated normal hours, but included the clause "or as business needs require". Chefs regularly worked ten to fifteen-hour days while getting paid for eight (Edith, chef de partie, All Weather Hotel). In

Edith's experience, chefs were expected to "turn up at seven and get everything just about ready and then start the official work at eight". Head chefs and managers required chefs to work additional unpaid hours as a rule rather than an exception; "if I said, 'I've done my eight hours and I'm going to go home' you would be considered unreasonable; instead you stay there ten, twelve hours and don't get paid for it" (Sebastián, chef, Last Boutique Hotel). The expectation was that if the hotel was busy, employees "should just get in early, sort things out and then often work a bit more" (Luther, First Boutique Hotel). This is a pervasive problem in the industry, as noted by Unite's (2016) membership survey, which found that 47 per cent of chefs start work before their official start time and 51 percent finish work after their official finish time, all for no extra pay. This means that hotels and restaurants are extracting a significant amount of unpaid labour and thus additional surplus-value from chefs.

If chefs' salaries were calculated as hourly wages accounting for total labour-time, then the price of labour per hour would fall dramatically. For example, Luther's co-workers started at £17,000 a year, but worked 60-hour weeks. This translated to £5.49 an hour, far below the minimum wage at the time (£7.20 from April 2016 to March 2017). Sebastián (senior sous chef, Last Boutique Hotel) was paid £28,200 a year, which seemed high compared to the average salary of £18,640 for a chef (ONS, 2017a). Yet, if his 70-hour week was fully accounted for, this would put his actual hourly earnings at roughly £7.75 per hour in London, close to the minimum wage at the time and far below the recommended London Living Wage, which was £9.75 per hour (D'Arcy and Finch, 2016). While the annual wage remained formally the same, the real hourly wage rate was dramatically reduced. This extension of work-time also increased the ratio of unpaid to paid labour by the addition of pure unpaid labour-time or absolute surplus-value.

Agency workers were particularly susceptible to the additional extraction of unpaid labour-time. All Service Agency, for example, paid workers £26.80 for a four-hour catering shift at Hilltop Hotel. Workers were instructed to turn up at 4.45 p.m. for a shift that officially ran from 6.00 p.m. to 10.00 p.m. but could continue longer depending on workers' individual capacities to navigate customers' demands while serving and clearing tables. This meant that there was at least an hour of unpaid work-time for every

agency worker, on every shift. This pattern repeated during day shifts at another Hilltop Hotel:

The agency told workers to arrive by 7.30 a.m., yet workers were later told after the shift that they didn't get paid until 8.30 a.m. When they arrived, they received their uniforms and were set to work immediately, moving furniture, setting up chairs, and running errands for the managers. This seemed to be a normal expectation for agency workers (Field Notes).

Hilltop employees disclosed evidence of systemic underpayment in the catering department of this hotel. Agency workers were only allowed a 15-minute unpaid lunch break, despite the fact that they worked over eight hours during this particular shift, which legally entitled them to a half-hour lunch and two ten-minute breaks (Field Notes). They were only paid for 7.5 hours of work, despite the length of the shift and actual labour-time expended. Non-payment for wait-time and working through unpaid breaks were two additional methods of wage theft through unpaid work-time.

Research on room attendants has yielded evidence that managers manipulate room-to-wage rates of hotel room attendants by increasing the number of rooms cleaned per shift (Knox, 2011; Lundberg and Karlsson, 2011). However, this phenomenon has not yet been investigated in detail or framed in terms of the additional extraction of surplus-value or wage theft. Managers extracted unpaid labour-time from room attendants by requiring them to clean a greater number of rooms than could be reasonably completed in the timeframe; “they play with the amount, they always make us to clean more rooms” (Ignacio, On the Job Agency for Empire Hotel). Workers in every housekeeping department that was part of the study provided evidence of the extraction of unpaid labour-time. For example, At Vacation Inn, managers required Damani (head housekeeper) to assign 25 departure rooms⁹ to each room attendant, yet since departure rooms typically required at least 20 minutes to properly clean, this meant that a labour-time of 7.5 hours with a 30 minutes break could never be enough time to complete the job. Multiple room attendants reported experiencing similar rate manipulation:

⁹ There are different labour processes and amounts of work depending on whether a room is a ‘stay-over’ or a ‘departure’ (see section 6.3.1).

If you don't get twelve rooms finished in eight hours, you stay until you finish it, but we don't get paid extra if we have to stay later (Josephine, room attendant, Saviour hotel). Essentially, we're paid until three and then if you have more rooms to clean, it's your problem (Ignacio, room attendant). It's thirty-nine hours a week, that's all you get paid for, for working up to 12 hours a day (Lorette, head housekeeper, Vacation Inn).

The intensification of work through rate-manipulation constitutes a type of wage theft in terms of unpaid labour time. The data indicated that rate-manipulation is a pervasive problem in the hospitality industry that is exacerbated by the agency division of labour. Agency workers who protested such practices were either intimidated, moved to another hotel or simply not given any more hours.

A further method of wage-theft occurred through managers changing workers' hours on their pay stub. Several workers revealed that they discovered the discrepancy by comparing their rota with their pay slip, which had a different total number of hours than they worked. However, it could be months before they realised this was taking place. For example, Lala (Just Clean Agency for Grand Budget Hotel) worked for six months before she discovered that the agency was taking "two hours every week" from her pay. She said, "I was missing £300 over the course of 6 months...if they are doing this to the fifteen people at my work and the other hotels, this is a lot of money they are getting illegally!" Union efforts to combat such practices involved a substantial case work and grievance procedures, but the vast majority of workers were not in a union and thus were ill-equipped to claim back wages or file a grievance (Field Notes). Certain union members with more experience were aware of this method of wage theft through non-payment and would encourage their colleagues to check their pay slip "to see that they're getting paid fairly" (Lorette, executive head housekeeper, Vacation Inn). However, the introduction of online payment systems made it more difficult for Lorette to audit agency workers' pay; "many agency workers don't have internet so a lot of them can't see their pay slip, so they just accept what they get".

As discussed in section 5.2.3, agencies essentially acted as "merchants of labour-power" or middlemen that sold workers' concrete labour to hotels. The agency division of labour created mobility differentials between employees and workers, but also carried an average "pay penalty" of £0.22 an hour for agency workers, roughly equivalent to a loss

of £430 a year per worker for those working full-time (Judge and Tomlinson, 2016). The nature of hotel and agency relations meant that agencies operated under extremely tight margins, which encouraged the theft of wages. Agencies had to make a profit based on buying labour-power cheap and selling it dearer to hotels. For example, World Agency staff were paid a minimum wage by the agency, but the agency would charge the hotel a set fee on top of the wage bill: “per week, the lowest fee that the agency will get from the hotel is eleven grand” (Lorette, executive head housekeeper). All Service Agency paid its workers the minimum wage and charged the hotel £0.30 per hour per worker on top of a management fee (which they did not disclose). Georgie (human resource manager, Vacation Inn) confirmed this by revealing that “the [wages] rates are different for our own staff compared to the agency staff”.

If a company makes a profit not from producing value, but rather from buying cheap and selling dear, then this is profiting through the capture of commercial capital.

Commercial capitalists profit purely through the process of circulation, the purchase and sale of commodities. What Marx refers to as “profit upon alienation” is only realised in the final sale of the commodity. As agents of the circulation of labour-power, agencies thus produce no new value (Marx, 1978a, p. 406). The agencies in the fieldwork bought cheap labour-power from workers to resell at a higher price to hotel companies. Agency workers thus contributed to the production of surplus-value only through contributing to the circuit of service assembly in the hotel. An agency’s relative contribution to the hospitality experience is therefore essentially negative in value terms, because they generate nothing other than “the ability to appropriate surplus-value” (Ibid., p. 407). Agencies profit indirectly from the fees they charge hotels, which are necessarily paid out of the product of workers’ concrete labour-time. Agency workers are therefore doubly exploited because both agencies and hotels profit from their labour.

7.4.2 Manufacturing Consent or A Force Majeure?

Some workers were clearly aware that “all the extra time they are working is free labour for their employer” (Valentino, doorman, Lux Hotel). It would therefore seem somewhat paradoxical that workers continued to work as hard as they did. How did such workers

navigate exploitation? Why did they continue to provide managers with unpaid labour-time? Luther (chef de partie, First Boutique Hotel) offered the view that hospitality culture itself encouraged subservience and discouraged confrontation. The culture “will always be tied to the service of the master” because the principles of hospitality were inherited from “just being a service to the aristocracy”. The principles of hospitality service cultivated an “aspirational attitude, bourgeois taste, individualist elitism and artisanal craft. That’s the industry; that’s just how it is” (Luther). Luther saw it as a culture of “martyrs”, who accepted exploitation as normal. Chefs had a particular tendency to build an identity around the difficulty of their work, taking pride in “a certain amount of status and the suffering that goes with it, which they all think it makes them more credible” (Luther). This was exemplified by the industry idiom: “If it’s too hot get out of the kitchen” (Burrow et al., 2015).

While chefs were an extreme example, Luther raised an important point about the culture and ideology of hospitality itself as a means of manufacturing workers’ the consent (Burawoy, 1979). As shown in chapter five, hotels aimed to recruit workers with the “right attitude”, workers who took pride in their service like Sherif (room service, Arab Hotel): “I like being engaged with my customers. It keeps me close to the better life, because it’s something I aspire to”. However, the notion of consent does not capture the true dynamic of this work. Workers knew they were being exploited but had very little power to change that fact. Rez (Server, TKO Restaurant at Medina Hotel) was “very sad to see really good staff, experienced staff who want to give a good experience continue to go the extra mile despite knowing that they were getting ripped off at the end of the month”. The tension between hospitality workers’ aim to produce a quality experience and the exploitative practices of managers reflects a central theme of the research: the tension between production and valorisation in the labour process. The emotional labour workers performed to satisfy customers was often carried out despite the intensification of the labour process and managers’ coercive methods of control. The increasing use of digital surveillance and performance monitoring techniques also undermined workers’ sense of pride in their work (Korczynski et al., 2000; Moore, 2018).

Hospitality workers were “stepped on” throughout the industry because management would use “scare tactics”, intimidating workers if they protested working extra hours. By assigning a workload that was greater than workers could reasonably complete in the contracted hours, managers would have leverage over workers who failed to meet their targets if they did not put in the extra unpaid hours. This undermined individual morale and confidence. Valentino (doorman, Lux Hotel) said his manager treated him “like an idiot” if he did not have his reports ready on time, despite the fact that he was putting in additional unpaid hours; “I would be there 6.00 a.m. until 7.00 p.m. in the evening”. Valentino’s manager made the office “a terrible place to work”, threatening him with the loss of his job “and the reference” if he didn’t work unpaid hours. Similarly, the food and beverage manager at Last Boutique Hotel demanded increasingly more unpaid hours from Sebastián (Senior sous chef, Last Boutique Hotel) and his colleagues in the kitchen. Sebastián thought they were being targeted because their “wages were raised over the years to an amount that they [management] were not prepared to pay anymore”. By threatening redundancy, managers coerced more unpaid labour from them. In this way, managers did not “manufacture consent”, but rather simply coerced workers into submission with the threat of redundancy.

Targeted work intensification was also used as a mechanism to force out older established employees. Older workers were generally more experienced, confident in their capacities and earned higher wages. Ammon (operations manager, Amnesty Hotel) explained that he was being forced out by the regional director because of his “higher salary and experience in the industry”. He thought this was because “younger, less experienced workers were easier to manipulate” and accepted less pay for the same work. Ramon (receptionist, Vacation Inn) corroborated Ammon’s account, observing that younger workers “often would say they didn’t mind staying an extra hour” because they thought this would allow them to “further their careers”. This tactic of forcing out of experienced, higher-paid workers was “a common practice” (Henry, union organiser, Unite) as younger workers “don’t know any different” (Mark, security guard, First Boutique Hotel).

Two embedded cases from the research were particularly illustrative of the methods that managers used to intimidate workers into working additional unpaid hours. The first case was a concerted effort by Redline Management to force experienced Transnational Hotel employees to resign in order to avoid paying redundancy fees. “They wanted to get rid of these old contracts because it’s going to cost them a lot of money to end them” (Fairouz, accounts supervisor). Fairouz had worked for Transnational Hotel for 18 years and was an “an ambassador for the hotel”. During Redline Management’s campaign to terminate older contracts, she became a target and was eventually forced to resign as a result of managerial intimidation. The intimidation started through work intensification, as a Redline manager assigned accounts employees an increasing number of administrative tasks to be completed in the same amount of time. Fairouz and her colleagues worked additional unpaid hours to compensate out of fear of a disciplinary procedure or dismissal; “it was rarely the case that you could finish within 39 hours”. The Redline manager also used also tactics aimed at undermining the authority of experienced employees. For example, she intensified surveillance through requiring detailed logs of activities and timestamps. Fairouz said, “I can do this job with my eyes closed”, but each week the manager reorganised work tasks by requiring reports on different days each week or changing the required content of accounts reports without telling everyone. If Fairouz protested, the manager would start “shouting, throwing stuff and slamming filing cabinets” near Fairouz’ head to intimidate her. The conflict between managers and experienced employees in the accounts department escalated until Fairouz and three of her colleagues resigned, proving the manager’s tactics to be successful.

The second case illustrates a method that managers used to intimidate workers into performing unpaid labour the name of efficiency. At Vacation Inn, Lorette (executive head housekeeper) was told that she needed to “cut staff and be more efficient” as the owners were getting ready to sell the hotel to another firm. The general manager had recently reduced the number of workers in Lorette’s department from seven to four people, increased the number of rooms she was responsible for inspecting from 80 to 100, and gave her additional administrative duties. Yet, she was told that she could not change the payroll, the budget, or any other aspect of the hotel finances by using additional agency staff in order to accommodate these changes. She ended up working

twelve-hour days, sometimes six days a week. As a result, Lorette became exhausted and overworked; “I don't sit down, I don't get my lunch break, I don't get to go to the toilet, I don't even have time to drink water”. When she complained about the workload, her manager responded by giving her a disciplinary and a “personal development plan”. This began an escalating series of interpersonal conflicts that eventually caused Lorette to have an anxiety attack; “an ambulance came for me, and my blood pressure went to 154 over 105”. She eventually decided to resign, yet the union encouraged her to file an official grievance against the manager. The manager resigned before the process could begin to avoid liability.

The above cases were indicative of the tactics that managers used to coerce workers into participating in their own exploitation by performing additional unpaid labour. While the union offered occasional support to members on a case-by-case basis, most workers were not able to access these services and therefore had to tolerate the exploitative culture of the industry. When workers attempted to limit their labour-time to their legally contracted hours, they were intimidated and even forced to resign as a result of the pressure to perform additional unpaid labour. Workers who resisted were slandered by managers; “they give you disciplinary; they try to kick you out; they call you a troublemaker” (Elena, room cleaning supervisor, Grand Budget Hotel). Others were accused of stealing and simply dismissed (see section 7.7). The theft of labour-time was a relatively overt process reinforced by blatant managerial coercion of workers. There were also more subtle methods of extracting an additional surplus through the theft of base wages. The next section investigates these methods in detail.

7.5 The Theft of Base Wages

7.5.1 Hidden Fees and the Non-Payment of Entitlements

While the theft of labour-time was generally not a hidden process and therefore workers were often aware of their exploitation, there were other, less explicit methods of extracting an additional surplus. These methods constituted the theft of base wages by managers manipulating the annual leave period, which resulted in workers losing

holiday pay, and the practice of charging workers hidden fees for training. These two methods are grouped together because they both relied on the manipulation of the labour contract to increase the ratio of unpaid to paid labour-time. This section explores the technical methods of contractual manipulation to reduce workers total wages and the consequences for workers' experiences of work.

In order to understand how workers were denied holiday pay, it is necessary to briefly outline how holiday entitlements are calculated. In the UK, all employees and workers (except for independent contractors) on full-time contracts are legally entitled to at least 5.6 weeks or 28 days paid holiday per year (known as "statutory leave entitlement" or "annual leave"), although employers can include bank holidays as part of this total. For shift workers with fixed hours (part-time or full-time), a week's holiday pay should be calculated as equal to the average number of weekly hours worked in the previous twelve weeks at their average rate. For work with no fixed hours (casual or temporary work), a week's holiday pay should equal the average pay a worker received over the previous twelve weeks. This calculation must fall within the annual leave year, which should be specified in the employment contract. If it is not specified in the contract, then it legally starts on the first day of the job. The research found that these rules were manipulated or ignored by managers to reduce labour costs and effectively extract additional surplus-value from workers.

Every agency worker in the study reported the non-payment of their holiday entitlements. Nazan (food and beverage assistant, All Service Agency), Lala (room attendant, Just Clean Agency), Ignacio (room attendant, On the Job Agency for Empire Hotel), and Elwira (room attendant, All Service Agency) had explicitly requested holidays, yet were denied their holiday pay. Managers told them they weren't entitled to it or didn't have enough hours. Employees with permanent contracts also gave evidence that managers manipulated the parameters of the annual leave year so that employees lost their annual leave entitlements. Chefs at First boutique Hotel, for example, were given no other option than to take their holiday in January (Luther, chef, First Boutique Hotel). This meant that "if you worked eleven months and one of them didn't include January then you wouldn't get holiday pay" (Luther). Henry (union organiser, Unite)

explained that “If they don’t pay you holiday pay and you go beyond the company holiday year, then you’ve lost it; you can’t get it back”. Workers also lost their holiday entitlements if they were forced out of the company:

If they harass you hard enough, you walk. If you walk you lose your wages for the month, your wages in arrears, all the holidays - it's a large sum of money that they save. This happened at my last job and I was out thousands (Sebastián, senior sous chef, Last Boutique Hotel).

The denial of holiday entitlements is technically an increase in unpaid labour-time through the theft of base wages. The non-payment of holiday entitlements allows the employer to retain up to 28 days of labour-time at the normal rate of exploitation (ratio of unpaid to paid labour), rather than paying the worker for holiday time (paid non-labour). This actually increases the total annual ratio of unpaid to paid work time and constitutes the additional extraction of surplus-value.

Managers also manipulated the terms of workers’ contracts to extract additional surplus-value through hidden fees for training. Through these fees, companies were able to retain wages that otherwise would have been paid to workers. For example, Lala (room attendant, Just Clean Agency) was only paid £200 for the first two weeks of full-time work because the agency managers told her the first week’s pay was retained as a training fee. Similarly, All Service Agency “hid information about their training fees in the fine print of their contracts”, which were not readily provided to workers, even when explicitly requested (Elwira, room attendant, All Service Agency). Nazan (food and beverage assistant, All Service Agency) said £10 was automatically deducted from her first pay check for a five-minute instruction on cutlery placement. These fees were made apparent in clause 3.4 of the All Service Agency “self-employment” contract:

3.4 You will be required to do our training course, which will enable you to do any task given to you by the clients. The training process takes up to three hours after which you will be issued with a certificate. The cost for the training course is a one-off payment of ten pounds.

The organisation charged for the training, yet workers said this training never occurred. Nazan and Elwira both said they were merely instructed to “watch YouTube videos” on service styles. All Service Agency also had a clause in their “employee” contract for

housekeeping staff (which was based on the Swedish derogation model providing a guarantee of four-hours weekly) stating the company would claim back wages for up to 75 hours if employees left before three months:

The first 2 weeks of your employment are dedicated and designated “Training weeks” as or Client hotels require trained team members [sic]. Payment for this training will be paid when you leave our employment however, should you voluntarily leave within the first 12 weeks, the company reserves the right to charge you the equivalent cost of providing this transferable, job specific training.

As stated clearly in the contract, if workers decided to leave for any reason, up to 75 hours of wages could be withheld. The hotels paid agencies for the work regardless of whether the individual workers stayed for twelve weeks or twelve days. In this way, All Service Agency could increase their profits by extracting additional surplus-value through withholding workers’ wages. Unlike the explicit extraction of unpaid labour-time as discussed in sections 7.4.1 and 7.4.2, these methods of exploitation were concealed and in a legal grey area. Regardless, they were highly unethical and preyed upon workers lack of knowledge of their contract. The withholding of this sort of contractual information was a tactic that managers used to maintain control over the labour process by wielding disciplinary power over workers. The next section explores how managers deceptively withheld contracts from workers in order maintain an asymmetry of information that allowed for the additional extraction of surplus-value as described above.

7.5.2 Contractual Coercion and Power Asymmetries

The Employment Rights Act (1996) section 1(2) states that the main terms of the contract or “written statement of particulars” must be provided in writing to the employee within two months of the start of their employment. Yet the managerial practice of withholding the written particulars of a contract is a widespread in the hospitality industry. Wright and Pollert (2006) found that hospitality workers often did not receive any written confirmation of employment at all. Luther (Chef, First Boutique Hotel) said that he had worked “in hospitality off and on since the age of seventeen or so” and said he had “only ever had a contract once”. Despite the apparent normality of

this practice, this nondisclosure is a blatant violation of workers' rights. That both hotels and agencies frequently failed to provide such a written labour contract indicates an asymmetry of information between managers and workers that the former leveraged to their advantage as a method of control.

The lack of a formal contract was a particularly frequent occurrence for agency workers. Nazan (hospitality assistant, All Service Agency) never received her contract, while Elwira (room attendant, All Service Agency) struggled for months to get a copy of hers, only succeeding in doing so after getting her union involved. Being an agency worker without a contract made it very difficult to establish a stable relationship to work; also the fact that the majority of agency workers are migrants compounds this instability, access to institutional support and social protections at work (Lucas and Mansfield, 2010; Migration Advisory Committee, 2014). Moreover, without a contract, contesting issues related to wage theft was exceedingly difficult. If workers were provided with a contract, they often did not understand the terms and conditions because of language barriers and no provision was made for workers to overcome them. Managers also pressured workers to sign contracts they did not understand, using informal coercion to produce formal consent. Lala (room attendant, Just Clean Agency for Grand Budget Hotel) described a situation that was commonly reported in the study:

The contract, when I make my signature, we were talking with some ladies and we see that everything is explained on the last page, but it's very small print and when I try to see she say, 'Oh it's not important.' They don't explain our holiday or sick pay properly. They don't specify how much they will pay on holiday or other days. It is zero hours. They change it or renew a contract every six months. They just say to sign. Because the people don't have time. They catch you when you finish, when you are tired. They make you sign, and we do because it's too much for us.

Managers forcing workers to sign things they had not read or understood was a routine experience; "the supervisor comes 'round [sic] to you, gives you a piece of paper and says, 'can you sign to say that you've read that?' But nobody's read it" (Rez, server, Medina Hotel). Other workers reported similar situations; Sara (server, Royal Hotel) and her colleagues, "just thought they were expected to sign" a contract that included a clause in which they opted out of the 48-hour maximum workweek.

The situations described above were made possible by the erosion of mutuality of obligation through the weakening of legal protections and collective bargaining for workers. This has led to contractual manipulation and the extraction of unpaid labour-time beyond the normal terms of the contract, a practice that constitutes the theft of base wages. Managers leveraged the power of their position in the organisation to coerce workers to sign contracts without understanding the terms and conditions. When workers left before the contractual minimum period of work, companies charged hidden fees, retained holiday entitlements, and thereby profited from the extraction of additional surplus-value. The securing and obscuring of additional surplus-value, whether in the form of unpaid labour-time, unpaid holiday entitlements, or fees for training, potentially affected all hospitality workers. However, there is yet another means of capturing additional unpaid labour from specifically front of house workers—through the appropriation of service charges and tips, further explored in the next section.

7.6 The Theft of Variable Wages

7.6.1 Tips, Troncs and Wage Theft

The third method that managers used to extract additional surplus-value from workers was through the appropriation of variable pay in the form of service charges and tips. “It’s not right. They are taking our service charges out before putting them into the tronc” (Rez, Server, Medina Hotel). Most research on service charges and tips has been carried out in a US context where workers have comparatively more autonomy, due to the absence of a formal tronc system (Cobble, 1991; Gatta, 2009). In the UK, there two are different systems for the distribution of variable pay. Tips distribution can be organised via an entirely informal system that is essentially autonomous from management and negotiated between workers (similar to the US) or it can be included with the distribution of service charges in a formal tronc system (Wood, 1997). Informal systems were generally present in front-of-house departments like reception and housekeeping, where tips were minimal and based around individual acts of front-line service. Formal tronc systems were used in food and beverage departments to manage a substantial income from service charges and tips. The standard service charge was 12.5

per cent of the total bill and usually discretionary unless stated otherwise.¹⁰ Cash tips tended to be less than 10 per cent of the bill and whether they were included in the tronc depended on the particular system that the employer adopted and the rules that it entailed (see below).

In order to understand the methods that managers used to manipulate the tronc system, it is first necessary to briefly outline the specific rules and regulations that govern it. Legally, troncs must be run by the “troncmaster” who decides what percentage of the money in the tronc is to be shared with each employee. The troncmaster must be independent from the employer and identified to HMRC as the person responsible for Pay As You Earn [PAYE] (HMRC, 2015). If the employer meets certain conditions (see appendix 7.1), then service charges, tips and other gratuities paid by customers and distributed to staff are free of National Insurance Contributions [NICs], which can save employers up to 26 per cent in tax. The tax incentive encourages many employers to use a tronc system for service charges and tips. The complexity of the specific rules and regulations of the tronc system meant that managers held a disproportionate amount of power over the way that these wages were distributed. The research revealed that managers frequently abused this power and used the tronc system as a means to siphon service charges and tips from workers to managers, thus reducing their overall wages.

The amount of variable pay added to base pay through the tronc system depended on the individual job of each worker and the hours that they worked. Troncs were typically organised according to a points system based on these criteria. Kitchen workers typically had higher base pay yet did not receive a portion of the variable pay from the tronc (or received a reduced proportion), while servers and other FOH workers had lower base pay but received a higher portion of the variable pay from the tronc: “it basically doubles my wage” (Sara, server, Royal Hotel). Each workers’ share of the tronc was calculated by multiplying their individual labour-time in hours by the number of points for each position (see tables 7.6.1 and 7.6.2). The allocation of hours and points by management could therefore have a significant impact on a workers’ income. Rather than a

¹⁰ If there is a compulsory service charge, businesses are legally required to indicate this on the menu and bill.

democratic and fair distribution of hours and the tronc, the research found that managers frequently manipulated the tronc system as a means to control and discipline workers. There were several cases in which managers used the tronc system to directly pilfer workers' service charges and tips. The tables below depict two different examples of tronc systems. The data was sourced from two spreadsheets that workers at two different hotels provided. The first spreadsheet had workers confidential data in it already, while the second had the hours removed but the formulas in place. Below, I discuss the rules of each system and the ways in which they were manipulated by managers to steal wages.

Table 7.6.1 The Tronc System for TKO Luxury Restaurant at Medina Hotel

1. Total distributable tronc = total service charge + reservation fees
2. Point value [1.21] = (total distributable tronc) / (total points)
3. Individual weekly tronc = (point value) x (employee points)

Position	Points	Weekly Hours	Total Points	Point Value x Employee Points = Tronc	Cash Tips	Tronc + Tips = Total Variable Wages
Head Host	3	43.25	129.75	157.00	-	157.00
Host	1	32.10	32.10	38.84	-	38.84
Reservations	4	41.50	168.00	203.28	-	203.28
Server 1	5	45.20	226.00	273.46	55.40	328.86
Server 2	5	32.40	162.00	196.02	37.20	233.22
Server 3	5	37.75	188.75	228.39	17.35	245.74
Server 4	5	48.15	240.75	291.31	-	291.31
Server 5	5	50.08	250.40	302.99	196.95	499.93
Server 6	5	43.33	216.65	262.15	70.68	332.83
Server 7	5	40.11	200.55	242.67	-	242.67
Runner 1	3.5	48.43	169.51	205.10	10.90	216.00
Runner 2	5	40.08	200.40	242.48	8.75	251.23
Clearer 1	3	39.97	119.91	145.09	13.54	158.63
Clearer 2	3	54.60	163.80	198.20	75.60	273.80
Bartender 1	5.5	56.5	310.75	376.01	30.20	406.21
Bartender 2	6	40.22	241.32	292.00	-	292.00
Head Bar Back	7	42.15	295.05	357.01	-	357.01
Bar Back	3	50.00	150.00	181.50	-	181.50
Total	79	785.82	3465.69	4193.48	516.57	4710.05

As table 7.6.1 shows, managers at TKO Restaurant did not allocate BOH workers any of the tronc, which was a common way of organising the system. BOH staff like chefs were usually on salaried contracts while FOH staff like waiters were on hourly wages plus

service charges and tips from the tronc. Additional cash tips were often retained by individual servers, who would share them with others at their discretion, maintaining a small degree of autonomy from management. At TKO restaurant, Media had appointed an “independent” troncmaster, so the employer was not technically responsible for PAYE or NICs. However, the independence of the troncmaster was questionable, since he was a human resource manager for the restaurant. By concentrating the power of distribution in this role, management retained control over variable wages and manipulated the tronc to reduce labour costs.

During the course of the fieldwork, workers at TKO Restaurant were mistakenly sent a spreadsheet from payroll that revealed that managers were topping up their own salaries with the tronc money tax-free. Rez shared this data, which indicated that managers were “stealing up to 30 per cent” of the service charge before they calculated the tronc for workers (Rez, server, TKO at Medina Hotel). Salvador and other workers had a meeting at the Unite headquarters and discovered that “all kinds of people had their hands in it” (Salvador, chef, TKO at Medina Hotel). Internal documents obtained by Unite showed that the managers of TKO Restaurant only declared their earnings to be £13,520. This meant that the top managers at a large and highly profitable five-star hotel officially earned “less than the kitchen porter” (Henry, Unite officer). The investigation concluded that the extra money to make up their £32,000 salaries were being taken out of the tronc system tax-free. As the rules state that PAYE and NICs are due on payments from the tronc if the employer directly or indirectly allocates the payments, the actions of managers constituted both tax avoidance and wage theft in the formal sense.

Table 7.6.2 Tronc System for Food and Beverage at Last Boutique Hotel

1. Total Monthly Point Value = Total Monthly Tronc / Total Points
2. Individual Monthly Tronc Payment = (Total Monthly Point Value) x (Individual Points)

Position	Individual Points	Monthly points	Monthly Tronc Pre-tax
Room Service 1	3	520	582.40
Room Service 2	3	520	582.40
Restaurant Server 1	5	866.67	970.67
Restaurant Server 2	5	866.67	970.67
Restaurant Server 2	5	866.67	970.67
Bartender	5	866.67	970.67
Head Chef	2	346.67	388.27
Sous Chef	2	346.67	388.27
Chef de Partie	1	173.33	194.13
Clearer	2	346.67	388.27
Kitchen Porter	1	173.33	194.13
Total	33	5026.68	5629.88

Last Boutique Hotel used an external consultancy as the troncmaster, thus relieving the hotel manager of the responsibility for PAYE and NIC on service charges. Individual employees who were not part of the food and beverage department, such as the room attendants, doormen and concierges retained control over their cash tips, yet service charges for both BOH and FOH were distributed through the tronc scheme. This system is indicative of a broader trend in the managerial manipulation of tronc systems to top up salaries to avoid paying full tax on their wages. As Henry (union official, Unite) explained, managers at this hotel had advertised a new chef position with a £30,000 salary, yet the contract given to the employee was for an hourly wage of £10.00, which translates to £24,960 annually on a 48-hour weekly contract. Management then used the service charge to top up the remaining £5,040 of the annual wage tax-free. Base wages for chefs were lower than if they weren't subsidised by service charges, while FOH workers effectively took a pay cut to subsidise BOH wages. The reduction in taxable salary also meant that BOH workers would receive less annual leave due to the reduction in base pay, since these wages were used to calculate annual leave (see section 7.5.1). If sales dropped, then all workers would suffer a pay cut, as if they were shareholders but without any control.

The theft of variable wages from the tronc system was not limited to the two cases outlined above. Other workers, many of whom had been in the industry for several years, reported multiple instances in which their service charge and tips were taken by managers. For example, Nazan (food and beverage assistant, All Service Agency) had previously worked at a restaurant where management kept all the discretionary service charge paid by customers, while workers were only allowed to keep cash tips. Sherif (room service, Arabian Hotel) said that managers manipulated the points system to appropriate service charges directly from workers; “they give themselves more points so get more service charge than us, but they don't actually do any of the service”. Dante (food and beverage supervisor, Sandy Hotel) reported that the hotel used the service charge to supplement the budget:

I could not believe that the company takes the service charge, but then I saw the budget. I saw how much they got. It was like £150-£300 per month each and it mostly goes to managers to buy stuff for the hotel, but I'm sure they also just take some.

The appropriation of the service charge not only lowered wages for workers, but also reduced maintenance costs for the hotel owners. The theft of variable wages was also sometimes used to directly enrich the employer. Sara (server, Royal Hotel) reported that her previous employer “expected staff to reach tip targets” set by managers, which were then kept by the company. If the targets management were not met, employees would have to make up the shortfall with their wages. Similarly, if there were shortages in the cash register, employees' tips were used to make up the difference.

As outlined above, the data revealed overwhelming and systemic evidence of managers appropriating workers service charges and tips, a practice that should be deemed wage theft. These practices were clearly incentivised by the potential to save up to 26 per cent in tax. The redistribution of service charges and tips from the FOH to the BOH was a tactic that managers used to reduce overall labour costs, while the topping up of managerial salaries was simply exploitation based on the power managers wielded over the employment relation. The valorisation process requires managers as agent of capital to extract as much surplus from workers as possible. This section details how managers increased the rate of exploitation through the theft of variable wages. However, managers

did not simply use the tronc system to extract an additional surplus; they also used it to control and discipline labour. How workers respond to and navigate these exploitative practices is addressed in detail in the next section.

7.6.2 Variable Wages, Variable Control

This section contrasts the different experiences of workers with regard to variable wages and wage theft, comparing workers who had relative autonomy over their tips with those who were subject to managerial control via the tronc. Front-line service workers that were not involved in food and beverage services mostly had “no formal system” for the distribution of tips (Valentino, doorman, Lux Hotel). Hotel employees in roles like parking valets, doormen, luggage porters, receptionists and concierges generally worked together to decide how to distribute their tips individually. With informal systems of tipping, hotel employees could ensure that management did not appropriate or control the distribution, as they did not have access to their cash and often “didn’t want to know about how they were divided” (Ramon). This allowed for a degree of autonomy over variable wages not present in tronc systems. Employees developed distribution agreements based on interpersonal relationships, playing what Sherman (2007) calls “money games”, which entailed manipulating their time and effort with customers and colleagues in anticipation of the portion of the tip they would receive. This could be a source of “a lot of tension and problems” among employees (Ramon, receptionist, Vacation Inn) because individuals did not always report tips to other team members; “somebody might get a £10 from the customer and come away and say, ‘I didn’t get anything’” (Valentino, doorman, Lux Hotel). This could breed mistrust and undermine workers’ capacities to maintain autonomy in the face of management.

Tensions sometimes flared between agency workers and hotel employees along contractual lines, as agency workers were explicitly barred from accepting tips; “I don’t even get tips in my current job; they aren’t distributed to me in any way whatsoever, even though I do a lot of service” (Nazan, Food and Beverage Assistant, All Service Agency). This contractual division of service charges and tips compounds the agency division of labour discussed in section 5.3. However, certain situations made it

extremely difficult for managers to monitor whether agency workers actually accepted tips. For example, in the housekeeping department, agency room attendants had “first access to rooms” and as there were no security cameras in the rooms, workers could therefore “accept tips anyway” (Elwira, room attendant, All Service Agency). In this way, agency workers resisted attempts from hotel and agency managers to control informal tip distribution. The lack of a tronc system allowed workers a greater degree of autonomy, yet this was limited in scope and fragmented along contractual lines. When tronc systems were present, the autonomy of informality dissolved into complex systems of rules and regulations with managers holding ultimate decision-making power.

As discussed in the previous section, managers used their power over the tronc system to redistribute workers’ variable wages to enrich the company as well as themselves. They retained this power because most workers did not understand the rules that governed the system:

No-one seems to know how it works. I've been told that our manager has full power over it, it's a points system but we don't know how the points are allocated, or we don't know how big the pot is, or anything. And we've asked on repeated occasions and we've gotten no further (Sara, server, Royal Hotel).

Sara’s experience reflects a general lack of accountability that characterised the managerial control over tronc systems. Workers at TKO Restaurant (Medina Hotel) expressed frustration with the lack of transparency and democratic control over the tronc distribution. Salvador (chef de partie, TKO Restaurant) thought that the points system “didn't make any sense” and Rez (server, TKO for Medina Hotel) said:

We had no transparency in the whole system...they hide it from us. You don't know how much money there is to start out with; you don't know how much your shift did; you don't know how much the others did. We don't see the logic behind it.

There was not a single case in which the rules of the tronc were officially made available to all workers. There were no reported cases of a fair and democratic process in which workers could participate in or control the distribution of the tronc. The nondisclosure of the rules that governed the distribution of these variable wages maintained an asymmetry of information between workers and managers that served as a method of

control. It was only when this asymmetry was broken, that the true nature of the tronc system was revealed.

The revelation of the tronc spreadsheet containing the data for table 7.6.1 is one such instance of breakdown of managerial power through the asymmetry of information. When workers obtained this document, it confirmed their suspicions that the rules governing the tronc system for TKO Restaurant and Medina Hotel were neither fair nor democratic. According to the tronc system, certain staff had more responsibility and therefore received more points: servers received five points, clearers received three points, and the bar back received one point, etc. This was a normal weighting of different roles. However, there were also large and unexplained discrepancies between similar roles that employees had no control over. For example, Nyah (host, TKO restaurant at Medina) observed that some servers in the restaurant were awarded a greater proportion of the tronc based on their “relationship to a manager” rather than performance. She said this was often highly gendered as male managers would favour attractive women. Rez (server) believed these discrepancies to be the result of favouritism and a system of reward or punishment that operated to control labour. As evidenced by table 7.6.1, there were significant discrepancies in points per hour between workers with the same or similar jobs. For example, the head bar back received a least a point more than either of the bartenders; one runner received two points more than another runner, and so on. As the points system was a significant multiplier of variable pay, the tronc system could therefore be used by managers to reward or punish workers on an individual basis by not given them hours, by not giving them the same points, or both.

Evidence of the tronc being used as a disciplinary mechanism was also revealed by workers at the Last Boutique Hotel. Sebastián (senior sous chef) represented the kitchen in the tronc committee, which was formed from representatives of the different departments. At the end of each month, they closed the tronc so that the troncmaster could divide the money according to a points system set by management, which was based on an individual’s job and seniority within the company. If there were disagreements among tronc committee members over the distribution, they could put in

a motion to request a change. However, Sebastián explained that this was essentially a ruse:

In reality, it's all a panache, a front, what you really do is say “yes” and sign because if you don't agree, the troncmaster will withhold your money and distribute it to himself and the rest of the employees. It's bullshit.

A disagreement over whether a new manager deserved a share of the tronc led to an escalating series of conflicts between the manager and kitchen staff. Sebastián and his colleagues opposed the manager receiving a share of the tronc on the grounds that he was a manager and was therefore not entitled to it. The manager, who was also troncmaster, then decided to withhold the money until they let him have a share. He made Sebastián look responsible for his colleagues not receiving their share of the tronc and forced him to concede to the managers' request to receive a portion of the tronc. The consequences of the struggle caused tension between Sebastián and the kitchen staff he represented since they were unhappy with this result. The conflict between managers and workers demonstrates how a lack of accountability within workplaces and a lack of enforcement of labour laws can allow exploitative practices to flourish. By coercing workers to allow him a portion of the tronc, the manager directly appropriated a portion of workers' wages and therefore a portion of the value they produced for the company.

This section examined how the tronc system was used by managers as a method of control, leveraging institutional power over workers to extract additional surplus-value in the form of wage theft. Due to the relatively complex rules of the tronc, managers and organisations use it as a method of detailed control over money relations: altering workers' pay through the points system, favouring or disciplining workers, and appropriating a portion for themselves. The appropriation of service charges and tips via the tronc system was partially a result of the asymmetry of information between workers and managers, yet also a product of the legal power asymmetry between workers and managers in the employment relation. Workers did not consent to these practices but had limited individual or collective power to resist. However, as the next section shows, there were exceptions to the asymmetric power relations in hospitality work. These exceptions demonstrated that unionised workers and customers can work together to fight back against wage theft.

7.7 Hybrid Solidarity and Resistance

This thesis has explored the tensions between production and valorisation of experience, which manifest in the struggle between workers and managers in the labour process. Bélanger and Edwards (2010, p. 442) claim that the “ultimate paradox of service work” is that service workers have “more objective reasons for resistance but less capacity to do so” due to the triangulated structure of the capital-labour relationship in front-line service work. The managerial use of the customer as a method of control is a tactic that has been well-documented in the literature on service work (Fuller and Smith, 1991; Gamble, 2007; Korczynski et al., 2000). Based on the experiences of workers, this section explores the opposite phenomenon: the use of the customer as a method of resistance. Based on the data, this section contests the claim that hospitality workers have less capacity for resistance. Unlike managers, customers are not obliged to act as agents of capital. Managers can leverage customer-mediation as a means of control, yet so can workers. While previous research (Cobble, 1991; Dowling, 2007; Gatta, 2009; Sherman, 2007) has examined historical instances of resistance in the production of experience, this section provides an analysis of a new dimension of collective resistance: a collective strategy to build customer solidarity.

The cases in which workers successfully resisted wage theft were exceptional and relied on building solidarity beyond the workplace. Since the 1989 victories of the Justice for Janitors campaign in Los Angeles by the Service Employees International Union [SEIU] local 399, service unions have oriented their organising strategies beyond individual workplaces to the level of the labour market and civil society (Savage, 1998). This reflects a “community turn” (Holgate, 2015) that has also characterised recent organising efforts in hospitality by the Hotel and Restaurant Employees Union [HERE] in the US and Unite in the UK. Community unionism is defined by organising strategies that have more in common with social justice movements than traditional union campaigns (Wills, 2005). However, research shows little evidence that workplace-based or community unionism alone are effective enough to win campaigns in industries like hospitality where workforces are highly fragmented and precarious (Alberti, 2016). It is

fitting, therefore, that workers in this study developed a hybrid organisational form of collective resistance to wage theft. The combination of elements of workplace and community unionism with customer solidarity is not an entirely novel phenomenon. Solidarity between service producers and consumers has a historical precedent in industries such as health and social care, where workers and users came together to fight for better pay and conditions (Spandler et al., 2006). However, this is a phenomenon that has not yet been explored in the hospitality industry. The fieldwork revealed that workers successfully used customer-mediation as a social form of resistance to exploitation and wage theft.

The most visible and successful forms of collective resistance emerged in relation to worker exploitation through unpaid labour-time and wage theft through the *tronc* system. Through the Unite Hotel and Restaurant Workers' Branch, workers collectively leveraged customer mediation against managers by developing worker-customer solidarity. The first example involved a campaign against a large hospitality chain. At this company, the finance director served as the *tronc*master of all workplaces nationwide. The company had a discretionary service charge in place, yet charged a 10 per cent "administration fee" to workers on every transaction, appropriating their wages (Unite, 2016b). The union demanded that management drop this "fee", which essentially served as a means for corporate managers to appropriate a percentage of the service charge from all employees, increasing the extraction of unpaid labour-time. During the campaign, union members and organisers visited various branches of the chain in London on a weekly basis to picket the entrance and hand out leaflets to customers explaining that managers were "stealing workers' tips" (Henry, union organiser). Customers were generally sympathetic to these protests. Workers and union activists asked customers to request that managers remove the service charge from the bill. Customers then paid their tips directly to the server in cash. The union extended this campaign nationwide and continued to use news and social media to leverage consumer solidarity until the administration fee was scrapped. The successful leveraging of social relations between workers and customers, along with pressure from outside the workplace itself had ripple effects on at least two other national chains who removed their administration fees. These campaigns helped provoke a more open dialogue about

the tronc system and the theft of workers' wages, while building momentum into a second campaign at a major luxury hotel in London.

The second campaign of collective resistance was against was sparked by employees' experiences of wage theft through the manipulation of the tronc system at Medina Hotel (see section 7.6.1 and 7.6.2). An escalating conflict over the disclosure and control of the tronc rules led to the targeted intimidation of one server (Rez) and the firing of five bartenders (anonymous) over their involvement with the union. Rez was intimidated by manager for his union organising actions. He was followed around after his shifts by security guards and harassed in the locker room. When he refused to turn up for a shift in protest, management used this as pretext for a disciplinary and to terminate his contract. The actions of management provoked Rez's colleagues to organise with union to protest their treatment and the theft of the service charge. At a meeting, they voted to picket in front of the hotel until Rez was reinstated and they were given control over the tronc. Before, during and after the pickets, workers inside the hotel restaurant and union members outside the hotel restaurant persuaded customers to put pressure on managers by asking them if the service charge went to the workers. In response, managers downplayed the conflict to individual customers, while attempting to discipline employees by removing the 15 per cent service charge without telling customers or employees; "they decided without anyone's knowledge that they're going to take it off until the protest ends" (Rez, server, TKO at Medina). This covert action further escalated tensions as all staff that dealt with customers' bills were told to bring them to management before processing.

The removal of the service charges would be a significant reduction of employees' wages because servers at the restaurant earned the legal minimum wage plus service charge and tips: "basically half of our wages, almost half, comes from service charge" (Rez). It affected everyone in the FOH: "everyone was just infuriated; they wanted to just walk out and quit, but we kept on going" (Rez). Some staff refused to take the service charge off the bill, while the union and solidarity picketers outside the hotel instructed customers to tip in cash. This was a successful strategy and continued on a weekly basis, gaining media attention, until management agreed to renegotiate the

service charge policy with employees and the union. Employees and union organisers thus leveraged customer mediation to resist the theft of wages in the immediate situation, while using social campaigning to take back control of the tronc system.

This section explored one of the successful ways that hotel workers collectively confronted management through union campaigns. Their struggle demonstrated that customers could be used as social leverage to resist wage theft from managers. These campaigns attracted positive media attention for workers and negative attention for managers and employers, which forced them to publicly change their policies.

Customers who heard about the campaign were encouraged to have conversations with their servers about the service charge wherever they went. According to Nazan, this “subjective and humanising” approach changed perceptions by “breaking down that material barrier between customer and server” and encouraged further struggles. She felt empowered and that “building a culture of respect and solidarity could go some way into building the confidence of hospitality workers”. These innovative methods of resistance leveraged public support, socialising the politics of service work beyond the workplace. As Marxist industrial relations theorists have pointed out, trade unions must find alternative ways of connecting economy and society, work and life (Hyman, 1989). These cases demonstrate that strategies of resistance to the appropriation of surplus-value do not begin and end at the workplace, but instead can find greater success if they are socialised beyond it.

7.8 Conclusion

This chapter examined the politics of valorisation in hospitality work. The empirical findings of this chapter revealed that managers practiced the regular theft of time and wages and dominated of the frontier of control. These particular methods of the extraction were bound up with different concrete labour processes and methods of control. Salaried workers were subject to bullying and intimidation if they did not complete the extra work that managers assigned, so worked beyond the normal contracted hours. Hourly-waged workers were subject to similar tactics, yet managers manipulated the intensity of work to coerce them into performing unpaid labour or did

not record the extra hours. Hotel employees were cheated out of holiday entitlements through manipulating the dates of the financial year and annual leave. Agency workers were charged hidden fees for training and denied holiday entitlements through the use of bogus “self-employment” contracts. Managers maintained these practices by simply not giving workers any written statement of particulars. A lack of transparency underscores the practices of management and the source of managerial dominance over workers is the fundamental withholding of information. Finally, the tronc system was leveraged as a means to reduce workers’ wages, therefore increasing the portion of unpaid labour-time they performed for the company and increasing company profits. This had the secondary effect of allowing the company to avoid paying tax in certain cases, which also increased the company margins.

The chapter makes an empirical contribution to labour process research by analysing the particular methods that managers used to extract additional surplus-value in the form of pure labour-time or wages and linking these methods to the nature of the valorisation process in service work. The struggle over the portion of value distributed to workers versus the portion of surplus-value appropriated by managers and the organisation itself represents the fundamental structural conflict of the valorisation process. The appropriation of surplus-value beyond the normal terms of the contract, a key finding of the research, is an extension of this conflict, yet has not received enough attention in the literature on work and employment relations. Critical studies of hospitality work have touched on some issues related to exploitation, such as the problem of low pay and poor conditions for room attendants (Lloyd et al., 2013; Warhurst et al., 2008), the normalisation of high-intensity work for chefs (Burrow et al., 2015), and the poor treatment of migrant workers (Alberti, 2011; Anderson, 2010). Yet, due to a reliance on a “core theory” that fails to recognise the importance of the value-form in the labour process, contemporary studies of the service labour process (Lloyd et al., 2013; MacDonald and Korczynski, 2009; MacDonald and Sirianni, 1996; Sherman, 2011) have a limited understanding of the dynamics of exploitation that workers must navigate. Applying value-form analysis to labour process draws out the politics of service work, linking conflict “on the shop floor” and to broader imperatives of the valorisation

process. Such an approach is necessary to explain how and why exploitation extends beyond the normal terms of the contract in the hospitality industry.

This chapter concluded with a discussion of some of the ways that workers have successfully mobilised these forces against exploitation. As argued throughout this thesis, customer mediation of the capital-labour relation can also make detailed control over the labour process harder for management. Too much control over the interpersonal relations of the production of the hospitality experience can lead to value destruction as workers would not be able to respond to individual customer expectations and demands. This tension offered opportunities for workers to socialise resistance to exploitation by appealing to customers' moral and ethical and using other points of leverage beyond the workplace. Through growing union membership and increasing scrutiny on the industry, the long hours, intensity, wage theft, and generally exploitative dynamics of hospitality work can potentially be changed for the better.

8. Conclusions: Navigating the Production and Valorisation of Experience

This thesis investigates the relation between the nature of capitalist service production and the experiences of UK hospitality workers through theoretical and empirical enquiry into the labour process. Critically analysing the experiences of London hospitality workers required delving into the ontological and epistemological foundations of labour process theory, addressing the relation between the labour theory of value, the commodification of services, and the experiences of workers. From a theoretical foundation with the value-form at its centre, the research proceeded to empirically investigate the production of the experiential commodity and the valorisation of value, a central thread of the thesis. The empirical aspects of the research explored how the production of such a commodity shapes workers economic experiences in three ways: by influencing divisions of labour and barriers to mobility power in the labour market; by subjecting workers to a particularly potent tension between quality and quantity in the production of the hospitality experience; and by compounding managerial capacity to exploit and coerce workers in the valorisation process.

8.1 Summary of Findings

The research found that hotel managers constructed the hospitality labour market through two forms of pre-emptive control—automated personality assessments and staffing agencies. Personality filtering was automated through online platforms and meant to find workers with the “right attitude” – dedicated to service, team-oriented, bubbly, etc. – since personality was strongly linked to the valorisation process. The widespread use of staffing agencies allowed managers to trial potential workers before providing them with permanent employment, which maintained a steady supply of “on-demand” labour power to supplement or even sometimes substitute permanent staff. Workers’ accounts of the hospitality labour market indicated that they primarily found success through using informal strategies to circumvent managers’ pre-emptive means

of control. Workers with hospitality experience relied on personal networks to find permanent employment, however migrants without hospitality experience or networks relied on agencies for work. These very strategies ended up reproducing divisions between hotel and agency workers by “shackling” agency workers to contracts with lower pay and less social protection compared to hotel employees; “it’s one rule for them and another rule for us (Ignacio, room attendant, On the Job Agency). This shackling impacted labour mobility power and deepening mobility differentials (Alberti 2014).

When asked about what the hotel produced, workers from all different departments responded by describing the notion of an “experience”. Many workers seemed to genuinely enjoy crafting memorable experiences for guests and took “pride in giving good service” (Nazan, hospitality assistant, All Service Agency). The research drew directly on workers perspectives to conceptualise the notion of commodified experience as a combination of an emotional and material transformation according to guest expectations. When discussing their role in the production of such experiences, workers described how they had to continually coordinate within each department as well as between departments to ensure customer satisfaction. The coordinated production of a hospitality experience constitutes a “circuit of service assembly” because it is mediated by customer expectation and demand. This concept is not a circuit in the sense of Marx’s industrial circuit of production, but rather a circuit in the sense of a feedback loop developed to explain the production of hospitality as a subjective and relational process. The study found that customer expectation acted as a fundamental mediator of the relation between workers and managers at three different levels – direct, indirect, and aggregate. These levels corresponded to how directly customer expectation and demand dictated workers’ concrete labour. Workers found innovative ways to moderate their emotional and manual labour in order to navigate the demands of customers and managers, which were sometimes at odds, creating a triangulated effort bargain and tension between them.

Finally, the research found that the imperative to exploit workers’ labour-power in the hospitality industry drove hotel managers toward extracting additional surplus-value

through the theft of time, base wages and variable wages. Managers extracted unpaid labour-time from workers through intimidation and a culture of coercion; they leveraged power asymmetries through contractual means to appropriate workers base wages in the form of hidden fees and holiday entitlements; and they stole workers variable wages directly in the form of service charges and tips by manipulating the tronc system. As Elena (housekeeping supervisor, Grand Budget Hotel) said, “They exploit us absolutely”. Despite the power asymmetries, some workers were able to find an innovative way to resist the rampant exploitation by managers, which relied on leveraging customer mediation as a form of hybrid solidarity to win back stolen wages.

8.2 Contributions

The contributions of this study are both theoretical and empirical. The central thread connecting all of them is how the nature of the experiential commodity itself shapes the labour process and the politics of service work. The theoretical contributions are principally comprised of a re-examination of the relation between the labour theory of value and labour process theory, which aims to centre labour process analysis on exploitation and labour time. This represents a theoretical deepening of value-form analysis in labour process research, while highlighting the importance of conceiving the capitalist labour process as a unity of production and valorisation. Labour process research needs a theory of value based on labour-time if it aims to make systemic and causal connections between exploitation in production and social relations that result from the valorisation process more generally. A Marxist approach recognises the different representations of value in time, commodities, and money, linking different levels of analysis into a totalising system. Through the incorporation of value-form theory into case study and ethnographic research, the thesis makes a methodological contribution to Marxist labour process research. The value-form analytic facilitates a clearer dialectical relation between the concrete and the abstract in the extended case method by emphasising production and valorisation as different levels of analysis.

The empirical contributions of the thesis revolved around three themes. The first empirical contribution is an analysis of the construction of the hospitality labour market

through the filtering of attitudes and the contractual stratification of the agency division of labour, neither of which had previously received sufficient attention in the research on hospitality work. The second empirical contribution is an analysis of how workers navigated the production of the experiential commodity and circuit of service assembly. An in-depth analysis of the commodity and the detailed division of labour in hospitality is under-researched from a Marxist perspective. The third contribution is an analysis of how workers navigated the valorisation process when experiencing exploitation and wage theft. Exploitation, wage theft, and the tronc system in the hospitality industry are have received very limited attention from academic researchers, especially from a Marxist perspective. Additionally, worker organising against the theft of variable wages is underexplored in the literature. Each of these contributions are summarised and explained in greater detail below.

8.2.1 Theorising the Labour Process and Hospitality Work

A Marxist approach to the labour process requires the consideration of micro-, meso-, and macro-levels of the empirical phenomena being studied (Vidal and Hauptmeier, 2014). This thesis considers these different levels through the labour theory of value and a qualitative enquiry into workers' economic experiences. Chapter two argued that labour process theory should return to a Marxist value-form analysis that explains capitalist accumulation by accounting for the exploitation of workers in terms of abstract labour time. The argument hinged on a critique of "core" labour process theory, which is premised on a so-called "materialist" turn away from Marx's conception of exploitation (Edwards, 1986). The "core" theory offers important insights into the dynamics of production, organisation, and experiences of workers, yet it would benefit from greater engagement with Marxist political economy. Other scholars have provided critiques of the "core" theory, based on the political consequences of abandoning the Marxist theory, but do not focus specifically on the labour theory of value and exploitation (Cohen, 1987; Rowlinson and Hassard, 1994; Spencer, 2000b). The chapter contributes to this literature by further developing these critiques. It begins by tracing the origins of the "materialist" turn back to Edwards' (1986) concept of exploitation, which is based on a neo-Ricardian theory rather than the labour theory of value (see Cohen 1978). Based on

a refutation of Edwards conception of exploitation and a critique of subsequent attempts by Thompson to connect LPT to other theories of value, the chapter bolsters the case for a Marxist approach to the labour process. Furthermore, the chapter draws on Elson (1979) to emphasize the political implications and unifying functions of value-form theory for social research. The labour theory of value demonstrates causal links between workers economic experiences of exploitation in production and broader dynamics of the valorisation process at a different level of abstraction. Marx's totalising approach thus offers a more robust ontological and epistemological grounding for LPT than recent attempts to broaden the "core" by attaching it to global value chains or critical realism.

Applying a value-form analytic to the production of services as commodities allows the thesis to draw out specific tensions between the private demands of individual customers and the market-mediated demands of managers that are particularly apparent in service work. To customers, workers appear as if they are private individuals and that social phenomena are merely the result of individual decisions. Yet as Marx (1976, p. 165) notes:

The labour of the private individual manifests itself as an element of the total labour of society only through the relations which the act of exchange establishes between the products, and, through their mediation, between the producers.

To commodify social interaction and emotion means these activities must be subsumed to the imperatives of profit-making and the division of labour. The research found that this subsumption generates a fundamental tension between the production and valorisation processes. Concrete labour in production must correspond to a certain quantity of average socially determined labour time that is necessary for both the reproduction of the valorisation process as well as an excess over it, which generates surplus-value. The labour process becomes a site of conflict 'on the shop floor' because the variability of concrete labour directly affects the capacity for the valorisation of capital.

Producing a service commodity requires several simultaneous, yet qualitatively different, capacities in labour-power: manual, mental, emotional and aesthetic. Emotional capacity is especially important for front-line service workers, who are

constantly surveyed by both managers and customers. In contrast to studies of service work influenced by the “core” theory (Bolton, 2010; MacDonald and Korczynski, 2009; MacDonald and Sirianni, 1996), whose depth of analysis is limited to concrete labour, value-form analysis also adds another level through the concept of abstract labour. Abstraction allows for form-determination in labour process analysis, which means that labour is represented as value in time, commodities and money. Commonalities can therefore be drawn from the labour-power of the service worker to that of the manufacturing worker. At the same time, service work relies at least in part on the commodification of human interaction, which due to the subjective and contingent nature of interaction, makes service production in hospitality more difficult to valorise.

8.2.2 Pre-Emptive Control in the Labour Market

The literature on hotels indicates that reputation is a crucial element in determining profitability and success (Shapiro, 1982). Online ratings agencies have increased the importance of reputation based on the heightened capacity for customer feedback (Yacouel and Fleischer, 2012). While managers can control levels of staff, prices, marketing, and so on, they cannot control every interaction between workers and customers. Research has shown that managers pay particular attention to service orientation and personality (Dusek et al., 2014; Lee and Ok, 2015). Chapter five makes an empirical contribution to this literature by exploring the ways that hotel managers attempted to militate against the risk of negative feedback by using different methods to filter workers with the “right attitude” so as to facilitate the valorisation of experience (explored in subsequent chapters). The research found that managers viewed emotional capacity and service orientation as innate rather than something managers could train. Automated personality testing systems allowed managers to leverage control over the labour market by sourcing workers who were already endowed with such capacities rather than allowing for diversity. These filters codified normative five-factor personality types and associated bias into the selection process. Establishing algorithms for job candidates based on personality creates precedents that allow for managers to extend their control beyond the point of production, pushing the commodification of labour-power toward the commodification of subjectivity itself.

The literature on labour markets generally recognises the presence of a dual labour market, core-periphery relation, or distancing flexibility in the hospitality industry (Atkinson, 1984; Harrison, 1994; Knox, 2010). Research on agencies has shown that they gave hotels advantages in terms of convenience, low labour and retention costs and flexible contracts that protected “core” departments (Geary, 1992; Houseman, 2001; Lai et al., 2008; McDowell et al., 2008). The research undertaken in this study found that directly employed workers on permanent contracts tended to be concentrated in front-line service or supervisory roles and had access to internal labour markets and development schemes that by default excluded agency workers. Agency workers on non-standard contracts tended to be concentrated in housekeeping departments or in other low-paid manual labour jobs. The research makes an empirical contribution to this literature by exploring how contractual hierarchies were used as a method of constructing and maintaining an agency division of labour, which served as a shackling device and a pre-emptive means of control. Agency workers gained experience in hospitality work, yet since agencies were predominantly used for cleaning and housekeeping services, these workers remained on the periphery of hotel employment. The agency division of labour institutionalised and reproduced social divisions of labour by limiting labour mobility power, establishing “mobility differentials” (Alberti, 2014).

8.2.3 The Production of an Experiential Commodity

Research on call centres and other forms of front-line service work has found that such work is characterised by a contradiction between the qualitative demands for satisfactory customer service and the quantitative demands to increasing the volume of sales in a given timeframe (Korczynski, 2009a; Taylor and Bain, 1999). However, the production of the hospitality experience requires something more than simply an “assembly-line in the head” (Taylor and Bain, 1999, p. 109). A key empirical contribution of this thesis is the exploration of workers’ experiences of navigating the production of an experiential commodity. As outlined in chapter six, the commodity produced in a hotel is neither merely a clean room nor a “feeling of being looked after”, but the holistic experience of hospitality itself, an environment comprised of multiple components, both tangible and

intangible. The production of hospitality required actively reading and responding to customers' subjectivity, including explicit and implicit social and emotional signifiers. Production operated on a circuit of service assembly comprised of different stages and mediated by customers' expectations and demands. There were three different levels of mediation (direct, indirect, and aggregate), each influencing the frontier of control in increasingly direct ways. A Marxist approach using value-form analysis allows for the conceptualisation of the production of experience as a commodity and frames the empirical exploration of how subjective variability mediates the labour process and the politics of service work.

The research makes an additional contribution to the empirical research on hospitality by exploring the effects of managers and customer mediation on workers' experiences. Managers attempted to mitigate against the subjective variability of customer expectation and demand through market segmentation strategies, setting the parameters of expectation via the star-rating system and the services offered. The production of the hospitality experience (the object of consumption) also entailed the production of the manner and motive of consumption. Hotels did more than simply satisfy guests' expectations; they also produced such expectations through determining the manner and means of consumption. Setting the parameters of expectation exercises indirect control over both variable capital (as labour-power) and variable consumption (as consumer demand). The dynamics of mediation highlighted a central tension between managers' strategies of setting the subjective parameters of customer expectation, customers enforcing those expectations, and workers negotiating between managers' and customers' demands. Workers engaged in a triangulated effort bargain, but the triangle was not equal. Instead, managerial power was merely refracted through customer expectation and demand. Managers leveraged customer mediation against workers in the production process.

8.2.4 The Politics of Valorising Experience

Customer mediation of workers' experiences in the production process has implications for the extraction of surplus-value in the valorisation process. As discussed in chapter

four, managers have generally maintained a higher rate of exploitation by relying on low pay, a phenomenon that is well documented in the literature on the hospitality industry (Johnson, 1983; Unite, 2016b; Wills, 2005; Wood, 1997). The industry continues to have the highest incidence of low-paid workers (see section 4.6). Managers have little capacity to increase productivity by reducing labour costs through further lowering wages, while lowering staff levels could potentially decrease customer satisfaction. At the same time, without satisfied customers, the valorisation process collapses. When production is fundamentally tied to human interaction, increasing the rate of surplus-value extraction can actually have value-destructive effects. The contradiction between producing for subjective expectations and the objective imperatives of service valorisation tended to result in workers performing unpaid labour. The time-sensitive and subjective nature of interactive services thus creates a structural imperative that favours the extension of the working day and unpaid working time.

A major empirical contribution of the research is the analysis of the exploitative methods that managers used to coerce workers into providing additional unpaid labour. There is a substantial literature on workers engaging in fiddles and gaming the effort bargain (Ditton, 1977; Henry and Mars, 1978; Mars, 1994; Sherman, 2007). However, the data revealed that managers were engaged in practices in which they fiddled with workers' share of the value produced. They extracted additional surplus-value beyond the normal terms of the contract, a practice that should be properly termed as the wage theft, represented in terms of time and money. These practices took three main forms. Managers extracted additional unpaid labour-time from workers through intensification and a culture of intimidation, including the threat of redundancy. They manipulated workers' contractual terms and conditions to extract base wages by charging for training and manipulated pay periods to avoid paying holiday entitlements. Managers appropriated workers' service charges and tips through the *tronc* system, which was also used as a disciplinary mechanism. The revelation and analysis of the additional extraction of surplus value through unpaid labour-time and unpaid wages, especially the use of the *tronc* system, constitutes a major empirical contribution of the research.

Successful collective resistance was the exception to managerial rule. However, the research provided insights into the development of social forms of resistance in hospitality work. While research on community unionism and social care has documented instances in which service producers and consumers have worked together to achieve aims, the dynamics of such social struggles in hospitality work are under researched. An additional empirical contribution of the research is the analysis of workers leveraging customer-mediation to resist the theft of their time and money. Medina Hotel workers' struggle for control over their tronc demonstrated that customers could be used as social leverage to allow workers to gain power over the frontier of control. Workers combined traditional pickets outside their workplace with social media campaigning to successfully pressure management into transparency and democratic accountability with regard to the tronc system. This is important because it shows that collective organisation is both possible and effective in hospitality work if it takes a social form.

The empirical data repeatedly highlighted a particularly strong tension in the nature of hospitality work between the quality of service production and the quantity of surplus-value that capitalists are able to extract in the valorisation process. The human and subjective nature of the commodified experience make the work unique. The customer's individual perception of the use-value of the service did not always align with the social or market-mediated perception of its exchange value. For example, customers often demanded more time and emotional engagement from workers than they were willing or able to give. The subjectivity of the customer thus constrained the extraction of surplus-value by introducing a tension between the quality and quantity of service interactions. The successful production of experience was directly mediated by the variable demands and desires of guests, yet the profit-making imperatives of the valorisation process placed limits on the degree to which success was achieved. Without an analysis grounded in the labour theory of value, the political implications of this tension and the dynamics of exploitation would remain opaque. A Marxist approach links concrete labour in production to abstract labour in the forms of time and wages in the valorisation process.

8.3 Reflections on Methods and Limitations

The limitations of the research were both self-imposed and structural. The self-imposed limitations were that the research did not aim to produce an “impartial” or “objective” account of hospitality work. One of its explicit aims was to explore the nature of such work from a worker’s perspective. Managers’ perspectives were used for context and triangulated with descriptive statistics to frame the politics of hospitality work. To adopt a worker’s perspective required participating in the work itself and gaining workers’ trust. Combining ethnographic participant observation with interviews allowed the researcher to explore hospitality work at both firm and industrial levels, examining occupations, sites, and situations throughout London. This technique allowed the study to weave workers’ narratives together with the researcher’s own experience of the labour process, collecting detailed data on the commodification of experience, the circuit of service assembly, the emotional effort bargain, the balance of control and resistance, and the exploitative conditions that characterised the industry.

The structural limitations of the research included access to sensitive data while navigating some difficult ethical situations in the field. One of the requirements of the research was to use fully overt methods and informed consent during the fieldwork. However, as explained in chapter three, there is often no hard boundary between overt and covert methods in the field. In public or semi-public situations, it can be impossible to obtain fully informed consent from all parties and attempts to do so can so radically alter the research environment that it would invalidate the data or foreclose access. The research therefore developed a particular approach to consent that entailed the use of limited disclosure, which mediates informed consent along a continuum. Limited disclosure is an important contribution to research methods and adds to the growing literature on critical ethnographic methods and research ethics. Using limited disclosure is important because it allows access to the research subjects while remaining within the ethical framework of informed consent. Through this method, the research was also able to explore the politics of service work “under the clean surface”. This technique reflects a Marxist aim in critical research in that it aims to reveal subjective and sensitive data that goes beyond appearances and links this data to systemic and objective conditions.

8.4 Directions for Future Research

This study addressed the question of what shapes workers experiences of London hospitality work from a Marxist perspective. Based on the theoretical and empirical contributions of the research, there are two themes which should be taken up by future research. The first theme concerns Marxist political economy, particularly how value-form analysis can provide insights into the changing nature of work and employment relations. Currently, there is a resurgence in interest around value “creators” (productive industries) versus value “extractors” (rent-seeking unproductive industries) (Böhm and Land, 2012; Brown, 2008; Mazzucato, 2018; Tregenna, 2014). Marxist political economy has transformative potential for the analysis of value creation and extraction because it locates the production of value as an objective and social phenomenon rather than a subjective and individual preference. By reconnecting value-form theory with its empirical application to the study of work, the theoretical contributions of this thesis provide an impetus for future Marxist research on the value contributions of labour versus the extraction of such value by capitalist institutions—from financialised firms digital platforms. “Platforms” are defined as “digital infrastructures that enable two or more groups to interact” (Srnicek, 2017, p. 43). They offer a technological “fix” to industrial logistics and production issues, taking advantage of the rapid development of cloud-based computing and artificial intelligence, while often compounding job polarisation. The rise of platforms such as Airbnb are a particularly relevant case-study for the analysis of value-creation versus value-extraction. Airbnb has disrupted the traditional relations of production in the hospitality industry by providing networked infrastructures and digital services for a growing mass of global users to collect rents from consumers seeking a particular experience.

The second theme that should be taken up by future research draws from the empirical findings of the thesis and addresses the question of technological mediation and substitution in interactive service work more generally. This question was not fully addressed in the thesis yet represents an increasingly important area of study. In interactive service industries, it is not yet possible to fully automate the production of

affect or emotion transfer. Hospitality services generally have been difficult to automate, especially jobs with a high degree of non-routine tasks such as those in hotels (Gronroos, 1990; Hayes et al., 2014). At the same time, the lack of trade union membership and limited labour protections allows employers to dictate the terms of employment and dismiss employees easily. This means that managers have less incentive to institute structured training and development programs for employees, especially for entry-level work, relying instead on outside institutions or recruiting workers from abroad.

Hospitality work is an ideal case study for investigating the limits of automated substitution precisely because the reliance on human labour-power for operations is greater than in other industries (Lee and Ok, 2015; Schneider and Bowen, 1993). The use of artificial intelligence through cloud-based platforms, which provide remotely accessible digital services for a subscription fee, has the potential to disrupt the hospitality industry. Automated technologies are already being used by some industry-leading four- and five-star hotels in London (Brant, 2016). Metis is one cloud-based platform that analyses an enormous volume of data collected by hotel companies from mystery guests, online reviews, social media, travel blogs, ratings agencies and customer preference surveys. Artificial intelligence has been useful only insofar as it can uncover problems, while providing explanations for why such problems are occurring; developing solutions still requires the creative and critical capacity of human labour-power (Brant, 2018). Data analytics and best practice are driving the hospitality industry toward the standardisation of service, which becomes the opposite of a unique or memorable experience. Customers expect satisfaction, but success in an increasingly competitive hotel industry means that companies must strive to provide unique and memorable experiences. As a result, hotels are diversifying their brands and offering more unique experiences and environments to guests. Hospitality thus represents an important future case study in the limits of automation and artificial intelligence to shape the world of work.

Les dés sont pipes.

Marx (1867)

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Appendices

Appendix 3.1: Interview Questions

Template 1: Managers and Supervisory staff

1.1 Work and Strategy as Manger/Supervisor

What is your formal title?

Could you describe your work environment?

What do you do on a typical day at work?

What sort of tasks does your job involve?

Do you feel valued by your company?

Do you find your work fulfilling?

Do you have a manager yourself? What is your relationship with them like?

How would you describe your relationship to the workers you manager/supervise?

Do your company policies, rules and regulations make your work easier or more difficult?

Which & why?

What is your approach to supervising others?

Is this informed by a general managerial philosophy/strategy and where did you learn this?

How do you divide work tasks and responsibilities among those employees you supervise?

1.2 Perceptions of Control and Decision Making

Do you feel you have any capacity to effect change either in the workplace or the company at large?

Who do you think has the ultimate power to make decisions in the company?

Do you participate in making decisions about such things as the products or services delivered, hiring and firing or budgets?

Can you make decisions to change the overall number of employees?

Can you make decisions to change the conception and organisation of work?

Do you have the power to grant or prevent a pay raise or promotion?

Do you have the power to hire and fire people?

1.3 Staffing and Organisation

How many people does this company employ?

What are the leadership roles in the company?

Who would you consider the core workforce or who plays the most important roles?

Does the company typically use recruitment or staffing agencies? If so, what sort of staff do they supply?

Does the company use contracted services? If so, what sort of services are they?

What proportion of expenditure does this company spend on staffing services? On contract services?

Does the company offer paid staff training and development?

Does the company offer paid/unpaid work experience, internships, etc.?

1.4 Perceptions of Mobility and Training

What sort of training did you receive for your job?

How long did it take to complete this training?

Did you find it useful?

What age did you leave school and what exams did you take if any?

What is your highest level of education?

What other formal credentials do you have?

Are you part of any professional organisations?

What formal credentials does your role at this company require?

Do you anticipate career advancement?

1.5 Understanding of the Product of the Company

What do you think the company you work for sells or produces?

What do you think is your primary contribution to the company product?

Do you think your work is any different than it would be if you worked in a factory? Why?

What do you think your company's principles are? Do you identify with them?

How important do you think your company is to the UK economy?

Do you think society values the work you do? Why or why not?

1.6 Identity and Demographic Information

What is your salary?

How often are you paid?

Do you receive additional benefits? What are they?

Do you own any shares in companies or receive dividends?

Do you have investments that you or someone else manages?

What is your age?

What is your racial/ethnic identity?

What is your country of birth? Are you a permanent resident in the UK?

Do you feel you have experienced any discrimination at work? What happened?

Do you feel discrimination of any sort has affected your career? How?

Could you describe where you live and your commute?

What are your monthly costs of living? [mortgage/rent, utilities, food, transport, children, care]

Are you the sole earner of your household?

Who does your housework?

Do you have any dependents?

Are you carer?

Template 2: Non-supervisory workers

2.1 Understanding of Employment and Contract

What company are you employed by?

What is your formal title?

Do you have a contract? If so what type? Permanent? Temporary? Zero hours?

How long have you worked in this role?
How did you get this job?
What was your previous job?
Do you consider your employment secure?
How much and how often are you paid?
Do you feel that you get a fair wage?
Do receive tips from customers or other staff?
Do you expect an increase in wages/salary over the course of your employment?
Do you receive any benefits such as a retirement plan from your employer?

2.2 Perceptions of Labour and Management

Could you describe your work environment?
What do you do on a typical day at work?
Do you feel valued by your company?
Do find your work fulfilling?
Do you find your work fluctuates or is routine?
What sort of skills do you need to perform your job?
How do you feel about the pace and intensity of work?
Do you typically work alone or with a team?
What are your relationships like with co-workers?
Who is your supervisor or line manager and how would you characterise your relationship with this person?
How would you characterise your relationship with management in general?
Do you feel like your opinions are valued by your supervisors?
Can you contribute suggestions to improve work you are involved in?
Do managers ever talk about flexibility?
What do you think it means to do your job well?
Do any conflicts occur in your workplace and how are they resolved?

2.3 Control and Rights at Work

Do you feel you have freedom in how you carry out your work?
Is your performance measured? How?
Does CCTV, a computer, or any other device monitor you? How does this make you feel?
How many breaks do you get during a typical day? How long are they?
Can you take a break without having to ask permission?
Do you feel your work environment is safe and healthy?
Have you ever been asked to do work 'off the clock'?
Have you ever been asked to do something that makes you uncomfortable or unsafe?
Are you a member of a union?
Have you relied on union resources for support in any way?
What do you think of unions in general?

2.4 Perceptions of Mobility and Training

What sort of training did you receive for your job?
How long did it take to complete this training?
Did you find it useful?

What age did you leave school and what exams did you take if any?
What is your highest level of education?
What formal credentials do you have?
What formal credentials does your role at this company require?
Do you anticipate career advancement?

2.5 Understanding of the Product

What do you think the company you work for sells or produces?
What do you think is your primary contribution to the company product?
Do you think your work is any different than it would be if you worked in a factory? Why?
What do you think your company's principles are? Do you identify with them?
How important do you think your company is to the UK economy?
Do you think society values the work you do? Why or why not?

2.6 Identity and Demographic Information

What is your age?
What is your racial/ethnic identity?
What is your country of birth? Are you a permanent resident in the UK?
Do you feel you have experienced any discrimination at work? What happened?
Do you feel discrimination of any sort has affected your career? How?
Could you describe where you live and your commute?
What are your monthly living expenses? [mortgage/rent, utilities, food, transport, children, care]
Are you the sole earner of your household?
Who does your housework?
Do you have any dependents?
Are you carer?
Have you ever had to use payday loan shops or pawnshops due to lack of work or low pay?
Do you receive or send money to/from family or friends?

2.7 Supplementary

2.7 Union Organising:

What unions are you a member of?
How did you get involved in Union organising?
How did you become involved in this particular union?
What is your position within the union?
How many members are in the union?
What sorts of workers does the union represent?
Have you had any significant increases over the past 5 or 10 years?
What are the main issues in the industry at the moment?
What are the main campaigns that you are part of at the moment?
What successes have you had?
Why do you think they have been successful?
What hasn't worked so well in your campaigns?
Have any of these campaigns been run before?
Have your campaigns changed in the overall strategy or tactics recently?

Appendix 4.1: Respondents

Name	Occupation	Organisation	Ethnicity and Residency	Age	Contract	Wages	Years in Job
Fairouz	Accounts Supervisor	Redline MGMT - Transnational Hotel Group	Moroccan & UK Citizen	43	Direct - Full-Time	£30,000 / year	18
Amy	Catering Assistant	Redline Catering Management	White & UK Citizen	46	Agency - Full-Time	£9.50 / hour	11
Edith	Chef de Partie	All Weather Hotel	White & Polish Citizen	32	Direct - Full-Time	£23,000 / year base + £7,000 service	6
Luther	Chef de Partie	Couture Arms / First Boutique Hotel	White & UK Citizen	28	Direct - Part-Time	£9 / hour	1.5
Salvador	Chef de Partie	Medina Hotel	Spanish Citizen	29	Direct - Full-Time	£1500 / month	2.5
Nyah	Door Picker	TKO at Medina Hotel	Caribbean & UK Citizen	37	Self-Employed	£150 / shift [7-8 hours]	2.5
Valentino	Doorman	Lux Hotel	Italian Citizen	33	Direct - Full-Time	£1400 / month	2.5
Lorraine	Executive Head Housekeeper	Redline Management Group at Vacation Inn	Guyanese & UK Resident	53	Direct - Full-Time	£1700 / month	7
Nazan	Food and Beverage Assistant	All Service Agency	Turkish & British Citizen	22	Agency - 0/3 hours	£6.77 / hour	0.25
Akram	Food and Beverage Assistant & Bartender	All Service Agency then Hilltop Hotel Group	Moroccan & 4 year Diplomatic Visa	21	Agency & Direct	£ 6.89 / hour	0.25
Dante	Food and Beverage Supervisor	Sandy Hotel	Italian & EU Resident	33	Direct - Full-Time	£1600 / month	0.5
Henry	Food Waiter & Union Organiser	Unite the Union	White Irish & British Citizen	67	Agency - 0/3 hours	Retired	5
Edzai	Grill & Breakfast Chef	Perfèct Hotel	Black South African & UK Resident	33	Direct - Full-Time	£8.25 / hour	5
Damani	Head Housekeeper (Agency Supervisor)	World Agency for Vacation Inn Group	Jamaican & UK Resident	57	Direct - Full-Time	£ 18,500 / year	2
Daniilo	Hospitality Assistant	Hilltop Hotel Group	Filipino & British Citizen	22	Direct - 0/3 hours	£7.50 / hour	7
Riza	Hospitality Assistant	Hilltop Hotel Group	Filipino & UK Resident	19	Direct - 0/3 hours	£7.50 / hour	1
Emily	HR Manager	Transnational Hotel Group	White British	28	Direct - Full Time	£30,000 / year	2
Georgie	Human Resource Manager	Vacation Inn Group	White & British Citizen	26	Direct - Full Time	£24,000 / year	3
Arnaud	Manager	On the Job	Black French	30	Direct - Full Time	£22,000 / year	2
Mark	Night Duty Security Officer	First Boutique Hotel	White & British Citizen	55	Direct - Full-Time	£27,000 / year	8
Ramon	Night Receptionist	Vacation Inn Group	Catalan & EU Resident	53	Direct - Full-Time	£10.50 / hour [night]	4
Kasia	Night Room Division Co-ordinator	West London Hotel	Polish & UK Resident	35	Direct - Full-Time	£1220 / month	10
Ammon	Operations Manager	Annesty Hotel	Egyptian & UK Resident	49	Direct - Full Time	£27,000 / year	2.5
Paola	Room Attendant	New Agency	Dominican & UK Resident	51	Agency - 0/3 hours	£9.50 / hour	3
Ignacio	Room Attendant	Empire Hotel London [On the Job Agency]	Spanish & EU Resident	25	Agency - 0/3 hours	£900 / month	2
Josephine	Room Attendant	Saviour Hotel	Jamaican & UK Resident	43	Direct - Full-Time	£1320 / month	4
Lala	Room Attendant	Just Clean Agency for Grand Budget Hotel	Bulgarian & EU Resident	60	Agency - 0/3 hours	£6.50 / hour [illegal]	1
Elwira	Room Attendant & Union Organiser	All Service Agency at Hilltop Hotel Group	Polish & British Citizen	35	Agency - 0/3 hours	£6.77 / hour	2
Elena	Room Cleaning Supervisor	Grand Budget Hotel	Bulgarian & EU Resident	55	Direct - Full-Time	£7.21 / hour	2
Sherif	Room Service	Arabian Hotel	Gambia & UK Resident	42	Direct - 0/3 hours	£1700 / month after tax	6
Sebastian	Senior Sous Chef	Last Boutique Hotel	Spanish & EU Resident	49	Direct - Full-Time	£28,000 / year	3
Rez	Server	TKO at Medina Hotel	Hungarian & EU Citizen	25	Direct - 0/3 hours	£9.50 / hour	1
Sara	Server	Royal Hotel	White & British Citizen	24	Direct - Full-Time	£7.20 / hour base + £600 service = 1550	1
Ramona	Supervisor	All Service Agency	White & Polish UK Resident	28	Direct - Full Time	£21,000 / year	1
Edward	Valet Assistant	KRS Agency at Far East Hotel	Hungarian & EU Citizen	26	Agency - 0/3 hours	£9.89 / hour [day] + £10.50 / hour [night]	2.5

Appendix 6.2: Star Rating System (AA and Visit Britain)

Star Rating	Criteria
One Star Rating 30-46% Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A minimum of five letting bedrooms. • 100% of bedrooms with en suite or private facilities. • Resident guests, once registered, have access to the hotel at all times. Proprietor and/or staff on site all day and as a minimum on call to resident guests at night. • A dining room, restaurant or similar eating area serving a cooked or continental breakfast seven days a week. • A dining room, restaurant or similar eating area serving evening meals at least five days a week (but hotels that do not offer dinner and are located within easy walking distance of a choice of places to eat dinner, can also be rated under the hotel scheme as a metro or town house hotel, as long as this is made clear to all prospective guests in all marketing and all other hotel requirements are met). • A bar or sitting area with a Liquor Licence. • Hotel generally open seven days a week during its operating season providing, on every day open, the level of service and facilities appropriate to its star rating. • Proprietor and or staff available during the day and evening to receive guests and provide information, services such as hot drinks and light refreshments. • A clearly designated reception facility. • Meeting all the current statutory obligations and providing Public Liability insurance cover.
Two Star Rating 47-54% Criteria	<p><i>(In addition to the requirements for One Star)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All areas of operation should meet the Two Star level of quality for cleanliness, maintenance and hospitality, and for the quality of physical facilities and delivery of services."
Three Star Rating 55-69% Criteria	<p><i>(In addition to the requirements for Two Star)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All areas of operation should meet the Three Star level of quality for cleanliness, maintenance and hospitality, and for the quality of physical facilities and delivery of services. • Once registered, residents have access at all times during the day and evening (e.g. from 7 am until 11 pm) without use of a key. • Access available outside these times. • Dinner served a minimum of six evenings a week with bar snack or equivalent available on seventh evening (unless hotel does not have a restaurant – i.e. metro or town house hotel, located close to a choice of places to eat). • Room service as a minimum of hot and cold drinks and light snacks (e.g. sandwiches) during daytime and evening. Option to provide on request only, without need for full menu promoted in bedroom. Guests should be made aware of this service provision via room information and made aware of prices before ordering. • All bedrooms with en suite bathrooms.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal or direct dial telephone system required (minimum is ability to phone from bedroom to reception and vice versa). • Wi-Fi available in public areas."
<p>Four Star Hotel Rating 70-84% Criteria</p>	<p><i>(In addition to the requirements for Three Star)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expectation is for higher quality of service levels in all departments and in general higher staffing levels; as well as a serious approach and clear focus to the food and beverage offering. • All areas of operation should meet the Four Star level of quality for cleanliness, maintenance and hospitality, and for the quality of physical facilities and delivery of services. • 24-hour room service, including cooked breakfast and full dinner during restaurant opening hours. • Once registered, residents should have 24-hour access, facilitated by on-duty staff. • Enhanced services offered, e.g. Afternoon tea, offer of luggage assistance, meals at lunchtime, table service on request at breakfast. • At least one restaurant, open to residents and non-residents, for breakfast and dinner seven days a week. Hotels without restaurants located within easy walking distance of a range of places to eat are required to serve as a minimum a selection of snacks, light refreshments in public areas, bedrooms, at least in core hours between 7am to 11pm. • All bedrooms with en suite bathrooms and all with WC and thermostatically controlled showers. • Wi-Fi or internet connection provided in bedrooms."
<p>Five Star rating 85- 100% Criteria</p>	<p><i>(In addition to the requirements for Four Star)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent staffing levels with well-structured and dedicated teams with depth in management levels. • Exceptional levels of proactive service and customer care. • All areas of operation should meet the Five Star level of quality for cleanliness, maintenance, hospitality, and for the quality of physical facilities and delivery of services. • Hotel open seven days a week all year. • Enhanced services offered e.g. valet parking, escort to bedrooms, proactive table service in bars and lounges and at breakfast, ‘concierge’ service, 24-hour reception, 24-hour room service, full afternoon tea. • At least one restaurant, open to residents and non-residents for all meals seven days a week. • A minimum of 80% of bedrooms with en suite bathroom with WC, bath and thermostatically controlled shower, 20% may be shower only. • A choice of environments in public areas of sufficient relevant size to provide generous personal space. • Additional facilities e.g. secondary dining, leisure, business centre, spa, etc. • At least one permanent luxury suite available comprising of three separate rooms -bedroom, lounge and bathroom.

<p>Additional Five Star Hotel Rating Criteria and Service</p>	<p><i>Additional Five Star Hotel Rating Criteria and Service</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A well-structured team of staff with management presence. • The restaurant always staffed. • Unobtrusive, polite and courteous staff providing an excellent standard of customer care. Highly trained, professional and proactive staff. • Guests welcomed and escorted to their table at all meals and in all areas where food and drinks are served. • Prompt table service in public areas where guests seat themselves. • Staff demonstrating excellent levels of food, beverage and wine product knowledge and service skills. An extensive choice of food. • A broad range of dishes of outstanding quality. Immaculately presented menus. • Room service ordered, delivered and cleared in a highly professional and efficient manner and without impacting on other services. • Full room service of lunch and dinner during restaurant hours, even if hotel has no restaurant. Service delivery allows each course to be eaten at the correct temperature. All meals served on a dining table or heated trolley, or each hot course delivered separately. Presentation of the highest standard. Bed linen changed frequently in accordance with the hotel’s own policy and for each new guest. • Rooms prepared in advance of the guest’s arrival – possibly including setting an appropriate ambient temperature for the time of year, airing the room well, closing curtains and putting on a light during the hours of darkness. • An evening housekeeping service provided and advertised – possibly including some of the following services: bed turn-down, bins emptied, curtains drawn, towels tidied, room service trays removed. • The significant majority of bedrooms very spacious, allowing generous ease of use for movement, comfort, dining and relaxation. • All bedrooms with a well-planned layout relative to the needs of the guest i.e. business or leisure use. • Room size, layout and delivery method ensures the highest guest dining experience for room service. • Beds for single occupancy to exceed 90 cm (3 ft.) width. • Beds for double occupancy to be at least 153 cm (5 ft.) in width. • Several beds to exceed this size. Bunk beds are not acceptable. • Beds and headboards of excellent quality. • Generous access to both sides of beds for double occupancy. • Décor showing attention to detail and co-ordination of design, as well as finished to a professional standard. Wall coverings and paintwork of an excellent intrinsic quality and condition. High quality paintings and prints in evidence. • All furniture, soft furnishings, and fittings providing excellent ease of use and of an excellent quality and condition. • A substantial writing table with excellent free space. • Multiple power sockets often with international sockets/adaptors according to market need.
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- Single – one substantial easy chair plus an additional chair providing comfortable use at the writing table.
- Double / twin – two substantial easy chairs plus an additional chair providing comfortable use at the writing table
- A minimum of two direct dial telephones if fixed – one at the bedside and one on the desk/writing table. Single cordless phone acceptable.
- Guests able to call individual hotel departments directly.
- Wi-Fi and/or internet connection provided. If chargeable, this must be clearly advertised prior to booking. Excellent in-room communication technology with best available connectivity and good support to resolve any problems.
- All bathrooms of excellent quality and condition and providing excellent ease of use with a luxurious standard of fittings, flooring and décor.
- Spacious bathrooms with generously-sized bath, basin and shower.
- Separate walk-in shower often seen at this level.
- The environment of all sitting areas of excellent quality and condition, and of sufficient size and with well-designed layout to provide generous personal space and privacy for guests.
- A variety of seating styles expected.
- Sitting areas not necessarily all lounges but certainly offering a range of environments.
- Restaurant tables should have sufficient space around them to allow a high degree of privacy and freedom of movement.
- Corridors and staircases wide and spacious allowing freedom of movement for guests and service trolleys.
- A serviced coat storage cloakroom provided. Receipts given.
- Corridors and staircases permanently lit.
- It is expected that a lift will be provided to all floors in the main building.
- The expectation at Five Star is a separate lift for hotel services such as luggage, laundry and room service.
- Spacious, luxurious and numerous toilet facilities and with refinements such as individual hand towels, high quality toiletries and accessories, serviced very regularly during the day.
- Access to any accommodation separate to the main building to be under cover. This could include chauffeured transport or escort with umbrella provided.

Appendix 7.1 Rules for Tips, Gratuities, Service Charges, and the Tronc System

The troncmaster is personally responsible for all aspects of operating a PAYE scheme. He or she may be held responsible for any failure to deduct tax from payments from the tronc. A troncmaster with a PAYE scheme may use the employer's payroll to operate PAYE on his or her behalf (the employer effectively acting as a payroll agent), but the troncmaster's PAYE records must be kept separate from the employer's. The tronc PAYE scheme must be entirely independent of the employer's scheme and must be run as such.

Where the employer is involved in deciding the distribution of tips amongst employees or if mandatory service charges are distributed through the tronc, the employer is responsible for operating PAYE. This applies even if responsibility for making distributions to staff is delegated to a trusted employee.

Where payments made from a tronc attract NICs liability, the troncmaster is not required to pay NICs on those payments. Responsibility for calculating any NICs due and making payment to HMRC rests with the employer. Payments of tips do not attract NICs if the troncmaster is allocating money that originally was not paid to the employer and the employer does not pay the money directly or indirectly to their employees or if employer does not determine, directly or indirectly, the allocation of those tips. Allocation means deciding who should receive what amount by way of tips.

If the employer, business partner or an official of the company (for example, a director) performs the role of troncmaster, they are considered to be making payments as if they were the employer and therefore the payments should be paid through the employer's payroll.