ABSTRACT

MCMANUS, LISA. Exploring Writing Reviews and Dining Out as Acts of Prosumption: A Qualitative Study of Online Restaurant Reviews (Under the direction of Dr. Martha Crowley).

Prosumption is a growing field of study that suggests production and consumption are intertwined—meaning acts of consumption involve some form of production and acts of production involve some form of consumption (Toffler 1980; Ritzer and Jurgenson 2010; Ritzer 2014). An ongoing discussion continues across disciplines, identifying the beneficial or exploitive potential of prosuming. Critics of prosumption argue that the growth of self-service technologies has increased consumer exploitation by enlisting unpaid consumers to perform tasks previously assigned to paid workers, or to provide web content (e.g. social media, blogs, etc.,) without compensation. Others promote the benefits of prosumption, arguing it offers consumers' opportunities to express their creativity, voice their opinions, and potentially contribute to the betterment of society through knowledge sharing. More empirical work is needed within the study of prosumption to explore how prosuming lends itself to exploitive or empowering experiences. Additionally, study of prosumption has mainly addressed implications for consumers as prosumers. Less attention has been given to how prosumption affects relationships between paid workers and consumers.

In this study, I conduct a qualitative analysis of restaurant reviews to explore 1) who benefits from the prosumption of online reviews, 2) variations in how consumers perceive and respond to distinct prosumptive roles in full-service restaurants, and 3) how embracing certain prosumptive roles influences interactions between consumers and employees. I begin with an introductory chapter that describes prosumption in the context of full-service restaurants and briefly summarize the remainder of the dissertation, including findings from the three studies presented in articles two, three and four.

Article one addresses writing online reviews as a form of prosumption and furthers the debate on the empowering or exploitive nature of prosuming online. Previous discussions of the exploitive nature of reviews have narrowly focused on the correlation of company profits and the number of reviews and numeric rating of an establishment. Additional arguments have been made that review sites themselves generate profit through the unpaid contributions of reviewers. This focus has limited the scope of the value of consumers' reviews to a quantitative sum. My findings further contextualize this argument by providing a qualitative understanding of how the content of reviews aid the goals of management by providing suggestions for improvements, using risk mitigating language to entice future customers, and socializes future customers. These findings provide additional support for understanding the potentially exploitative nature of prosuming online.

Article two explores how consumers make sense of being responsible for different productive tasks within the context of dining out. I identify the process of tipping and the process of consumers using tabletop tablets to order food, pay the check, etc. as two ways in which consumers contribute to the production of their own experience. Findings suggest consumers recognize the process of ordering food as the responsibility of paid workers and in turn reject absorbing this responsibility. Conversely, I find consumers do not recognize the processes of tipping as work and desire to maintain the responsibility of paying workers directly through a system of tipping. These findings elucidate how customers recognition and preference for prosuming is context dependent.

Article three identifies ways in which consumers' attempt to prosume (co-create) their restaurant experience shapes their evaluations of front-line service workers within full-service restaurants. Co-creation is an organizational model that suggests consumers are willing to take

on additional productive responsibilities in exchange for the satisfaction they feel by being able to personalize their product or experience. Management scholars argue that applying principles of co-creation as a 'win-win' for both consumers and management. An understanding of the implications of co-creation for front-line service workers has been largely absent from the discussion of co-creation. My findings suggest that as customers occupy the role of co-creator, their expectations of workers' responsibilities are increased. As co-creators, diners still expect servers to perform skilled tasks, including emotional labor. In addition to these criteria, diners also expect workers to assist in co-creating a personalized experience. These findings push beyond previous discussions of the expectations of front-line service workers to perform emotional labor.

I conclude this dissertation by discussing the pertinence of the study of prosumption in a time when the productive responsibilities of consumers are steadily expanding. This study advances the literature on prosumption in three ways: 1) by contributing to the ongoing discussion regarding the empowering or exploitive nature of online prosumption 2) by further exploring how customers make sense of performing productive tasks traditionally assigned to paid workers, and 3) by examining how consumers attempts to co-create their experience influences their perceptions and expectations of workers.

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Exploring Writing Reviews and Dining Out as Acts of Prosumption: A Qualitative Study of Online Restaurant Reviews.

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DEDICATION

Dedicated to my family. Thank you for all your encouragement.

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I am very grateful for the support of Martha Crowley. My dissertation has been a non-linear process, and regardless of what direction I steered my dissertation, Martha would always insist that time had not been wasted, but that instead, new ideas had been developed. This sentiment made it easy to keep moving forward regardless of any bumps I hit in the road.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Dining out is an integral part of American culture. The average American adult eats out 4.5 times per week at commercial establishments (Zagat 2015) and in 2014 the food expenditures on food-away-from-home surpassed the amount of money spent on food-prepared-at-home (U. S. Department of Agriculture 2016). Dining establishments are a major employer, with over two million people working as waitstaff alone (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2015). For these reasons, the study of dining out is of sociological importance.

Prior research has studied dining out from the perspective of production and consumption. Research on restaurant work has primarily focused on service workers, addressing issues of managerial control and worker surveillance (Bayard de Volo 2003; Butler and Skipper Jr 1980; Leidner 1993), emotional labor and abuse (Hall 1993; Korczynski and Evans 2013; Wharton 2009) and worker resistance (Paules 1991; Whyte 1949). Additionally, scholars of consumption have studied the symbolic importance of dining out, dining out as it relates to cultural capital (Bourdieu 1984; Warde, Martens, and Olsen 1999) and consumers' feelings and experiences while dining out (Finkelstein 1989; Warde and Martens 2000). While dining out broadly describes eating meals outside of the home, this dissertation will specifically explore dining out in the context of full-service restaurants. This dissertation provides a different approach to the study of dining out, by situating dining out within the study of prosumption.

Prosumption refers to the intertwining role of consumer and producer (Ritzer 2010; Ritzer and Jurgenson 2010; Toffler 1980). Much of this literature is focused on consumers as prosumers. Meaning, studies of prosumption mainly discuss the work performed by consumers through their consumption of goods, services and experiences (Cova and Dalli 2009; Rieder and

Voß 2010; Ritzer and Jurgenson 2010). Further, studies of prosumption discuss the ways in which the consumers' work generates value of goods, services and experiences. Consumers add value to both goods and services in a variety of ways such as providing new cultural or symbolic meaning, collaborating with companies or other consumers, and by performing physical work (Prahalad and Ramaswamy 2004; Cova and Dalli 2009; Rieder and Voß 2010; Ritzer and Jurgenson 2010; Koeber 2011).

To understand the work involved in dining out, I provide a comparison of the productive tasks involved in dining at home, in fast-food restaurants and in full-service dining restaurants. The work of dining at home includes shopping for groceries, preparing and cooking the meal, serving the meal (even if just plating up a meal for oneself) and cleaning up the mess resulting from this process. While fast-food and fast-casual restaurants mitigate much of the work associated with of dining in, consumers still maintain some responsibility for producing the meal experience. For example, consumers may be expected to receive their food from the counter, participate in the cleaning processes by clearing their tables, fill their own drinks, etc. (Ritzer 1993; Koeber 2011). When dining at full-service restaurants, consumers can pay a server to perform these tasks to alleviate having to perform much of the 'work' involved in dining (Ritzer 2015c). Even when visiting a full-service restaurant, there are many ways consumers contribute to the production of their own dining experience. For example, consumers must read through the extensive menu to pick a meal, perhaps request to make modifications to their meal choice and are tasked with the responsibility of evaluating their server's performance and expected to adjust their tip accordingly (Lynn 2015; Segrave 1998).

The internet has redefined the tasks relevant to the dining out experience and in some cases has created new tasks all together. Prior to the internet, choosing a restaurant still required

some level of consumer effort. Consumers could exert minimal effort by choosing a restaurant at random, or exert more effort by asking others for recommendations, reading published restaurant reviews in newspapers or magazines, or seeking information through books dedicated to reviewing restaurants. The sheer amount of information made available via the internet can greatly increase the time spent engaging in this decision by providing access to seemingly endless opinions and recommendations, which can be accessed through review sites, social media sites, blogs, etc. Additionally, consumer work can be performed during meals, by contributing information to social media, which can include crafting a witty description and taking multiple photos to capture the meal at the right angle before sharing it online. Even after the dining event, diners put forth additional effort by writing full recaps and evaluations of their experience and sharing them on blogs, general review sites, such as Yelp or TripAdvisor, food specific recommendation sites such as Chowhound, or on their personal Facebook pages.

Again, the internet has not introduced the work of reviewing restaurants but has further expanded the number of consumers who partake in this activity. The Zagat Survey, introduced in 1979, first introduced the concept of consumers taking part in the valuation of restaurants, by consumers participating in a survey that asked them to rate the quality of the restaurant and then publishing the average scores (Albala 2015; Davis 2009). Dating back as early as 1900, with the introduction of the Michelin Guide, reviews had been written by professional reviewers (Davis 2009). While the Zagat Guide provides insight into how crowdsourcing redefines who can contribute to the process of valuation (Albala 2015; Davis 2009), in the context of prosuming, Zagat represents the first push to enlist consumers to perform the work of reviewing restaurants. Although the internet has not introduced the role of consumers as reviewers, it has greatly increased the number of consumers participating in this activity. For example, in the year 2000,

Zagat had over 30,000 consumers contributing survey responses. In comparison, since the year 2005, Yelp.com alone is home to 171 million reviews (Yelp 2018).

Because individuals derive enjoyment from participating in dining out experiences, posting to social media or reading online reviews, they may be opposed to the categorization of these activities as any type of 'work.' Even those who recognize the additional effort of prosuming as a form of work, they may still prefer to complete tasks themselves due to the efficiency it affords (Chandler and Chen 2015). Further, because these productive tasks occur within consumption interactions, the work involved is often not visible to those performing it (Cova, Dalli, and Zwick 2011; Ritzer 2010). Regardless of the enjoyment or gratification garnered through prosuming, the unpaid work of consumers has been criticized for being exploitive (Fuchs 2010; Rey 2012; Zwick, Bonsu, and Darmody 2008). Conversely, other scholars have emphasized the empowering nature of prosuming by suggesting that it allows consumers to participate in creative expressions (Tapscott and Williams 2008), engages in self-identity formation (Davis 2012), and can contribute to social good when consumers are involved in cooperative peer-to-peer collaboration (Chen 2015; Chen 2016; Recuber 2012).

This dissertation extends the study of prosumption in both online and offline environments through the qualitative analysis of online reviews. Further, this dissertation discusses the implications of prosuming for both companies, consumers and workers in three separate articles. In the remainder of this introduction I will, first, discuss the origins and theoretical underpinnings of the study of prosumption and provide an overview of types of prosumption in practice. Next, I review the gaps in the literature and discuss how my research aims to address them. Finally, I will discuss the methods used in this dissertation and briefly summarize the three articles that comprise my dissertation.

The Origins and Theoretical Underpinning of Prosumption

Interdisciplinary discussions of prosumption have relied on various terminology, including; 'putting the customer to work' (Rieder 2010; Ritzer 1983; Zwick, Bonsu, and Darmody 2008), working consumers (Cova and Dalli 2009) consumptive labor (Koeber 2011), free labor (Terranova 2000), produsage (Bruns 2008) and playbour (Kücklich 2005; Taylor et al. 2015). Management scholars have been more unified in their terminology, building mostly on the work of Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004) who coin the term co-creation, which refers to the active role of consumers in creating value. Similarly, marketing scholars have built on the term service dominant logic (Lusch and Vargo 2006; Vargo and Lusch 2006; Vargo and Lusch 2008) to discuss consumers' roles in value creation. The term prosumption has only recently been reintegrated into scholarly discourse. As I discuss below, scholars still debate the boundaries of what types of consuming and producing processes fall under the definition of prosumption. To contextualize the current definition of prosumption, I will first review its origin.

Toffler (1980), a well renowned futurist, first introduced the term prosumer in his book *The Third Wave.* From its origin, prosumer was introduced to explain the blurred role of producer and consumer. Toffler supposes, prior to the industrial revolution (the first wave) most members of society were prosumers and they produced for their own consumption. During this time period, only a small segment of the population produced goods which they would not consume, but instead exchanged. He suggests that society entered the second wave during the industrial revolution, which shifted the role of most people from prosumer to producer. During this time, more people began working in factories for wages and began consuming goods they had not produced. Writing in the 1970s, Toffler argued society was entering a third wave, in which he believed most people would return to prosumers and once again begin producing things

for their own consumption. He saw the shift to the third wave as a result of a foreseen growth in computer technology, which he believed would reduce the number of hours people worked. As a result of this change, he envisioned people would seek out prosumption to engage in physical activity, creative projects and self-care (Toffler 1980; Kotler 1986). Toffler's discussion of prosumption positions prosuming as an overall positive shift in society, allowing individuals to voluntarily prosume goods and experiences, leading to greater satisfaction and enjoyment (Toffler 1980; Dusi 2017; Zwick 2015). Additionally, Toffler suggested that through prosuming, people are empowered by their ability to exit the traditional market, which he believed could potentially pose a challenge to capitalism (Toffler 1980).

Ritzer has been very prolific in his writings on prosumption (Ritzer 1993; Ritzer 2009; Ritzer and Jurgenson 2010; Ritzer 2010; Ritzer, Dean, and Jurgenson 2012; Ritzer 2014a; Ritzer 2014b; Ritzer 2015a; Ritzer 2015b; Ritzer 2015c; Ritzer 2015d; Ritzer and Rey 2016; Ritzer 2017) and he is credited with reintroducing the term into academic discourse. While maintaining the use of the term prosuming to describe the conjoining of production and consumption, Ritzer's definition of prosumption has fundamental differences from Toffler's original conception of the term. Ritzer and Jurgenson (2010) argue that *all* acts of consumption and *all* acts of prosumption are intertwined. Unlike Toffler's account of prosuming occurring during certain time periods, Ritzer suggests that society has always consisted of prosumers. Further, Ritzer argues distinguishing between production and consumption serves as a false dichotomy (Ritzer 2009; Ritzer and Jurgenson 2010; Ritzer 2015b).

Ritzer's definition of prosumption provides a more expansive use of the term than proposed by Toffler. According to Ritzer, prosuming applies to all actions, even actions occurring outside of traditional economic markets (Ritzer and Jurgenson 2010; Ritzer 2015b).

Ritzer expounds that all actions do not involve an equal part consumption and production and positions acts along a spectrum, with actions mainly consisting of consuming behavior on one end, to actions mainly consisting of producing behavior on the other end. Between both ends of the spectrum, there are actions of balanced prosuming which are more equal part consumption and production. To discursively distinguish between types of prosumption, Ritzer (2014) introduces the terms prosuming-as-consuming (mainly consumptive, i.e. dining out in a full-service restaurant) to prosuming-as-producing (mainly productive, i.e. factory work), with some activities more central on the scale having a more equal balance of both producing and consuming (i.e. using social media sites).

Ritzer himself acknowledges the awkwardness of these terms (Ritzer 2014). By maintaining that all forms of consumption and production rely on at least some of the other, it is no longer necessary to qualify the term consumer or producer with prosumer. For the purpose of this dissertation, I maintain Ritzer's conception of prosumption. Therefore discussions of consuming presuppose some aspect of production and vice versa.

As noted above, the study of prosumption is still relatively new within sociological literature, and in turn, the fundamental boundaries of the term are still being challenged. Scholars have criticized Ritzer's definition of prosumption for being too broad. Dusi (2017) argues that by expanding the definition of prosumption to encompass all acts of production and consumption, that the term loses its analytic power. Humphreys and Grayson (2008) rely on a Marxists discussion of use value and exchange value to challenge Ritzer's expansive definition of prosumption. Briefly defined, use value is created through the utility of a product from the perspective of the owner or purchaser and realized through the use or consumption of goods. Exchange value is measured in relation to other products that can be exchanged within an

economic market (Marx 1867 [2001]). Humphreys and Grayson (2008) suppose that only when consumers create exchange value does it have a meaningful implication for capitalism. Further, they argue that consumers' contributions to use value does not change or redefine the traditional role of consumer.

Ritzer defends his definition of prosuming as related to all acts. He acknowledges that although his conception of prosumption is founded in Marxist theory, that it is important to adapt these terms to better fit capitalism as it exists today. He argues that we can no longer parse out use value from exchange value, especially as it pertains to value generated through online activity. Ritzer maintains the broad reach of activities within the definition of prosumption since the production of information in online spaces, referred to as knowledge work or immaterial labor (Cova, Dalli, and Zwick 2011; Taylor et al. 2015; Terranova 2000), makes it more challenging to determine which processes are transpiring within economic markets (Cochoy 2015; Taylor et al. 2015). Further, Ritzer argues that when consumers replace paid employees by performing self-service tasks, that they allow capitalists the ability to create exchange values at a lesser rater, which in turn can increase a company's profit. Despite claims that these profits are shared with consumers (Dusi 2017; Humphreys and Grayson 2008; Zwick 2015), Ritzer rejects these arguments, suggesting that they are not supported by evidence and that it is likely that capitalists would not return the full savings to consumer (Ritzer 2015b).

Through a discussion of consumers' work, Cova and Dalli (2009) provide support for Ritzer's inclusive definition of prosumption. They argue that across contexts, active consumers create new spaces and opportunities for companies to create value. This includes, consumers contributing to collaborative innovation by providing companies new suggestions (Bauer and Gegenhuber 2015; Prahalad and Ramaswamy 2004; Tapscott and Williams 2008). Also,

consumers can generate value through the formation of consumer tribes, which consist of enthusiastic consumers who develop brand loyal groups. Tribe members enhance the value of goods and experiences of other members by creating a collective experience, such as fan groups and enthusiasts who generate additional brand related content (Cova and Dalli 2009, Kozinets 2007, Schau and Muniz 2007).

Perhaps the most elusive ways in which consumers' work generates value for companies is through consumers' acts of empowerment and resistance. Empowered consumers can construct their own cultural consumer identity within the market and exert power when they are able to mobilize companies to do something they would not otherwise do (Denegri-Knott et al 2006; Kucuk 2008; Rezabakhsh et al. 2006). Through empowered interactions with companies, consumers communicate with other consumers and companies. Even through the communication of demands, consumers are creating value for companies by contributing in the marketing process (Arnould and Thompson 2005; Cova, Pace, and Skålén 2015; Kucuk 2008). Even consumer resistance can be co-opted by companies to their advantage, using the free insight gained from consumer resistance groups as avenues for new branding strategies (Hollenbeck and Zinkhan 2006).

Adapting a Marxist perspective, Ritzer proposes a more pessimistic conceptualization of the growth of prosuming behaviors than Toffler. Rather than suggesting that the growth in prosumption challenges the capitalist economy, Ritzer infers this shift reinforces the capitalist system and leads to exploitation, albeit with changes to the traditional definition of exploitation (Ritzer 2009; Ritzer 2017). Marx discusses exploitation in relationship to capitalists and workers, occurring when capitalist keep the surplus value generated by the value added to goods through the labor of workers. Meaning, workers increase the value of goods at a rate higher than they

receive in return. Ritzer suggests that prosumers are exploited because capitalist do not return to the full value of consumers contributions back to consumers. With the internet allowing consumers to prosume in nearly all aspects of life, Ritzer argues that prosumers are exploited at an unprecedented rate (Zwick, Bonsu, and Darmody 2008; Zwick and Denegri Knott 2009; Ritzer 2015a; Ritzer 2015b).

While many sociologists support Ritzer's pessimistic interpretation of prosuming, the management and marketing scholars have worked to construct a positive public discourse surrounding prosuming and have promoted the merits of co-creation. The term co-creation used within managerial discourse defines the productive contributions of consumers to the process of value creation (Cossío-Silva et al. 2016; Jaakkola and Alexander 2014; Prahalad, C. K. and Ramaswamy 2004). Management scholars have encouraged organizations to adopt models that encourage consumers' active involvement by allowing them to incorporate their opinions and requests into the production process, resulting in the customization of goods and services (Prahalad and Ramaswamy 2004). By allowing consumers a voice in the production processes they will derive greater pleasure and satisfaction from their goods, services or experiences. Co-creation suggests that increased satisfaction among consumers will lead to greater brand loyalty and consumers to convey more positive messages about the brand (Casaló, Flavián, and Guinalíu 2008; Cossío-Silva et al. 2016; Maru File, Judd, and Prince 1992). The managerial discourse of consumer empowerment and consumers as co-creators has become widespread public discourse put forth at the surface of organizations (Prahalad and Ramaswamy 2004; Thrift 2006; Zwick, Bonsu, and Darmody 2008), although in practice much of the power remains within the reigns of the organization (Dujarier 2016; Ritzer 2015b; Zwick 2015).

Dujarier (2016) provides a particularly meaningful opposition to the win-win interpretation of prosumption by likening the empowerment afforded to consumers through co-creation to that of participatory work groups. Participatory work groups became a popular managerial practice in the 1980s and 1990s that encouraged workers to participate in the decision-making processes and encouraged workers to have more direct involvement with customer relations. Like prosuming, workers voluntarily participate in these groups believing they can personally benefit (by means of better job opportunities, satisfaction from feeling their voices were heard), but in practice workers were given more responsibilities—mainly increased involvement in interacting with customers—without being afforded any additional power within the organization (Smith 1996; Lincoln and Kalleberg 1985). Dujarier (2016) argues that co-creation promises consumer empowerment, but in practices is co-opting consumers to perform more work without truly affording consumers any new power. Consequently, through the rhetorical positioning of consumers as empowered, the responsibility of their satisfaction becomes tied to their individual effort, and in turn alleviates the responsibility of the organization (Dujarier 2016).

To date, the literature on prosumptive work tends to speak to one of these categories that map onto positions traditionally associated with workers: (1) consumer as quasi-employee, (2) consumer as quasi-supervisor, (3) consumer as quasi-marketer/advertiser (Koeber 2011; Koeber, Charles S., Wright, and Dingler 2012), (4) consumers as co-collaborators (Cova and Dalli 2009; Cova, Dalli, and Zwick 2011). These categories are not mutually exclusive and can occur in both offline and online environments. Consumers as quasi-employees focuses on consumers performing self-service tasks and do-it-yourself activities (Ritzer 1993; Toffler 1980; Wolf and McQuitty 2011). Consumers as quasi-supervisors explains the role consumers play in

supervising and evaluating workers. This is most common in cases involving front-line service workers. Consumers act as managers when either directly exerting their power on consumers by means of praising or reprimanding their performance (Bolton and Houlihan 2005; Wharton 1993) or communicating their opinions or evaluations to managers (Fuller and Smith 1991). Consumers as quasi-marketers refers to consumers' participation in developing brand identity through their personal use of products or through the discussion of products and brands through peer-to-peer communication (Casaló, Flavián, and Guinalíu 2008; Cossío-Silva et al. 2016; Maru File, Judd, and Prince 1992). This has even been expanded to how consumers market to themselves, by means of learning additional information about brands. Cochoy (2015) provides a particularly interesting example of consumers' self-marketing by discussing a case study of consumers using 2-D barcodes (small square black barcodes that can be scanned by smartphones) that had been added to wine labels. In doing so, consumers learned more about the products. This coincided with marketing to others, as consumers discussed wanting to share this experience with others (Cochoy 2015). Finally, consumers as co-collaborators describes the involvement of consumers in product or experience development. This occurs when consumers provide suggestions for improvement or new innovations and communicate directly to companies, or in online environments in which it can be captured by companies (Cova and Pace 2006; Cova, Dalli, and Zwick 2011; Prahalad and Ramaswamy 2004)

Positioning this Dissertation Within the Study of Prosumption

This dissertation will extend the study of prosumption. Previous scholars have discussed prosuming online as it relates to user-generated content, mainly focusing on the generation of click data (Terranova 2000; Zwick, Bonsu, and Darmody 2008), the development and promotion of company brands (Arvidsson 2005; Arvidsson and Colleoni 2012; Peñaloza and Venkatesh

2006) and companies motivation to capture consumers' innovative ideas (Prahalad and Ramaswamy 2004; Cova, Pace, and Skålén 2015). Specifically, discussions of how reviews benefit companies has been addressed mainly by comparing the number of reviews and overall rating with company profits (Chevalier and Mayzlin 2006; Luca 2011). By focusing on company profits in relation to the number of reviews and overall rating, the work and value embedded within individual reviews can be overlooked. By using qualitative methods to explore the content of reviews, I explore prosuming at the level of each review and in turn discuss how it can provide potential benefits for companies.

Additionally, I will extend previous discussions of prosuming in offline environments. Despite prosuming accounting for all acts of consumption and production, most attention has been afforded to cases that explore consumers taking on responsibilities of paid workers (Ritzer 1993; Ritzer 2014). Additionally, discussions of prosuming offline focus on person to person collaboration outside of the traditional economic market (Chen 2015; Chen 2016; Toffler 1980). The study of prosuming in leisure consumption has been less fully addressed. By exploring dining out in full-service restaurants, this dissertation will provide insight into the prosumption of leisure experiences. Further, this allows for a discussion of how prosuming impacts consumers' expectations and evaluations of workers. Additionally, this dissertation explores how consumers react to acquiring additional productive roles or relinquishing productive responsibilities as it relates to prosuming leisure experiences. Previous studies have discussed reasons for prosuming, including efficiency, enjoyment and a desire to shape their experience. By exploring the acquisition and relinquishing of prosuming responsibilities (both using tabletop tablets and shifting to a no-tip policy) at a transitional time point, this provides an understanding of consumers initial reactions to these changes.

Research Methods

Research for this dissertation was performed using abductive analysis. Abductive analysis shares many similarities to grounded theory but differs regarding the use of theory (Tavory and Timmermans 2014). Grounded theory relies on researchers avoiding theoretical preconceptions when entering the field to collect data or during analysis of data (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Glaser and Strauss 2017). Conversely, abductive analysis "rests on the cultivation of anomalous and surprising empirical findings against a background of multiple existing sociological theories and through systematic methodological analysis." (Timmermans and Tavory 2012: 169). Abductive analysis involve the following three steps, which at times happen in conjunction with one another: 1) exploring initial patterns within the data through a process of reading the data, memoing and coding, 2) continued analysis of the data until a level of defamiliarization is reached which allows for potentially taken-for-granted activities to emerge as relevant or surprising, 3) rechecking initial findings that emerged against the data to ensure that findings accurately represent the data as a whole. Further, abductive analysis encourages researchers to continuously engage with literature and to discuss their work with other scholars during the process of refining their analysis and positioning their findings within the existing scholarly literature.

Data

Online restaurant reviews are customer-developed narratives in which customers can provide an account of – and rate – their dining experience. Reviews then become an excellent source of data that capture customers' immediate perspectives about their dining experience. By exploring unsolicited and voluntary narratives of experiences, both positive and negative, as opposed to surveying or interviewing diners about their experience, I can uncover what themes

are most salient to consumers about their experience (Finkelstein 1989). Additionally, by exploring accounts of experiences, I can situate dining experiences within the social contexts (motivation for dining out, expectation of dining out) of the event described (Finkelstein 1989; Orbuch 1997). One drawback of this data is that reviews are subject to self-selection at two levels; 1) not everyone contributes reviews of their dining experiences, 2) people who do contribute reviews of their dining experiences do not every dining encounter. Outside of a small subset of individuals who are avid reviewers, and review most of their dining experiences, most people contribute reviews when they perceive an experience as either very good or very bad (Burtch and Hong 2014). While important to recognize that reviews may be more skewed towards positive and negative, as opposed to neutral dining experiences, this does not pose a significant limitation since the focus of this study is the productive work of consuming as opposed to customers' evaluations of experiences as positive or negative.

I selected to sample from Yelp.com both because it is a leader among restaurant review sites and because it attempts to eliminate falsified reviews. Yelp implements an algorithm to capture false reviews posted to unfairly bolster or impede an establishments rating (Luca and Zervas 2016). While the parameters of the filter are not made public, research suggests that the filter relies on linguist and behavioral cues. Reviews with more extreme language, posted by reviewers with few reviews, are more likely to be tagged as false (Luca and Zervas 2016; Mukherjee et al. 2013). Additionally, when comparing Yelp reviews to competing review websites that maintain complete review anonymity, Yelp reviews were found to have fewer extreme ratings than other sites. This suggests that reviews posted to Yelp include accounts of dining experiences customers consider average along with dining experiences customers perceive as highly negative or positive that would lead to ranting or raving (Wang 2010).

Sample

As expected, when employing a study using abductive analysis, (Tavory and Timmermans 2014), I did not approach my data with a specific goal but maintained a general interest in exploring consumers' perceptions of workers (Goldberg 2015). This broad interest influenced my sampling design. To include diversity among restaurant policies, which I believed could be meaningful in understanding consumers' perceptions of workers, I employed a three-step sampling procedure. First, I identified Joe's Crab Shack (JCS) as a restaurant that had implemented a no tipping policy. JCS experimented with a no-tipping policy at 18 restaurants throughout the Northeast and Midwest from September 2015 and April 2016. I sampled all reviews posted to each of the 18 restaurants during this time period, resulting in 188 reviews from 188 unique reviews. Next, I systematically sampled reviews posted by these 188 reviewers directly prior and directly after posting to JCS. With not all reviewers having reviewed both before and after JCS, and some reviewers reviewing the same restaurant, this resulted in an additional 285 reviews from 248 unique restaurants. This amounted to an additional 285 reviews from 248 unique restaurants. Finally, as themes related to prosumption emerged in my data, I purposefully sampled additional reviews to capture consumers' reactions to self-service technologies within the dining out environment. I identified Olive Garden's use of tabletop tablets as an example of self-service technology. Olive Garden placed tabletop tablets in 800 of locations beginning in April 2015 and completed their installments by December 2015 (Lien 2015) RestaurantNews 2015; Lien 2015). In total, this resulted in a sample of 536 reviews from 251 unique reviewers. Although variation in tipping and tabletop tablets is not discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, there is no reason to believe that the inclusion of this diversity within the sample has shaped the results of these studies in any significant way.

Analysis

I analyzed online review data using principles of abductive analysis. Notable, I approached my data with underlying assumptions of consumers as consumers—not with an understanding of consumers as prosumers. To begin, I entered all reviews from my sample into Dedoose, a qualitative analysis software. During my first reading of reviews, I developed a codebook to categorize the large amount of data into excerpts with shared concepts (i.e. food, servers, management, quality, quantity). As themes emerged that directed my analysis in the direction of prosumption, I added additional codes to my codebook and then coded all reviews. Through an iterative process of data analysis and engaging with existing sociological literature, I positioned my findings within a broader academic discussion of prosumption.

Overview of Articles

Article one furthers the understanding of the benefactors of online prosumption. Previous research has discussed the benefits of reviews for consumers and organizations. Review sites position themselves as beneficial to consumers, arguing they allow for a stronger democracy and consumer empowerment by providing a space to facilitate peer-to-peer communication and peer-to-company communication (Kuehn 2013; Sperber 2014). Support for this depiction is found from discussions on how peer-to-peer and peer-to-company communication allows consumers to voice their opinions and collective pressure companies to make changes (Kucuk 2008; Rezabakhsh et al. 2006; Thompson 2003). Review host sites and companies being reviewed have been discussed as benefactors of online reviews as well (Chevalier and Mayzlin 2006; Luca 2011; Ye, Law, and Gu 2009; Zhang et al. 2010). My findings further the discussion on how companies may benefit from the productive contributions of reviewers. By applying a qualitative analysis to individual-level review data, this research

demonstrates that reviewers offer value at the individual level in addition to the aggregate level. This article discusses how review sites structure contributions and encourage reviewers to construct reviews in ways that can be meaningful for generating business improvements or attacking new customers (Sperber 2014). Specifically, this article finds that reviews provide information for companies that can contribute to value by: providing suggestions for improvements, by using risk-mitigating language to entice future customers, and by socializing future customers to the specific culture and offerings of a restaurant. These findings provide empirical support for understanding the potential value afforded companies through peer-to-peer communication and, indirectly, peer-to-company communication.

Article two furthers the study of prosumption by investigating how consumers make sense of the producing responsibilities they perform while dining out in full-service restaurants. Specifically addressing the roles of consumers as quasi-employees and consumers as quasi-management (Koeber 2011; Koeber, Charles S., Wright, and Dingler 2012). I identify consumers' use of tabletop tablets to perform tasks such as ordering food and paying their check, as representative of consumers as quasi-employees. Also, I identify consumers tipping the waitstaff as representative of consumers as quasi-management. Consumers perform managerial tasks through the process of tipping; tipping should reflect the quality of the workers performance and more directly, through tipping consumers become responsible for paying the workers' wages (Albin 2011; Ogbonna and Harris 2002; Whaley, Douglas, and O'Neill 2014). To capture consumers' perceptions of performing these tasks, I look at reviews posted during a transitional point in time in which restaurants' business models changed. Specifically, I look at customers' reactions to the introduction of tabletop tablets on which customers place orders and can pay with credit cards as indicative of increases to consumers' productive responsibilities.

Also, I identify the implementing of a no-tipping policy as representative of decreases in consumers' productive responsibilities. These changes occurred at two different restaurant chains within 40 different locations. I find that within the context of dining out, the preference for performing productive responsibilities varied depending on the task. Findings suggest, first, that consumers were distressed by being tasked to use tabletop tablets and associated the use of these tablets of being required to complete work of paid employees. Conversely, they reject relinquishing the responsibility of tipping and prefer to maintain this responsibility. These findings complicate the notion of consumer preference for prosuming. If consumers universally preferred to reduce their productive responsibilities, we would expect preferences for neither tipping or tabletop tablets. In both cases, customers are displeased with company-initiated policies that redefine their productive responsibilities. Additionally, consumers perceive these policy changes as disproportionately advantageous to companies.

Article three identifies the ways in which consumers' evaluations of workers are shaped directly by their attempts to co-create their experience. Co-creation is a widely accepted managerial strategy that works to incorporate consumers into the production process by facilitating the ability for consumers to personalize their goods, services and experiences (Prahalad and Ramaswamy 2000; Prahalad, Coimbatore Krishna and Ramaswamy 2004). Among management and marketing scholars, co-creation is presented as advantageous for both consumers, who are better able to satisfy their desires, and for companies who are better able to meet consumer demands and improve their business through the unpaid contributions of consumers (Prahalad and Ramaswamy 2000; Prahalad, Coimbatore Krishna and Ramaswamy 2004; Thrift 2006; Dujarier 2016). In prosumption centered research, social scientists have criticized the strategy of co-creation, arguing it exploits consumers' unpaid contributions that

offer innovative ideas to companies (Ritzer and Jurgenson 2010; Ritzer 2015a). The study of prosumption and co-creation have focused mainly on the implications of prosuming for consumers and have not addressed how this shift influences consumer-worker dynamics. This article fills that gap by conducting a qualitative analysis of online restaurant reviews to study consumers' perceptions of workers. Findings suggest that as customers strive to co-create their experience, their expectations of workers are heightened. These findings have important implications for both the study of prosumption and the study of front-line service work.

I conclude by reviewing the major findings of each article and address how these articles contribute to the literature on prosumption in online and offline environments. I synthesize the following findings and identify the following contributions; 1) by demonstrating how user-generated content offers potential value for companies, I contextual ways of understanding user-generated content as exploitive, 2) by exploring variations in consumers' preference for performing tasks, I demonstrate the importance of further theorizing on what contributes to consumers' preference to perform productive tasks, and 3) by examining how consumers' positions as prosumers influence their perceptions of workers, I broaden the scope of studying the impacts of co-creation on consumers and organizations to include the discussion of the impact of consumer co-creation on workers. I argue that collectively these findings both enhance and expand the current study of prosumption both online and within the service industry. Finally, I link my findings to additional avenues of research that can continue to bolster the study of prosumption.

CHAPTER 2: STUDY ONE—MORE THAN JUST A STAR: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF ONLINE RESTAURANT REVIEWS

INTRODUCTION

Many people contribute to online review sites and discuss their dining experiences and evaluations of restaurants. Almost 50 percent of people suggest they 'at least sometimes' write and post reviews of products and services, with almost 10 percent of people reporting that they 'almost always' write restaurant reviews (Smith 2016). There are a variety of reasons people contribute reviews, including gaining status within the review community (Lampel and Bhalla 2007), an opportunity to display their cultural capital (Vásquez and Chik 2015), feeling the need to warn future customers about poor products or services (Cheung and Lee 2012) and a desire to have their opinions heard or simply because they enjoy the process (McQuarrie, McIntyre, and Shanmugam 2013; Yoo and Gretzel 2008). Regardless of the reasons for posting unpaid reviews, collectively, reviewers have contributed to building and sustaining a multi-billion-dollar industry that is dedicated to gathering, financializing, and sharing customers' opinions (Hsu 2012).

Consumers may recognize that companies are profiting, in part from their contributions, but this imbalance in economic rewards is not problematized by consumers until an incident occurs in which they no longer feel aligned with the company (Cova and Pace 2006; Cova and Dalli 2009). After years of contributing unpaid online reviews to the website Yelp.com, on October 23, 2013 Dr. Allen Panzer, Amy Sayers, Lily Jeung and Darren Walchesky were named in a class action suit against YELP INC in efforts to receive compensation for the reviews they had contributed in the past. The complaint reads as follows:

> “This is a class-action complaint under Section 216(b) of the Fair Labor Standards Act ("FLSA") based on Defendant's policies and practices of refusing to pay wages to its workers by designating them variously as "reviewers" or "Yelpers" or "independent contractors" or "interns" or "volunteers" or "contributors" even though they are performing vital work that inures to the benefit of Yelp's various business enterprises. Defendant could not exist, nor make its enormous returns, without its domination and control over non-wage writers.” (Rosenblatt 2013)

Their case was dismissed. A similar suit was filed in 2015, this time plaintiffs bolstered their case against YELP INC by referencing that some reviewers do receive compensation. When Yelp.com is establishing a presence in a new location, some paid employees can be tasked with writing reviews to develop a base of restaurants reviewed in the area. Plaintiffs compared their contributions to the paid contributions of Yelp employees (Barmann 2014; Rodell 2013). The judge acknowledged that Yelp may profit from the reviews but dismissed their claims stating, “publishing the reviews written by plaintiffs…it does not necessarily mean that the writers are performing a service for Yelp” (Shah 2015). In response, Yelp issued a statement reiterating the company’s position as a pro-consumer advocate, suggesting that the site is for the benefit of consumers (Shah 2015).

These cases were not alone. There are other cases of consumers feeling that their online contributions warrant financial compensation. For example, volunteers who monitored online chat rooms received a fifteen-million-dollar settlement when they filed a class action suit against AOL to be compensated for their time and effort (Kirchner 2011). Conversely, a case filed by bloggers against the Huffington Post in efforts to receive compensation for past contributions was dismissed (Stempel 2012). While legal recourse of unpaid contributions made online are

beyond the scope of this paper, these examples help to exemplify the ways in which online activity has conflated the processes of consuming and producing—and in turn ignited a discussion of who benefits from the work being done by consumers. The study of prosumption provides a theoretical framework for understanding the intersections of consuming and producing (Ritzer 2010; Ritzer, Dean, and Jurgenson 2012; Ritzer 2014). Both companies and consumers have been argued to be the benefactors of prosumption.

This research will explore online restaurant reviews as an act of prosumption. Previous discussions of reviews as prosumption have mainly identified their value at the aggregate level by focusing on the profits of review sites or increases in restaurant profits through higher rankings and higher number of reviews (Arvidsson 2005; Chevalier and Mayzlin 2006; Cova, Dalli, and Zwick 2011; Rieder 2010; Zwick and Denegri Knott 2009). Additionally, scholars attentive to valuation have discussed how consumers participating in review structures are contributing to the ways in values are ascribed to products, places, and experiences—which is a shift from previous valuation processes that relied mainly on the information of experts (Davis 2009). By examining reviews as 'work,' this dissertation contextualizes the understanding of how consumers may generate value for companies through their peer-to-peer communication, and potentially peer-to-company.

Through a qualitative analysis of online reviews, I further the study of prosumption by exploring the value of consumers' productive contributions at an individual rather than aggregate level. In my findings, I argue that review content benefits companies by enticing future customers, providing suggestions for improvements and socializing future customers. First, I briefly discuss the current study of prosumption and discuss how individuals and companies interact with online reviews.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A Review of Prosumption

Sociologists have traditionally studied consumption and production as two distinct, yet linked, fields. Studies of consumption primarily focusing on culture, choice and identity, and studies of production mainly examined work, organizations and labor markets from various angles (Ritzer 2009; Dujarier 2015). The study of prosumption refutes the idea that consumption and production are mutually exclusive, arguing that the distinction creates a false dichotomy. The terminology and the theoretical framework of prosumption was initially introduced by Toffler (1980) to explain the increasing rate of individuals producing their own goods and performing their own services. The study of prosumption received little attention from scholars until it was advanced by Ritzer's continued work on the topic (Ritzer 1993; Ritzer 2009; Ritzer and Jurgenson 2010; Ritzer, Dean, and Jurgenson 2012).

Both theorists recognize emergent technologies of their day as playing a central role in the current state of prosuming but have divergent historical accounts of prosumption (Ritzer and Jurgenson 2010; Toffler 1980). At the time of his writing, Toffler (1980) recognized that there has been a reemergence of prosuming, which he attributed to new technological advancements. He recognizes individuals as prosumers prior to the industrial revolution, because during that time people mostly produced the goods for their own consumption. He argues the industrial revolution diverged the processes of production and consumption. Post-industrial revolution, most individuals no longer consumed the goods they produced but instead produced goods to be exchanged, and consumed goods produced by others. Writing in the 1970s, Toffler identifies new ways in which technology was shifting consumers to producers. He discusses the rise of 'do-it-yourselfers' who were performing tasks once occupied by workers, such as direct dialing

rather than relying on telephone operators. Also, he identified the how the push to de-massification of products led to companies seeking (and sometimes paying consumers) to provide input into creating products that would meet customer demands, specifically discussing this within the electronics industry (Kotler 1986; Toffler 1980).

Conversely, Ritzer argues that consumption and production have never been truly distinct (Ritzer 2009; Ritzer and Jurgenson 2010). Rather, he asserts that the industrial revolution made the producing aspect of prosuming more visible but maintains that, to produce, one must simultaneously consume. Ritzer identifies social changes that have made the interdependence of consuming and producing more visible. These include: fewer jobs designated to the production of material goods, more production of immaterial goods, the expansion of the service industry, increases to the experience economy and changes in technology and the growth of the internet (Ritzer and Jurgenson 2010; Ritzer 2012). Along with these changes aiding the visibility of prosuming, the adoption of post-modernism among academics led to a greater recognition of prosumption among scholars (Ritzer 2012).

Dusi (2017) categories the ways in which prosumption is addressed in the literature into five main categories; producer-consumer collaboration—often referred to as co-production, customer self-service, digital prosumption, bricolage, and collaborative. Producer-consumer collaboration is mainly addressed by management scholars and involves the ways in which consumers ideas, knowledge and creativity are incorporated into the production process (Prahalad and Ramaswamy 2000; 2004a; 2004b). This can occur through surveys, reviews, company-initiated contests for product innovation, etc. (Prahalad and Ramaswamy 2000; 2004a; 2004b). Self-service prosumption focuses on tasks performed by customers that were initially performed by employees, such as clearing one's own dishes at a fast-food establishment rather

than dishes being cleared by a server (Ritzer 1993; Koeber, Wright, and Dingler 2012; Palm 2016). Digital prosumption encompasses both active and passive ways in which users create value on the internet (Fuchs 2010; Zwick and Denegri Knott 2009). Active participation online includes generating new content such as a blog or posting images or text on social media which becomes available for others to consume (Chia 2012; Rey 2012). Browsing the internet is considered a form of passive prosumption. Even without generating any new content, users perform work by browsing the internet, which creates 'click data' which is packaged and sold as a commodity (Fuchs 2010; Zwick & Denegri Knott 2009). Bricolage refers to crafting and do-it-yourself creations in which individuals are producing their own products (Toffler 1980; Wolf and McQuitty 2011). Finally, peer-to- peer prosumption refers to collaborative work done by groups of people to achieve specific goals, such as building public databases, knowledge banks or open code software (Tapscott and Williams 2008; Recuber 2012; Dodge and Kitchin 2013; Chen 2015).

Although acts of prosumption can extend to various categories, categorizing prosumptive behaviors enables the grouping of prosumptive work along lines of exploitation and empowerment. Studies examining bricolage and peer-to-peer collaboration have emphasized the empowering and positive aspects prosumption (Chen 2015; Labrecque et al. 2013). By creating, fixing or repurposing products, consumers can exercise creativity and challenge preexisting structures of capitalism (Toffler 1980; Wolf and McQuitty 2011). Additionally, through peer-to-peer collaboration, individuals can work outside of wage-based systems of accumulation. For example, open source coding softwares allow individuals to share their knowledge and skills without anyone owning the product being developed (Bruns 2008; Tapscott and Williams 2008). Cooperative childcare groups which allow individuals to exchange knowledge and services

outside of traditional market exchanges are also given as examples of peer-to-peer collaboration (Chen 2015; Chen 2016). Arguably, capitalist organizations can still find ways to harvest benefits from these forms of prosumptive work involving peer-to-peer collaboration and bricolage Cova and Dalli 2009).

Extensive research has also established prosumption as exploitive. Management scholars suggest that prosumer consumer collaboration is mutually beneficial since consumers enjoy contributing their ideas to the production process (Prahalad & Ramaswamy 2000; 2004a), but critics suggest that this is just a way of harvesting consumers ideas and not compensating them for their contributions (Dujarier 2016). Regardless of enjoyment customers derive by providing new insight for companies, such as entering a design contest or testing new software, prosumer consumer collaboration is exploitive because profits are not shared with the customers (Van Dijck 2009; Rey 2012; Ritzer 2015b). Self-service is also considered exploitive and detrimental to workers because modes of self-service allow customers to perform tasks initially assigned to paid employees. For example, Rieder (2010) estimates the cost of labor a company saves by enlisting consumers to engage in acts of self-service. They present Ikea as an example of a company that has increased their profits by enlisting customers to assemble their own furniture. Ikea announced having sold 30 million book shelves at the 50th anniversary. Rieder estimates that this resulted in a savings of 75 million Euros. While companies can pass some savings off to the consumer, arguably this strategy also bolsters profit.

Most attention has been paid to the exploitative nature of digital prosumption. Sites built around predominately user-generated content profit from the content and data collected from customers without sharing the profits. Fuchs (2010) argues this creates ‘double exploitation’ as individuals are being exploited while consuming and producing content. Consumers also create

value for companies by defining companies' unique brand through discussing, promoting and interacting with companies and other consumers for free (Arvidsson and Colleoni 2012; Cova, Kozinets, and Shankar 2007; Kozinets 2007). With the consideration of few exceptional cases, most individuals who generate online content do not receive any financial compensation and 'attention' becomes the desired reward (Chen 2015; Rey 2012). In conjunction, the strategies to encourage and profit off individuals' online participation turns consumers' online activity into the material value that can be packaged and sold (Terranova 2000; Zwick and Knott 2009; Arvidsson and Colleoni 2012).

It is important to note that the discussion of exploitation in the prosumption literature deviates from the traditional Marxist definition. Marx discusses exploitation in relationship to capitalists and workers, occurring when capitalist keep the surplus value generated by the value added to goods through the labor of workers. Meaning, workers increase the value of goods at a rate higher than they receive in return. Ritzer suggests that prosumers are exploited because capitalist do not return to the full value of consumers contributions back to consumers. With the internet allowing consumers to prosume in nearly all aspects of life, Ritzer argues that prosumers are exploited at an unprecedented rate (Ritzer 2015b; Zwick, Bonsu, and Darmody 2008; Zwick and Denegri Knott 2009). This expanded definition of exploitation is useful in seeing how the work of consumers can benefit companies, but unlike the exploitation in the classic Marxist sense, consumers work may not always contribute to increases in surplus value.

Online Reviews as Prosuming

Online reviews are a specific type of digital prosumption that allow consumers to evaluate products and services. The origin and popularity of online reviews has been linked to the growth of online retailers such as Amazon and Ebay (Dellarocas 2003; Davis 2009). As

people began purchasing products online, reviews became an important asset to consumers as they were able to reduce the ambiguity brought on by purchasing products without being able to physically interact with it (Dellarocas 2003). Today online reviews are far from limited to physical products and have been inserted into areas across the service industry ranging from restaurant reviews, hotels, hospitals, law offices, etc.

Consumer based reviews play a central role in purchasing decisions, with people reporting that they trust consumer reviews equally or above company issued statements or the government (Smith 2016). Reviews are argued to benefit consumers by providing increased access to information about goods and services which can allow for more educated purchasing decisions. Yet, humans can absorb and processes only a finite amount of information when processing a decision (Eppler 2004), and some having this much information can be detrimental to consumers who now feel compelled to sort through more information prior to making purchasing decisions (Dujarier 2016).

Unlike the goal-oriented decision to read reviews of products when making purchasing decisions, the decision to write review is less straightforward. Theories of why individuals contribute to online reviews include the desire to create and be part of a community that provides shared knowledge (Hicks et al. 2012; Giesler 2006; King, Racherla, and Bush 2014) to warn other customers (Yoo and Gretzel 2008), and to elevate one's status within the community or be seen as an expert on the topic (McQuarrie, McIntyre, and Shanmugam 2013). With the ability to rank the helpfulness of other reviews, research suggest that status seeking behavior better explains individuals desire to participate than explanations of altruism or information gift-giving (Dellarocas 2003; Lampel and Bhalla 2007. Additionally, findings of past research suggest

individuals contribute reviews out of the intrinsic joy of developing and writing the reviews (McQuarrie, McIntyre, and Shanmugam 2013).

Although individuals may express intrinsic motivation to write reviews, review sites also strategize to increase reviewer contributions and productivity. This includes providing reviewers with an increased status, such as 'elite' or providing them with badges that can be displayed with their online profile (Dellarocas 2003; Lampel and Bhalla 2007; Forman, Ghose, and Wiesenfeld 2008). Small tangible rewards can also be given, such as invites to premier events or t-shirts or bags that often display the company's logo. Online review sites also attempt to guide the structure of reviews responses by providing them with examples of 'good reviews' (Baer 2014). This is not intended to inspire positive or negative reviews but intends to demonstrate what content is relevant, length of review, amount of detail, etc.

Both third-party review sites and companies being reviewed stand to benefit from online reviews. Review sites are like social network sites such as Facebook or LinkedIn, which are dependent on user generated content. While a steady funding stream is needed to advertise, develop and maintain these sites, most of the content available on the sites is provided without cost by users. This business model has allowed for sites dependent on user-generated content to be extremely profitable (Bussgang 2012; Debter 2017). User generated sites can also benefit other companies by providing space where their products and services can be advertised and reviewed. For example**,** The National Restaurant Association discusses a variety of ways in which companies should be utilizing online reviews to improve their current business strategies. They encourage owners to use the content to learn what customers are liking or disliking and that reviews can be used to determine what items to highlight, what items can be put on special, and that they can be information to share with staff (National Restaurant Association 2013).

Past research has focused on site hosts as the main benefactors of online reviews. Scholars have also demonstrated the benefits to individual establishments at the aggregate level by discussing the correlation between profits and the quantity and rating of reviews (Ye, Law & Gu 2009; Zhang, Ye, Law & Li 2010; Luca 2011). This study moves beyond exploring the value of reviews at an aggregate level by using a qualitative analysis to identify how review content can provide value for businesses. I identify three predominant ways in which reviews provide value to individual establishments; 1) drawing in new customers by using risk mitigating language, 2) identifying establishment short-comings and suggesting avenues for improvement, and 3) socializing new customers on what to expect within establishments. These findings expand the position of online reviews as exploitive.

METHODS

This study employed abductive analysis in a qualitative study of online restaurant reviews. Abductive analysis shares many similarities to grounded theory but differs regarding the use of theory (Tavory and Timmermans 2014). Grounded theory relies on researchers avoiding theoretical preconceptions when entering the field to collect data or during analysis of data (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Glaser and Strauss 2017). Conversely, abductive analysis "rests on the cultivation of anomalous and surprising empirical findings against a background of multiple existing sociological theories and through systematic methodological analysis." (Timmermans and Tavory 2012: 169). Abductive analysis involve the following three steps, which at times happen in conjunction with one another: 1) exploring initial patterns within the data through a process of reading the data, memoing and coding, 2) continued analysis of the data until a level of defamiliarization is reached which allows for potentially taken-for-granted activities to emerge as relevant or surprising, 3) rechecking initial findings that emerged against the data to

ensure that findings accurately represent the data as a whole. Further, abductive analysis encourages researchers to continuously engage with literature and to discuss their work with other scholars during the process of refining their analysis and positioning their findings within the existing scholarly literature.

Data

Online restaurant reviews are customer-developed narratives in which customers can provide an account of – and rate – their dining experience. Reviews then become an excellent source of data that capture customers' immediate perspectives about their dining experience. By exploring unsolicited and voluntary narratives of experiences, both positive and negative, as opposed to surveying or interviewing diners about their experience, I can uncover what themes are most salient to customers about their experience (Finkelstein 1989). Additionally, by exploring accounts of experiences I can situate their reviews within the social contexts (motivation for dining out, expectation of dining out) of the event described (Finkelstein 1989; Orbuch 1997). One drawback of this data is that reviews are subject to self-selection at two levels: 1) not everyone contributes reviews of their dining experiences, 2) people who do contribute reviews of their dining experiences do not always review their dining experience. Outside of a small subset of individuals who are avid reviewers and review most of their dining experiences, most people contribute reviews when they perceive an experience as either very good or very bad (Burtch and Hong 2014). While important to recognize that reviews may be more skewed towards positive and negative, as opposed to neutral dining experiences, this does not pose a significant limitation since the focus of this study is the productive work of consuming as opposed to customers evaluations of experiences as positive or negative.

I selected to sample from Yelp.com both because it is a leader among restaurant review sites and because it attempts to eliminates falsified reviews by implementing an algorithm to capture false reviews posted to unfairly bolster or impede an establishments rating (Luca and Zervas 2016). While the parameters of the filter are not made public, research suggests that the filter relies on linguist and behavioral cues and is more likely to be extreme in rating and by reviewers with fewer reviews (Luca and Zervas 2016; Mukherjee et al. 2013).

Sample

As implied when employing a study using abductive analysis (Tavory and Timmermans 2014), I did not approach my data with a specific goal but maintained a general interest in exploring consumers' perceptions of workers (Goldberg 2015). This broad interest influenced my sampling design. To include diversity among restaurant policies, which I believed could be meaningful in understanding consumers perceptions of workers, I employed a two-step sampling procedure. First, I identified Joe's Crab Shack (JCS) as a restaurant that had implemented a no tipping policy. JCS experimented with a no-tipping policy at 18 restaurants throughout the Northeast and Midwest from September 2015 and April 2016. I sampled all reviews posted to each of the 18 restaurants during this time period, resulting in 188 reviews from 188 unique reviews. Next, I systematically sampled reviews posted by these 188 reviewers directly prior and directly after posting to JCS. This amounted to 286 additional reviews from 248 unique restaurants, as not all reviewers reviewed a full-service restaurant both before and after reviewing JCS and some reviewers reviewed the same restaurant. The findings from this study are based on analysis of all 436 reviews by 188 reviewers. The findings of this study are in relation to the work performed by consumers through the process of writing reviews. Therefore, the diversity among restaurant policies, and the over representation of reviews from JCS was not

important for the findings of this study, but there is no reason to believe that the sampling shaped the findings of this study in any meaningful way.

Analysis

Using abductive analysis strategies, I analyzed online review data. Notable, I approached my data with underlying assumptions of consumers as consumers—not with an understanding of consumers as prosumers. To begin, I entered all reviews from my sample into Dedoose software, a qualitative analysis software. During my first reading of reviews, I developed a codebook to categorize the large amount of data into excerpts with shared concepts (i.e. food, servers, management, quality, quantity). As themes emerged that directed my analysis in the direction of prosumption, I added additional codes to my codebook and then coded all reviews. These themes include encouraging future customers, providing suggestions for improvements, and socializing future customers. Through an interactive process of data analysis and engaging with existing sociological literature, I positioned my findings within a broader academic discussion of prosumption.

FINDINGS

Reviews include descriptions and evaluations of the dining experience, as well as specifics descriptions and opinions about the food, atmosphere, location, service, management, ambiance and more. Within these reviews, I identify three prominent themes that discuss aspects of the experience or establishment in ways that are valuable to the company: drawing in new customers through risk mitigating language, suggestions for improvements and information for socializing future customers. Not all reviews speak directly to these themes. Additionally, many reviews include more than one of these narratives. I explore each of these narratives to further explore the unpaid profit producing work being done by reviewers.

Drawing in Customers

Popular reasons given for wanting to eat out including having a new experience, socializing, and avoiding cooking (Finkelstein 1989; Warde, Martens, and Olsen 1999). To fulfill these goals of dining out customers must put forth effort by means of the time and money. Additionally, by choosing one restaurant, customers are forgoing the experience they could have had dining at another restaurant. Therefore, by choosing a restaurant the customer is placing themselves at risk. While we tend to think of risk in terms of harm and danger, the risk of dining out involves time, money or effort on purchasing an experience that results in dissatisfaction. To mitigate this risk, customers rely on online reviews when making purchasing decisions (Yin et al. 2014; Parikh et al. 2014). I find reviews provide value for businesses by going beyond recommending restaurants, by using specific risk mitigating language to encourage potential customers.

For many customers, cost is an important factor when choosing a restaurant. The price category of a restaurant is linked to each restaurant, demonstrating the sites recognition that this information is meaningful to customers. Dining at a more expensive establishment places a customer at a greater financial risk. The following excerpt is from a review written by a self-described avid “Yelper.” Describing a more expensive restaurant then most of reviews in this sample the reviewer writes:

> Wow. Wow. Wow. I made sure to hold off on writing this review, so it would be my 600th. I love dining out not only in Pittsburgh but all over the country and world, and after much thought, I have named this restaurant my "favorite restaurant of all time. Our check was around $400, and considering the quality of our food and our overall

> experience, we happily paid the tab. I cannot wait to return here again! So what are you waiting for?[1]

Discussions of past dining experiences and the ease of paying an expensive tab could be explained by the reviewer's desire to promote their own economic and cultural capital (McQuarrie, McIntyre, and Shanmugam 2013; Vásquez and Chik 2015). Yelp allows reviewers to construct a personal profile and link to one another, which can make displays of status even more meaningful (Giesler 2006; Lampel and Bhalla 2007; Wolny and Mueller 2013). Regardless of the reviewer's motivation for providing this self-description, providing this personal context reinforces their position as a qualified to provide an accurate cost benefit analysis. The reference to happily paying their tab offers future customers reassurance that the high cost of the dining experience is met by a more-than-satisfactory experience.

Diners at full-service restaurants are also sacrificing more time than they would if they choose to dine at a fast-food, fast-casual or takeout restaurant. Time invested in dining out is a common them, with reviewers describing speed of service, waiting to be seated, time spent choosing the restaurant, time invested physically getting to the restaurant or getting ready to dine out. Unlike the time spent dining, time spent waiting for a table is one of the inconveniences associated with dining, rather than one of the pleasures. While discussions of a long wait time can indicate a restaurant's popularity, it can also be tied to inefficient service or insufficient

[1] In order to most accurately represent the work performed by reviewers, reviews have been left unedited.

dining space. Choosing to eat at a restaurant that is notorious for having extended wait times involves taking a larger time risk by diners having to spend time ‘waiting’ rather than be able to immediately begin their dining experience.

> Nikola's is one of my all time favorites when I'm in Detroit…Being that the food is so great there is always a wait, you'll see that it is well worth it. The wait staff have never been super pleasant but they take good care of you.

Not only does this reviewer discuss expected wait time to further promote the quality of the food, they reassure the customer that waiting to dine at Nikola’s is a good investment of time because the quality of the superior quality of food. Similarly, the sentiment of a worthy time investment is reflected again, this time in relation to speed of service.

> I found this place by chance when taking my son for dinner the night he left for the Army. Fantastic food! Some of the best sushi I've had. You can see the kitchen, it looks to be the size of a closet. This makes the food coming out a little slow, but it is well worth the wait.

An even larger investment of effort can be seen in a customer’s willingness to travel. References to the distance traveled was used in reviews to demonstrate how much effort they were willing to put forth to be part of an experience or event. The following reviewer reflects this sentiment. “Outstanding food and worth the drive from Chicago!” As with many large metropolitan cities, Chicago is home to many well-recognized dining options. With so many options to choose from, this recommended restaurant would have to surpass the value of the experience that would be provided by exerting less effort. By referencing the restaurant is worth the drive, the reviewer provides a cost/benefit analysis of making the risk of travel worth the reward of the quality experience.

Despite individuals suggesting that they dine out for enjoyment, there are many inconveniences associated with the dining out experience (Finkelstein 1989). For customers to feel satisfied, they must feel that the level of satisfaction they have received has outweighed the inconveniences they have encountered. Some reviews acknowledge specific inconveniences associated with a restaurant and weigh them against the reward of an exceptional experience.

> I've been going to [buddies] pizza my whole life. Love the food. Service sucks once a while, but that pizza is worth any trouble getting there...which parking really blows, but *I'm* telling ya...go for the pizza and salad. Yuum

By discussing one of the drawbacks to this establishment this reviewer can be perceived as more trustworthy, being that they are willing to recognize the negative aspects of the establishment. Acknowledging the inconveniences and suggesting they are worth tolerating counters negative reviews that provide these problems as reasons to not choose this establishment.

In addition to enticing new customers, I find reviews also work to draw in lost customers by explicitly speaking to the improvements made to an establishment.

> My husband and I love this place -- We can't understand why it's usually not very crowded, other than they did have a bit of a shaky start; the service was very slow when they first opened, but it's improved a lot since then. Now that they've gotten their act together; we always get good, friendly, fast service. The prices are reasonable as well for the quality & quantity of food. Definitely worth trying!

This reviewer distinguishes the previous restaurant with the new and improved version of the restaurant. Providing a positive review without discussing the shortcomings of the restaurant in the pre-improved state would lead past customers to think that the reviewers may just have different standards in evaluating the establishment. By discussing problems with the restaurant in

the past, the reviewer argues that past negative experiences can no longer be used as a fair measuring tool to determine future experiences. Similarly, the following review describes the improvements of a new restaurant located at the same location.

> The best restaurant that has been here so far!!! Fish and chips fresh battered fish. Seafood linguine was Perfectly seasoned. ...Big shrimp, just good. Salad was yummy, homemade dressings, fresh red and yellow tomatoes.....Walleye chowder very yummy…Please, please, please give this new place a try, very different from what it was and worth a visit!

Like other risk mitigating reviews, this reviewer suggests that the restaurant in its current state is worth attending. Additionally, they demonstrate their desire for the restaurant to succeed by pleading with potential customers to try this new establishment. Customers may use reviews to help sort out less-desirable establishments from others. By using risk mitigating language they may be intending to help other customers 'choose wisely.' Additionally, they demonstrate feeling that certain restaurants are worthy of additional patronage and express hoping that their reviews will drive up business. Regardless of reviewers' motivation for providing reviews, arguably through their positive reviews they are generating value for restaurants.

Identifying Inefficiencies and Providing Suggestions

Although reviews can be read as general rants or raves, I find reviews identify inefficiencies and provide specific suggestions for improvements that can be used by companies to improve business models. Unlike the value derived from risk-mitigating language, both negative and positive reviews can provide value by identifying inefficiencies. Reviewers who describe having a positive experience and suggest intentions to return often position their feedback as intended to help rather than criticize.

The following review is from an overall dissatisfied customer who describes being very displeased by the food but still acknowledging the service as ‘awesome.’ Still, alongside the complaints and compliments is some helpful information about improving the restaurant’s visibility.

> I did search if I needed to make one [a reservation] but the website stated it was only needed for parties of six or more and they aren't an Open Table participant. Additionally, the valet service drew a map for me to the awesome mahogany door that really could use signage.

OpenTable is a website designed to allow customers to make reservations online and provide reviews. By discussing their attempt to make a reservation via OpenTable, they have made it clear that there is some customer demand for the ability to use this site for reservations. Considering this site can also be used by potential diners when seeking out a restaurant, this comment also makes owners aware that there is another website that they may want to be utilizing. Although minor, they also indicate that the lack of signage could be causing some confusion. Similarly, the following glowing review alerts the business of difficulties with finding the establishment and provides recommendations for ways to alleviate the issues.

> We must have driven by this place 50 times without even knowing it was there. Fortunately, I got some coupons in the mail for Leo's and noticed there was a location on Van Dyke, which is a very short drive from our home. [Provides positive description of the appearance, food quality, quantity and cost]. Now that we know where they are, we will definitely be going back. I'm not sure about the signage regulations in Sterling Heights, but if possible, a big sign that is visible from Van Dyke would be very helpful. Currently the only sign we saw was a tiny one crammed on a big sign with all the other

> businesses in this plaza. The name is on the building of course, but it's very hard to see from the road. If you can find them, give them a try!

This review provides insight into what aspects of marketing work and what can be done to help increase visibility. By referencing that they were made aware of the restaurant by receiving a coupon, the reviewer provides assurance that sending coupons is working to draw in new business. Additionally, this reviewer points out an issue with restaurant visibility. By articulating that they are familiar with the area they support their point that locating the restaurant can be challenging to customers. By providing specifics about what is and what is not visible, these details can also be helpful hints to future customers who intend on visiting the restaurant.

The following reviewer discusses the issue of limited seating, which of course would be a more challenging fix for owners.

> They do not have enough seating. The unit they rent is just too small to accommodate their weekday lunch rush. I suppose if you're a business owner that's a good problem to have. It certainly beats an empty dining room at lunch rush. They're doing a good amount of business despite Abelardo's being just a block away. Unfortunately, while I was dining a couple of customers chose to go elsewhere because there was nowhere for them to sit. They have a sidewalk patio, but it has no tables or chairs.

By discussing witnessing other potential customers leaving, they bring to the owner's attention that the space limitation could be leading to lost business. Another issue addressed by customers is ways to improve the experience of the atmosphere within the restaurant. Some reviews simply describe pleasing or displeasing elements of the décor or ambiance, often linking back to discussions of cleanliness. While these can be important reminders to owners of what customers

are taking into consideration, other reviews push further to point out even more specific points of improvement.

> I like this place, its good and they don't skeeze on the portion size. Best Spicy Tuna in Utah and their Teriyaki Chicken is the best I have ever had. I do wish that the servers and front of house host and hostess would start wearing the traditional kimonos again. I think the tee shirts bring down the classiness it used to have.

Clearly this reviewer is a fan of the restaurant and had frequented there previously and considering that they were aware of past uniforms, perhaps multi-times. Not only do they express their opinion about what uniform they prefer, they provide context of why they believe the kimonos would be a better choice, suggesting they increase the classiness. Similarly, the following reviewer provides context for why they think their suggestion is warranted.

> Passed by and decided to give this place a try. First impression of this place gave us a weird vibe only because it was so quiet and there were 3 tables with people there. I felt like I had to be quiet and my kids were being too loud even though they weren't. I'd recommend playing music just so it isn't so quiet.

These specific suggestions are actionable items reviewers suggest to management that they feel can improve the overall experience and feeling of the establishment. Of course, without further research management could dismiss these suggestions and assume they are the unique opinions of individual diners. But when management begins to see comments multiple times, they may value the suggestion or management could use suggestions provided by individuals to further investigate ways to improve their business.

Many customers also share opinions about the quality, quantity or cost of a meal and provide recommendations on how one of these areas need improvement. For example,

> Portion sizes were average, prices were about a dollar too much per item, flavors were perfect. For 2 people, our bill came to $24 for lunch. Overall I would say I would return, but because of the prices, I don't know that this would be my first choice.

While restaurants strive to maximize profits by reducing costs and increasing prices, this review suggests that the current pricing is a deterrent for future patronage. Even more direct, the following reviewer address management directly about their concerns with pricing.

> Good knowledgeable server. Fantastic fresh cut fries. Sauces to delight you. Only negative was that the meat on the bun was very light in the weight. If you are going to sell an incredible tasting sandwich, then if you must, charge a $1 more and make it great. I'd come back again.

By recommending higher prices, this reviewer makes it clear that they understand that to maintain profits, management cannot provide additional product without increasing cost. Comments indicating specific price recommendations can help management to further understand the ways in which customers are weighing quality, quantity and cost into their decisions.

Comments about food are not always provided as direct suggestions for improvement. While broader critiques of food being ‘terrible’ or ‘poor quality’ could indicate to an establishment that improvements need to be made in this department, the vagueness can render them less useful. When suggesting a specific product or item is undesirable solutions are more direct. For example, “The coffee was not the best so I'd find another.” Since coffee is a purchased product, this suggestion is an actionable item that can be changed without reskilling or tooling workers. Similarly, the following review points out how a few specific menu items are failing in comparison to the broader menu.

> This review is for the non seafood lovers that are coming to the restaurant with seafood loving friends. The non seafood menu is very limited. I have tried the steak and the chicken sandwich and was not impressed. I get it, it is a seafood restaurant but please focus on some enhancements to your alternative menu items to bring them up to par with the rest of the menu.

By positioning themselves as a member of a broader group of diners, those who do not eat seafood, they allude to the broader applicability of this complaint beyond their own personal-opinion. By commenting on product choice, price points and menu provide unsolicited information that would be expensive to acquire through traditional market research, the following review goes further by beginning to synthesize the data.

> We went there for a second time last night and again I like it and I will go back for sure. In order to make me LOVE this place please add some more flavor like another person wrote in a review. Greek food is sooo good with it's typical herbs like Rosemarie and Oregano and all the other loveliness, not to forget garlic. About the presentation it's fine but imagine you have the Tsatziki serves on a green salad leave instead of this little white porcelain dish, and on the lamb chops with a spring of Rosemary hmmm sprinkle the fries with some season salt and the rice pilaf kick it up a notch and make a better sauce, it's the same sauce you have for the pasta dish and it's missing everything. The service is great and I like the atmosphere with the nice Greek music. Like I said I will go back it's so much better than what I had before when I had Greek and I did not even leave a comment :)

The language within the review clearly demonstrates that the reviewer is not criticizing the restaurant to deter future customers, but rather is attempting to provide valuable insight into how

to improve the quality of the food. They bolster their point by referencing other reviews and their experience at the establishment.

Socializing future customers

For the experience of dining at a restaurant to run smoothly, both customers and workers must know their assigned roles during the service transaction (Goodwin 1988; Ritzer 1993). Despite full-service dining experiences being highly routinized, there are still some aspects of the dining experience that leave room for variability. For non-chain restaurants, there are some variables that customers may not be able to fully anticipate. Marketing scholars identify the ways in which being more comfortable with an environment helps customers to enjoy their experience. This involves socializing consumers to learn the social norms of a company. Companies can encourage more experienced consumers to social new consumers to the appropriate situational norms (Goodwin 1988). My findings elucidate the ways in which customers can provide meaningful information to help future customers navigate their dining experience.

A common theme among Yelp restaurant reviews are suggestions for what to or what to not order. These often include discussions of size, taste, level of spice, etc. With and without the added detail, even providing choice recommendations can help alleviate the stress caused by needing to choose a menu item.

> I got tacos, and was pretty eager to try as many as possible, but I got full after appetizers (chips salsa and beans, all pretty good but be warned, no mild salsas there) and barely got through 5 of my 6. The steak taco was amazing, the chicken mole was nice (and spicier than the rest), the pulled pork stood out as good too. Mahi Mahi was alright; I've had better but also much worse. My GF got three types of vegetarian tacos and was pretty pleased but she swore one of her cheese and pepper tacos was super spicy--I don't believe

> her though. Another at our table got Carne Asada or something, it looked pretty good and the refried beans with it were really good.

Previous research has suggested that having fewer choices can increase a consumer's enjoyment, being that the process of choosing can be stressful (Iyengar and Lepper 2000). Therefore, recommendations can help alleviate the stress of decision making and ultimately improve the quality of the future customer's meal. By providing an explanation for their choice, reviewers may inadvertently answer some of the questions that would traditional be directed at servers.

For restaurants that involve a non-standard dining experience, tips into how to navigate the new scenario can be particularly important in enjoying the dining experience. The following reviewer is describing eating at a fondue restaurant, which involves a lot more prosumption than a normal dining experience.

> This was my first time and I was pleasantly surprised. From the 4-course meal to the excellent server (Renee), I will definitely be back. Don't be afraid to ask for suggestions or help with the menu, I was a little intimidated at first but it's easy enough to understand. The cheese appetizer and chocolate dessert are amazing but even the salad was great. It's not cheap to eat here but worth it--trust me.

The reviewer doesn't only speak to their own level of confusion, but directly speaks to the intended reader in sharing with them that even though they were initially intimidated that they were able to easily access necessary information and enjoy their meal. Although suggesting future customers pose questions to the staff could provide more work for staff, knowing that one should feel comfortable asking questions can be valuable advice to future diners who feel uncertain how to navigate the fondue experience.

Another strategy for helping customers to know what to expect is by providing meaningful comparisons. This is done below by referencing a series of comparable restaurants. The fact is, this place is very good. [continues to describe his steak as 'perfect' as well as compliments the service] Was it the absolute best meal I've ever had? No it wasn't. I would rate it a cut above such places as Longhorn, Outback, Texas Roadhouse and etc. and there is nothing wrong with those places. Firebirds was at least equal in regards to the food but a big step above most of those chains in service. Prices are not cheap but certainly in line with what you get. Three weeks ago, I ate at St. Elmos in downtown Indianapolis. Was St. Elmos better? Absolutely. You have to keep it in perspective though. I eat at St. Elmos about once a year while there for a convention. It always costs me just over $100.00 per person to eat there. That's a HUGE difference over what I spent at Firebirds. In conclusion. I enjoyed by dining experience at Firebirds. I will eat there again when I am in Erie next time.

In this review, the notion of worth is again present, and this reviewer provides examples of other comparable restaurants to help set reasonable expectations for future diners. In doing so they help to place the cost of the meal into context of what can be expected in return. Again, this provides value to the company by providing context that will make future customers more knowledgeable about the experience and therefore more satisfied with their experience.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Previous research has provided arguments for prosumption as exploitive and empowering (Chen 2015; Dusi 2016; Dusi 2017). Reviews have been discussed as potentially exploitive by discussing the profits generated by site hosts, who are arguably only made profitable through the contributions of users through selling advertising and user data (Arvidsson and Colleoni 2012;

Fuchs 2010; Rey 2012). I advance the existing literature by using qualitative data to further explore how the work of reviewers could be beneficial to individual companies. By focusing on the qualitative content, more attention is paid to the more laborious task of writing, as opposed to ranking. While using secondary data creates limitations of what can be addressed in the scope of this research, the benefits of using this data are that it provides relevant examples of what value is created in reviews.

My findings demonstrate three main ways in which the content in online reviews can potentially benefit business; promoting future business through risk mitigating language, providing suggestions for improvements and socializing future customers. While a potential limitation of this study is that it is unclear how businesses use the review content, presumably many establishments utilize these sites to improve their business models. Strategies for using reviews to enhance business are outlined by both host sites and outside organizations like the National Restaurant Association (National Restaurant Association 2017). Therefore, even if the specific reviews quoted in this study were not advantageous to businesses, the findings still exemplify ways in which valuable content is produced without compensation via reviews. Considering that the benefit is created through unpaid contributions, I argue this research provides support for the argument of prosumption online as exploitive. Companies are provided with free information by the work performed by reviewers to construct reviews.

Additionally, it is important to address that this data do not account for the enjoyment received by those writing reviews. I argue regardless of their satisfaction, findings still demonstrate elements of exploitation considering reviewers are generating monetary value without receiving compensation. Further, by demonstrating the routinized structure of reviews, these findings challenge the depiction of online reviews as fully democratizing the valuation of

restaurants (Sperber 2014). In addition to reviews requiring specific components, such as rating an establishment on a scale of one to five, sites use additional suggestive tactics to shape reviews, including highlighting the 'best' reviews on their site and promoting 'good reviewers' to an elevated status (Baer and Singley 2014). These strategies may speak to the tendency of reviewers to provide suggestions for improvement. Additionally, sites that rely on user generated content allow users to comment on others post, which can encourage reviewers to generate more useful content in order to increase their status within a site's online community (Lampel and Bhalla 2007; Wolny and Mueller 2013).

Establishments also benefit from reviews because customers, sharing the same role as other customers, may be able to provide more relevant suggestions than could be provided by workers. In many consumer-oriented workplaces, training is done to encourage workers to place themselves in the shoes of customers and behave accordingly (Korczynski et al. 2000). Research suggests that customers use reviews to make future purchasing decisions to avoid the risk of dissatisfactions (Wu et al. 2013; Flanagin et al. 2014). Findings demonstrate that customers speak specifically to this fear. This can potentially be explained by efforts imparted by Yelp INC or other review sites to shape the content of reviewers. For customers writing reviews it may be even easier for them to a imagine what other customers would find most useful, being that they occupy the same role within the dining setting. In this way, prosumers are even more qualified than paid employees to generate content most valued by other customers.

Future research should explore if reviewers are aware of the ways in which companies are benefiting from their labor? Interestingly some sites are beginning to pay reviewers for contributions. For example, overstock.com provides customers with small sums of money to be used towards future purchases if they write a review of a purchase. Future research should

explore how reviewers make sense of their contributions across paid and non-paid contexts. Additionally, scholars should further explore how companies recognize the benefits they receive from the content of online reviews.

Consumption and production are commonly perceived as dichotomous and symbiotic processes. Currently, the legal system reflects this dichotomous perception of work and consumption, and individuals are afforded different legal protections depending on which role they occupy. As a consumer, individuals are afforded specific legal protections under The Bureau of Consumer Protections. As a worker, individuals are provided other protections under the US Department of Labor. In October of 2013, Dr. Panzer and others joined in a civil suit against Yelp, attempting to claim compensation for the work they performed through writing online reviews. Despite occupying roles as consumers (users of this online website), the plaintiffs recognized their contributions as labor, and in turn sought the legal protections afforded other workers. The dismissal of their claims, and the widespread depiction of these lawsuits as frivolous, demonstrates the cultural embeddedness of perceiving consuming and producing as binaries. This binary representation allows for consumption to maintain the status of voluntary, non-productive, and therefore undeserving of compensation. By further expounding the value produced by the unpaid work of reviewers, this study supports the importance of shifting to a prosumer perspective. As scholars and individuals begin to further understand the exploitative nature of prosuming, individuals may gain strength in demanding that the rewards of their unpaid contributions be more equitably distributed.

CHAPTER 3: STUDY TWO—TABLETS AND TIPPING: CUSTOMERS' PERCEPTIONS OF PROSUMING WHEN DINING OUT

INTRODUCTION

The process of consuming goods and services is constantly changing, and over time different tasks become seen as responsibilities of either the customer or worker. The processes of purchasing groceries is a commonly referenced example for viewing how the tasks performed by customers and workers shift over time. The recent shift to self-service checkout lanes brought attention to how customers are now filling the jobs of workers by scanning and paying for their goods without interacting with a cashier, although a worker is often available to oversee the work of multiple customers (Palm 2016; Ritzer and Jurgenson 2010). While it is not difficult to relate the self-checkout lines with an understanding of customers performing tasks of workers, the task of gathering groceries off the shelf is not often associated with performing work traditionally done by employees. An invention that is so normalized we could easily take for granted by today's standards, the shopping cart, drastically changed the consumer's role in a shopping event (Grandclément 2006). Yet prior to 1916, when Piggly Wiggly first implemented a system of self-shopping by making groceries available in aisles, the task of gathering groceries was performed by grocers (Palm 2016). Years after Piggly Wiggly first implemented the self-shopping model, the process of selecting groceries off shelves is no longer recognized as customers doing employees' tasks (Humphreys and Grayson 2008). More recently, the tasks assigned to customers have been transformed again by implementations of amenities like curbside pick-up or the ability to select groceries online and have them delivered to one's home. These practices of consuming revert some of the tasks previously absorbed by customers back to paid employees.

This example helps to demonstrate that not only do the tasks performed by workers and consumers change within service interactions, but that perceptions of who are responsible for these tasks can also shift.

Ritzer and Jurgenson (2012) argue that companies enact new mechanisms of customer self-service to reduce labor costs, arguing companies increase their profits by replacing low wage laborers with unpaid customers. They suggest customers are willing to take on these tasks because of capitalists being able to present the new tasks as fun or beneficial to customers. Additionally, especially in the case of online shopping, consumers can benefit from lower prices (Brown and Goolsbee 2002; Rezabakhsh et al. 2006; Zettelmeyer, Morton, and Silva-Risso 2006). They acknowledge that customers can resist specific forms of consumer exploitation, such as avoiding self-service roles. They emphasize limits to these resistance strategies and argue that by looking at historical examples of shifts in prosuming roles, they would bet on capitalists' ability to successfully co-opt the involvement of consumers. While many scholars have contributed to understanding the implications of self-service prosumption, little empirical research outside of applied hospitality management research (Hsu and Wu 2013; Meuter et al. 2000; Szymanski and Henard 2001) has been provided to further uncover how customers make sense of performing prosumptive responsibilities.

Through a qualitative analysis of online reviews, this study will enhance the study of prosumption by further exploring the context in which customers recognize performing tasks traditionally performed by paid employees as work. Additionally, I address reasons customers reject or embrace being tasked with productive responsibilities. Specifically, I identify and compare the processes of customers using table-top tablets to place orders and pay their bills and the practice of customers tipping workers as two cases of customers perform the productive

responsibilities traditionally assigned to workers. This research helps to broaden the current understanding of variations in how customers respond to different prosumptive tasks. In what follows, I first review literature pertaining to self-service technologies and tipping.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Self-Service & Prosumption

Ritzer (1993) first addressed company-driven strategies to enlist customers in co-producing their own experiences by implementing technologies that allowed customers to perform tasks initially performed by workers. Most strategies of self-service prosumption involve consumers and technologies interacting to coproduce experiences in replace of consumers and workers interacting. Widely referenced examples include ATMs, self-check-in Kiosks, automated phone services or shopping online in which a person completes a shopping transaction without interacting with service workers (Humphreys and Grayson 2008; Koeber, Charles S., Wright, and Dingler 2012; Ritzer and Jurgenson 2010). Dujarier (2015) discusses how self-service technologies also reshape the role of workers as well. Rather than always resulting in job loss, there is also a redefining of their responsibilities and they are tasked with assisting customers adapt to the new technology to ensure that customers complete tasks. Referring to the grocery example, there are now normally workers stationed at the end of self-service kiosks who, rather than performing the task of checking-out items, now manage and assist customers performing this task.

In a study of causes of customers satisfaction and dissatisfaction with self-service technologies. The marketing scholars, Meuter et al. (2000) identify three main causes of customer satisfaction and four main causes of dissatisfaction. Customers expressed satisfaction with self-service technologies when they were used to assist them in an urgent time of need, to

allow them to avoid interacting with service workers, and when the technology worked successfully. These reasons for satisfaction demonstrate that customers are not uniformly opposed to taking on additional responsibilities within service interactions. Findings revealed the largest cause of dissatisfaction was being unable to access a service entirely when technology failed. For example, in cases of free-standing ATMs, customers do not have the option to work with a bank teller to access money when the machine is out of service. Dissatisfaction was also expressed about poor technology design, process failure (for example, a kiosk not reading a credit card during self-checkout), and user error. Even when technologies work, other factors such as a customer's age, which is often associated with more limited exposure to computerized technologies, can impact preferences for self-service technologies (Meuter et al. 2000; Dean 2008).

By applying a social science perspective to customers' perceptions of self-service technologies, I explore issues beyond customer satisfaction to broaden the understanding how customers make sense of these tasks as performing work. I explore customers' perceptions within the context of full-service dining. As opposed to dining in a fast-food or fast-casual restaurant, full-service restaurants provide an additional expense to customers (via tips), in exchange for servers performing the work of taking orders, delivering food and drinks, and clearing dishes. The concept of full-service dining assumes minimal customer responsibilities, making it a particularly interesting context for exploring customers' perceptions of the implementation of self-service technologies.

Through implementing new policies and self-service technologies, full-service restaurants have also experienced shifts in the direction of customers assuming more responsibility. A quick chronological look at the events of dining out demonstrate this shift at

each step of the way. First, even prior to arrival, customers are now increasingly making their own reservation via the internet rather than calling and speaking with an employee (Layton 2005; Lang 2006). Next, can be greeted by a sign to "Please Seat Yourself" rather than being guided by the hostess to a table. More recently, at some restaurant's tabletop-tablets often provide detailed menu items so that customers can self-navigate the menu rather than needing to ask questions about specific options. Additionally, tablets allow customers to directly order their meal from their seat, which sends their order directly to the kitchen and foregoes a server taking their request. While servers are still tasked with delivering meals and beverages, tablets also eliminate servers need to present customers with the bill. Instead customers can access the bill directly via the tablet and pay the bill directly if using a credit card (Kimes 2008).

Tipping as Work

Discussions of prosumption as self-service often address shifts to consumption in relation to technology. Tipping offers an example of how intertwined policy changes and cultural norms can also reassign the responsibilities of consumers within service interactions (Azar 2007; Azar 2009; Lynn and McCall 2000). I identify tipping as a form of self-service prosumption since customers are performing the productive task of controlling, evaluating and rewarding (front of house) workers ((Albin 2011; Koeber, Charles 2011; Lopez 2010). Apart from tipped jobs, wages are traditionally seen as obligations of management. I further elaborate on the tipped structure to demonstrate how these tasks come to be the responsibility of customers.

When people dine at full-service restaurants, they are expected to tip the waitstaff at a rate that reflects the quality of service received. Much of servers' pay comes from tips provided by customers, rather than wages paid by employers (Allegretto and Cooper 2014; Jayaraman 2016). This pay structure is supported by the existence of two federal minimum wages, one for

employees expected to earn tips and one for all other workers. The federal tipped minimum wage is $2.13 an hour, which is less than a third of the standard federal minimum wage of $7.25 an hour (Wage and Hour Division, U.S 2017). This dual pay structure allows management to offload their responsibility to pay workers into the hands of customers—meaning through the process of tipping, customers take on the responsibility of providing workers' wages (Lopez 2010; Albin 2011; Allegretto and Cooper 2014).

A customer is supposed to determine how much to tip servers by considering the size of the bill and the quality of the service. There is also a social norm of tipping at least 15 percent of the pre-tax bill. The tipped based pay structure used in full-service restaurants creates a dynamic in which the link between customers' evaluations of workers and workers' wages is most explicit. Waiters/waitresses are employed in multi-employer-relationships rather than bilateral work relationships (Ogbonna and Harris 2002; Lopez 2010; Albin 2011). In bilateral work relationships, there is an employer and worker, and the employer is expected to fulfill the following roles: allocate or terminate employment, pay workers with monetary sums and/or benefits, manage the work process and use workers' services (Freedland 2005). In a multi-employer relationship, the employer role is filled by both the employer and customer, because both customers and employers directly pay workers monetary sums (Lopez 2010; Albin 2011). From a working consumer perspective, issues of consumers acting as management has been referred to as consumers as quasi-management (Albin 2011; Koeber, Charles 2011; Lopez 2010).

Implications of tipping have mainly been explored from the perspective of tipped workers. In a context that promotes tipping, there is additional stress felt by the workers who know their wages are at the discretion of customers (Ogbonna and Harris 2002; Jayaraman 2016). Workers consciously perform tasks in hopes of increasing tips, such as asking the

manager to discount an item (Bolton, Houlihan, and Gatta 2009; Eddleston, Kidder, and Litzky 2002). The vulnerability felt by workers who are dependent on tips is seen, for example, by instances of workers refraining from reprimanding customers who make inappropriate sexual remarks (Jayaraman 2016). Despite workers attempts to elicit large tips, workers recall instances when they felt the tip left by a customer was not an appropriate amount for the quality of the service they had provided (Whyte 1949; Paules 1991). Prior research has established the correlation between relying on tips for wages and how workers experience their job responsibilities. While this suggests that workers see customers as fulfilling a role of management, less is understood how customers make sense of their task to evaluate workers.

Having identified tipping as a form of prosumptive self-service, it is important to consider the historical context surrounding the practice of tipping. In the early 1900s, the English practices of tipping had been introduced in the United States and was becoming widespread. Initially, customers opposed the task of tipping because of its implications of servility (Segrave 1998). Public distaste for tipping and organized worker movements protesting tipping both focused on the implications of tipping for workers, but less attention was paid to how tipping obligates customers to control and evaluate workers. Despite public distaste for tipping, employers successfully lobbied for the continued use of a tip-based wage system in place of a minimum wage. As reflected in the widespread practice of tipping today, employers' requests for a two-tiered wage system has implemented and cemented tipping as a normative practice (Azar 2007; Azar 2009; Lynn and McCall 2000). Today, some restaurants are beginning to experiment with implementing no-tipping policies and rationalize this decision as providing workers with more stable wages.

Hospitality and management scholars have explored the impact of changing consumers' productive responsivities, but their approach remains narrowly focus on customer satisfaction (Dixon, Kimes & Verma 2009; Hsu & Wu 2013). By applying a sociological perspective to the study of customers' perceptions of tabletop tablets and tipping responsibilities, this study provides a more in-depth understanding of how customers understand being tasked productive responsibilities. Through a qualitative study of online reviews, I find that customers do not desire to use the tablets but prefer to maintain the structure and responsibility of tipping. These findings suggest that customers' preferences for prosuming is task specific and is influenced by their perception of whether they perceive the task as the responsibility of a paid worker.

METHODS

This study employed abductive analysis in a qualitative study of online restaurant reviews. Abductive analysis shares many similarities to grounded theory but differs regarding the use of theory (Tavory and Timmermans 2014). Grounded theory relies on researchers avoiding theoretical preconceptions when entering the field to collect data or during analysis of data (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Glaser and Strauss 2017). Conversely, abductive analysis "rests on the cultivation of anomalous and surprising empirical findings against a background of multiple existing sociological theories and through systematic methodological analysis." (Timmermans and Tavory 2012: 169). Abductive analysis involve the following three steps, which at times happen in conjunction with one another: 1) exploring initial patterns within the data through a process of reading the data, memoing and coding, 2) continued analysis of the data until a level of defamiliarization is reached which allows for potentially taken-for-granted activities to emerge as relevant or surprising, 3) rechecking initial findings that emerged against the data to ensure that findings accurately represent the data as a whole. Further, abductive analysis

encourages researchers to continuously engage with literature and to discuss their work with other scholars during the process of refining their analysis and positioning their findings within the existing scholarly literature.

Data

Online restaurant reviews are customer-developed narratives in which customers can provide an account of – and rate – their dining experience. Reviews then become an excellent source of data that capture customers' immediate perspectives about their dining experience. By exploring unsolicited and voluntary narratives of experiences, both positive and negative, as opposed to surveying or interviewing diners about their experience, I can uncover what themes are most salient to customers about their experience (Finkelstein 1989). Additionally, by exploring accounts of experiences I can situate their reviews within the social contexts (motivation for dining out, expectation of dining out) of the event described (Finkelstein 1989; Orbuch 1997). One drawback of this data is that reviews are subject to self-selection at two levels; 1) not everyone contributes reviews of their dining experiences, 2) people who do contribute reviews of their dining experiences do not always review their dining experience. Outside of a small subset of individuals who are avid reviewers and review most of their dining experiences, most people contribute reviews when they perceive an experience as either very good or very bad (Burtch and Hong 2014). While important to recognize that reviews may be more skewed towards positive and negative, as opposed to neutral dining experiences, this does not pose a significant limitation since the focus of this study is the productive work of consuming as opposed to customers evaluations of experiences as positive or negative.

I selected to sample from Yelp.com both because it is a leader among restaurant review sites and because it attempts to eliminates falsified reviews by implementing an algorithm to

capture false reviews posted to unfairly bolster or impede an establishments rating (Luca and Zervas 2016). While the parameters of the filter are not made public, research suggests that the filter relies on linguist and behavioral cues and is more likely to be extreme in rating and by reviewers with fewer reviews (Luca and Zervas 2016; Mukherjee et al. 2013).

Sample

As implied when employing a study using abductive analysis (Tavory and Timmermans 2014), I did not approach my data with a specific goal but maintained a general interest in exploring consumers perceptions of workers (Goldberg 2015). This broad interest influenced my sampling design. To include diversity among restaurant policies, which I believed could be meaningful in understanding consumers perceptions of workers, I employed a three-step sampling procedure. First, I identified Joe's Crab Shack (JCS) as a restaurant that had implemented a no tipping policy. JCS experimented with a no-tipping policy at 18 restaurants throughout the Northeast and Midwest from September 2015 and April 2016. I sampled all reviews posted to each of the 18 restaurants during this time period, resulting in 188 reviews from 188 unique reviews. Next, I systematically sampled reviews posted by these 188 reviewers directly prior and directly after posting to JCS. Finally, as themes related to prosumption emerged in my data, I purposefully sampled additional reviews to capture consumers reactions to self-service technologies within the dining out environment. I identified Olive Gardens' use of tabletop tablets as an example of self-service technology. Olive Garden placed tabletop tablets in 800 of locations beginning in April 2015 and completed their installments by December 2015. In total, this resulted in a sample of 536 reviews form 251 unique reviewers. While the findings were part of an interactive process that involved engaging with the whole dataset, the findings from this study report on reviews of JCS and Olive Garden.

Analysis

Using abductive analysis strategies, I analyzed online review data. Notable, I approached my data with underlying assumptions of consumers as consumers—not with an understanding of consumers as prosumers. To begin, I entered all reviews from my sample into Dedoose software, a qualitative analysis software. During my first reading of reviews, I developed a codebook to categorize the large amount of data into excerpts with shared concepts (i.e. food, servers, management, quality, quantity). As themes emerged that directed my analysis in the direction of prosumption, I added additional codes to my codebook and then coded all reviews. These themes include tipping as control, tablets as work and company advantage. Through an interactive process of data analysis and engaging with existing sociological literature, I positioned my findings within a broader academic discussion of prosumption.

FINDINGS

Findings suggest that customers desire to perform prosumptive tasks are dependent on: 1) If customers recognize a task as 'work' that they feel should be performed by paid employees, and 2) If they feel they are afforded a benefit by performing the task themselves rather than the task being completed by a paid worker. I find diners recognize using tablets as work but do not recognizing tipping as work. I contextualize these findings by demonstrating customers are willing to accept performing tasks on tablets when they find it increases efficiency, but feelings of frustration are exasperated when they feel their efforts have not increased efficiency. Since customers do not recognize tipping as work, they prefer to maintain this responsibility and see tipping as beneficial regarding service quality and their ability to enact agency.

Forced Use of Tablets

Dining out at a full-service restaurant provides customers with more than just a meal, but an experience of being served. Servers are traditionally responsible for taking customers' orders, relaying this information to the kitchen staff, delivering food and drinks, delivering the bill and taking payment. By implementing tablets, customers can place orders and pay bills on their own. When asked to use tablets, customers can feel they are being asked to complete the work of paid employees. For example,

> I don't care for the darn screens on the table. I go to a restaurant to have service not to be told to use a computer to order food. Additionally, why tell us to use the computer to pay but then the computer is so good that the server has to stay and help us with the computer, only to get frustrated and do it themselves. The breadsticks and salad are still very good. I wish there menu was better when it came to gluten free items. Only some of the items are labeled and the rest you have to use those darn computers to find out. Yet even those computer GFree menu is not clear.

Since servers are traditionally responsible for taking orders, this reviewer equates having to order their own food as losing the opportunity to be served. In addition to the physical task of inputting orders, the discussion of using the 'darn tablet' to find out answers about gluten free options also demonstrates how the tablets reassign the mental task of navigating the menu to the customer as well.

Some reviewers explain the tablets as managements solution to workers not being available to perform their job: "Now they have this little dumb machines were you can make your order because that Waiters are never around, you also get to pay there at the table through

this device." Others feel that it is the workers that are trying to relinquish themselves of their own productive responsibilities.

> Our waiter was mediocre and kept pushing us to use the Ziosk at the table - ok, so what is your job exactly? I'm (not) sorry, if I go to a restaurant then I expect the waiter/waitress to take my order and serve it to me. It was not busy, there was no reason for him to be that adamant about ordering through the tablet.

This reviewer enforces the idea that customers' preference for self-service technologies are dependent on the scenario, they demonstrate a willing to tolerate using the tablet if the restaurant had been busy enough to warrant this tool (Meuter et al. 2000). This is further demonstrated by customers discussing how using the tablets afford them benefits they could not receive if they were to interact with workers. For example, the following review discusses issues of trustworthiness of an employee when paying for their meal.

> My favorite Olive Garden of all time. Love the crew members and the food. Unfortunately there was an incident where a server added a tip amount that I did not authorize. I didn't leave her a tip at all bc her service was poor. Once I checked my bank account I realized she included a 8.99 tip on to my card. Her name was Kaitlyn. Not sure if she still works there or not. I still eat here bc I didn't want Kaitlyn to ruin my overall experience but now I am skeptical on using my card unless I am using the table ziosk.

While this review is focused on the trust concerns associated with dining, it can help to demonstrate that some individuals may prefer to limit their interactions with workers more broadly. Tablets would provide customers this opportunity. The more common benefit referenced was using tablets to increase efficiency. For example,

> If you want a freaky fast lunch.. this is the place to go! Sit down. Drank. Order apps on the Ziosk. Arrives before you know it. Soup, salad bread sticks... quick AF. Order a full on entree and boom... at the table once you finish your apps. In and out in 20-30 mins.

For this reviewer, the speed of the meal was prioritized above the experience and in turn they are not displeased with the tablets. Since full-service dining establishments are associated with a more leisurely dining experience, it is not surprising that most reviewers were less focused on the benefit of increased efficiency. Still, in many instances rather than increasing efficiency, servers' failures to respond to customers' requests via tablets pronounced preexisting issues with inefficiency.

> What the heck kind of system did Olive Garden adopt? The hostess never said our waiter was going to come by to take our drink orders so my party was confused. And then we noticed those tablets and decided to explore that. We couldn't find what we wanted to order so we decided to "call a server". All the tablet does is flash a small red light. Was that supposed to get someone's attention? Well it didn't. After sitting around and feeling irritated, we got up and left.

Failed attempts with attracting server's attention using the Ziosk left customers feeling defeated. Similar frustration is reflected by the following reviewer, who warns future customers about the inefficiencies of using tablets. Customers become frustrated when they attempt to resist this new change and are forced to 'wait' on themselves.

> NO SERVICE! We arrived before 2:00 pm on a Sunday to have lunch. We waited about 20 minutes for a table (about what we were told). The man who seated us attempted to show us how to "wait" on ourselves using the little tablet on the table, but we declined that, wanting to be served by a real server...We waited for about 20 minutes for our server

> to show up, but no one ever came to our table (even to give us water). We even pressed the "call server" button on the tablet, which blinked for a few minutes and then shut off. There were other servers in our section, none of whom ever acknowledged our presence. Finally, with no service apparent in the near future and no appropriate meal choices, we left. We will not return.

While prosuming can enhance customers control over a service interaction, these examples suggest that customers feel less empowered rather than more empowered by failed attempts at producing their meal experience via tablets. Additionally, this example emphasizes the continued role workers play in shaping customers' experiences despite new "efficient" self-service technologies.

Loss of Tipping Role

Theoretically, traditional tipping policies require customers to evaluate the server's performance and compensate them accordingly. Evaluating and rewarding workers are traditional responsibilities of management. Therefore, tipping requires customers perform the work of paid managerial employees. Despite the parallels of tipping and performing managerial duties, I find that except for one review, customers do not recognize the process of tipping as absorbing 'work' tasks. Further, I find customer desire to maintain the tipped policy. Customers perceive that the quality of service is lessened, and that no-tipping policies diminish the agency they are provided by determining tip size. Therefore, since tipping is not perceived as work, customers perceive only negative consequences of moving to a no-tipping policy.

The following reviewer demonstrates recognizing tipping as tied to the task of managing customers.

> Service (**): I can't really complain about the particular waitress because the lack of tips gives any person in that position less of an incentive to please the customer. In that situation, it boils down to Human Resources really trying hard to instill customer satisfaction as a point of pride. I did not feel that here. We were ignored for long periods of time, and we were asked on two occasions, within 5 minutes of each other, if we wanted dessert - after declining the first time. I'm glad we tried it, but we won't be returning of we can help it.[2]

By denoting that Human Resources can take on the task of encouraging workers to provide quality service, the reviewer indirectly acknowledges how, through tipping, customers are now responsible for motivating workers. More common were references to tips as disconnected from the process of tipping, or tipper themselves, which helps to develop an explanation of why customers do not experience the responsibilities of tipping as work. The following reviewer address this distinction through emphasizing the definition of tipping that focuses on tip receivers rather than the tippers.

> It turns out that the corporate company is testing a new policy in which they raise the menu prices to compensate for the increased wages of the normally tipped employees who are no longer allowed to accept tips. While I initially thought that this was an

[2] Asterisks are used by reviewers to indicate the star rating of a portion of the experience. Although each review is attached to an overall star rating, some reviewers included asterisk to indicate how they rate specific aspects of the meal.

> interesting policy, I quickly changed my mind as the meal wore on. The word tip stands for "to insure promptness" and let me assure you, when this concept was removed from the dining experience, so was the promptness. The motivation to please the customer no longer was a relevant concept and it was obvious.

Rather than the responsibility of tipping causing the reviewer to recognize themselves as managing the customer, the reviewer discusses the power of the tip policy as exerting control over workers' decisions to please customers. While a few reviewers discuss the benefits of the no-tip policy regarding providing fair wages, most reference changing their opinion after experiencing poor service.

> Joe's has now started a 'no-tipping' policy at all their restaurants. Thought we'd give it a try last night and see how it was working. Well, in theory, the 'no-tipping' sounds good, but in practice, I don't think it's working--not at this place anyway...And the service was just plain ... bad.

Customers also express dissatisfaction with tipping because it prevents their ability to provide input into valuing the meal. While the prices of food are predetermined, tipping allows customers to determine how much they believe the service is worth. The valuing of the service is guided by shared cultural norms about how much a person should tip (currently the standard in the US is between 15%-20%), but with standard tipping policies customers can adjust this accordingly. Rather than seeing determining the tip size as a burdensome 'work task,' customers see this as a benefit that empowers them to determine how much they would like to pay for the service they received. Customers frustration with an inability to tip extends to cases of customers reviewing service as either positive or negative. For example,

> Service @ the bar was awesome. They now have signs up everywhere saying no tipping and tips not accepted. Then on the receipt it says any money left on the table will be given to charity. I then found out it's not charity, it goes to a foundation. I'm sure those beautiful waitresses will move on with this no tip policy and the service will be crap with high turnover employees. It's truly a shame. So for a $60 dinner tonight i got small portions, left hungry and told i couldn't tip my favorite waitress.. I will definitely go less often.

The reviewer's reference to being unable to tip their favorite waitress suggests they derive pleasure out of the process of tipping and feel alleviating this task as diminishing satisfaction gained from the experience.

Workers' wages were increased to account for lost tipped wages. To account for increased wages, the restaurant increased the price of menu items. Customers recognizing the price increase felt this caused them to tip even when they felt the service did not warrant compensation.

> I used to love this place. I see signs of decline...They have a sign on the door that they are probably a "no tipping establishment". What I discovered that means is, they have jacked up the prices, decreased the portions, and cut the quality. Now you will pay a 20% tip whether they are good or not because it's built into the price. As I said, this used to be one of my favorite places. It is now permanently off my list.

Collectively, diners rejected changes to their roles as consumers. This demonstrates that customers satisfaction is not dependent on doing fewer productive tasks, but dependent on doing productive tasks they favor.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

While scholars debate the empowering and exploitative tendencies of prosuming, this research helps shed light on how customers perceive prosumptive tasks in positive or negative lights. This research provides insight into how customers make sense of the tasks they complete as part of the consumption process. I find customers recognize the task of entering meals and paying bills via tablets as work but do not recognize the act of tipping as work but do. These distinctions can be understood in context of the task being completed. The managerial task of evaluating and rewarding workers involves mental work rather than physical work which can make it less visible.

Another explanation for customers not recognizing the practice of tipping as work is by considering its long-standing history. When tipping was first implemented consumers rejected this process of tipping for its implications on reducing workers to servile positions and for being asked to pay rates different than the set price (Segrave 1998). After decades of consumers becoming accustomed to tipping, the processes of paying servers via tips has become associated with customers' responsibilities (Albin 2011). Findings support this assessment by demonstrating that customers are reluctant to give up the role as tipper because they assume tipping accounts for the quality of service received. Reviewers attributing poor service to the loss of their tipping role demonstrates the belief that tipping promotes a higher quality of service. Even those who favored the no-tipping policy reported feeling no longer in favor of this shift after feeling they received poor quality service. With exception of one reviewer, customers did not consider how quality service could be implemented alongside a no-tipping policy through alternative management strategies.

The current rejecting of tablets mirrors initial rejecting of tipping. Both manufacturers of self-service technologies and companies that implemented these technologies as cost-saving strategies have a vested interest in the cultural acceptance of these shifts in service. Companies promote these technologies as beneficial to consumers, promoting ideas of efficiency and convenience. This narrative obscure how self-service technologies enlist customers to perform previously compensated tasks without compensation.

Companies stand to disproportionately benefit from the shifting of productive responsibilities from workers to customers. Understanding variations in customers perceptions of prosuming is an important component of the continued study of prosumption and the implications for companies, workers and customers. Future social science research can address this topic from both the management and customer perspective. Applying survey and interview strategies can provide a deeper understanding of why customers accept certain forms of prosuming above others. Additionally, scholars should further explore the strategies implemented by management to co-opt the compliance of customers in completing productive tasks. Specially, over the course of the next few years, scholars can explore how the implementing tabletop tablets in full-service restaurants receive resistance from customers and presumably eventually gain acceptance.

CHAPTER 4: STUDY THREE—DINERS AS CO-CREATORS: EXPECTING MORE THAN SMILES AND SILVERWARE

INTRODUCTION

Undoubtedly, the internet has made it possible for customers to personalize their consumption. For example, customers can tailor their newsfeed on social media and news sites to show them stories relevant to their individual interests or design sneakers with unique designs to be custom printed. While much attention has been given to the way customers personalize goods and services online, the desire to personalize experiences extends beyond the web. Prahalad & Ramaswamy (2004) coined the term co-creators to capture the idea that customers provide input into the production process and in turn expect personalized experiences.

The concept of co-creation views customers as active agents and further defines their roles and responsibilities as compared to more simplistic depictions of customers as selfish actors who operate on the understanding that they are 'always right.' Rather, co-creation suggests through structured communication, companies and customers can develop a mutually beneficial relationship in which customers wants are met and company profits are enhanced. In part, this model suggests that customers are privy to more information about goods and services and in turn accept more responsibility for their decisions (Prahalad, C. K. and Ramaswamy 2004; Prahalad, Coimbatore K. and Ramaswamy 2000; Prahalad, Coimbatore Krishna and Ramaswamy 2004; Ramaswamy and Ozcan 2013).

Proponents of co-creation suggest that customers benefit by being afforded the opportunity to get what they want, rather than being subject to the options provided through mass production. This in turn benefits companies by allowing them new ways of satisfying customers

and building customer loyalty (Auh et al. 2007; Cossío-Silva et al. 2016). Additionally, companies can benefit by using customers' input to incorporate new innovative ways of satisfying other customers as well.

Positioning customers as co-creators has different implications for workers when customers are purchasing goods online vs. when consuming services face-to-face. Within the leisure and hospitality sectors, shifts to co-creation suggest that service interactions now transpire between co-creators and front-line service workers (FLSW) rather than between customers and FLSW. Seemingly mundane examples, such as requesting an early check-in at a hotel at the front-desk or asking to add extra avocado to a sandwich depicts instances of customers' desires to personalize their experiences. Unlike making these requests online, in which website design can either allow or disallow modifications or space for comments/requests, when requests take place in face-to-face environments, service workers are tasked with granting or denying requests. While research has addressed the implications of co-creation regarding customers' experiences and company profits (Cossío-Silva et al. 2016; Prahalad and Ramaswamy 2004; Ramaswamy and Ozcan 2013; Ranjan and Read 2016), little attention has been paid to how co-creation and expectations of personalization impacts workers. Similarly, the sociological study of service work and customer-worker interactions has not sufficiently addressed the shifting role of customer to co-creator (Glucksmann 2013; Wheeler and Glucksmann 2015).

Currently, the study of customer-worker interaction maintains a binary understanding of consuming and producing and focuses on managements strategies to control workers' emotional labor. This focus assumes customers are recipients of service, rather than partners in creating their experience. By acknowledging the productive work of consumers, this study broadens the

focus of customer-worker interactions and provides a meaningful link between the study of service work and the study of prosumption. Through a qualitative study of online restaurant reviews, this research will explore how customers position themselves as co-creators in the context of full-service restaurants and how this position shapes their perceptions of workers. First, I will provide an historical context for understanding the theory of co-creation as different than previous conceptions of consumers' roles. Next, I briefly review the literature surrounding the study of customer-worker interactions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Recognizing Consumers as Co-Creators

Broadly defined, co-creation is an organizational model that incorporates customers into the production process by encouraging customers to actively engage with the organization to produce value (Prahalad, Coimbatore K. and Ramaswamy 2000; Prahalad and Ramaswamy 2004; Prahalad and Ramaswamy 2000). Management and marketing scholars position the development of co-creation against previous strategies that assumed consumers were targetable groups, and companies were tasked with selling products to them (Berry, Carbone, and Haeckel 2002; Prahalad and Ramaswamy 2004; Vargo and Lusch 2006; Vargo and Lusch 2008). Further, prior to co-creation company strategies operated on the assumption that value was generated exclusively by firms during the process of production. Therefore, strategies to increase profits relied on a firm's ability to decrease cost of production by reducing the cost of materials or labor (Ritzer 2009; Vargo and Lusch 2006). During this time, products were mass produced and customers could choose between purchasing or not purchasing a product—but notions of altering or personalizing products or services were very limited. As globalization developed and increased modes of mass production created slimmer profit margins, companies began focusing

on service quality to differentiate themselves from competitors and to justify product costs (Vargo and Lusch 2006; Vargo and Lusch 2008).

Shifts to focus on service quality led to emphasizing the importance of providing customers 'experiences' rather than just goods or services (Prahalad and Ramaswamy 2004; Verhoef et al. 2009). Consider the example of getting a trim at a high-end salon vs a discount hair salon. Not only is a high-end salon selling a service—the physical cutting of hair—they are also selling an experience, which may include offering the customer a drink, using higher end products, or taking time to review photos of the customer's hair inspirations. A discount salon may perform the same service for a fraction of the cost, but the experience they provide will likely be much different.

Initial emphasis on consumers' experiences maintained the perception of customers as passive and assumed their experiences could be shaped and controlled from the top down. This assumes through brand management and service interactions customers are provided clues as to how to interpret their experience (Berry, Carbone, and Haeckel 2002; Verhoef et al. 2009). This passive vision of consumers' experiences maintains a unidimensional depiction of service, assuming all customers will experience clues similarly, at least within demographic segments. The internet has reshaped how customers consume by enabling more opportunities for customer-to-firm communication and customer-to-customer communication. In addition to changes in customers' behaviors, marketing and management scholars have adopted new perceptions of consumers which now focuses on their active participation in the production process. The acknowledgement of consumers as co-creators of value has become the new dominant narrative (Prahalad and Ramaswamy 2004; Vargo and Lusch 2006; Vargo and Lusch 2008). Unlike the understanding of value as tied to the production process, the theory of co-creation emphasizes

that value is created through the interaction of consumers and firms. Further, value is seen as socially constructed and context dependent as it relates to each customer (Edvardsson, Tronvoll, and Gruber 2011).

Critiques of co-creation as exploitive have mainly focused on the benefits provided to companies by their ability to co-opt consumers' innovations and reduce labor costs by implementing new strategies to allow for customers to serve themselves (Ritzer and Jurgenson 2010; Thrift 2006). Studies of how workers are affected by self-service has been limited to discussions of deskilling or job displacement (Ritzer and Jurgenson 2010; Ritzer 2015b). While important perspectives, I argue that these critiques have focused on elements of co-creation as isolated practices and yet to address the impact of the repositioning of customers as co-creators more holistically. Considering the important role customers have in shaping the experiences of workers, it is important to consider how the shifting the roles of consumers impacts customer-worker interactions (beyond discussions of job displacement). This is particularly relevant considering that customers acting as co-creators are expected to personalize their experience. This means in the service industry, customers are attempting to co-create their experience alongside FLSW.

The Missing Co-Creator

In service work, customers also exert power and control over workers in what is known as the customer-worker-management triangle (Albin 2011). Considering the power given to customers, it is important to understand their perception of workers. Extensive studies have demonstrated that customers are influential in the job satisfaction of workers. Customers' negative verbal outbursts, for example, can take an emotional toll on service workers and diminish levels of job satisfaction (Wharton 1993; Bolton and Houlihan 2005; Chau, Dahling,

Levy and Diefendorff 2009; Goodwin, Goth and Frenkel 2011; Groth and Grandey 2012), while having authentic exchanges with customers can provide workers with higher levels of job satisfaction (Liedner 1993). Complaints made to management about workers can impact managements review of workers (Fuller and Smith 1991). Even acts such as writing reviews for review sites or social media can deter or encourage future business and in turn diminish workers' wages (Luca 2011), specifically in the dining industry where wages are tied to tipping. Korczynski (2009) suggests that rather than viewing these outbursts as evidence of individual customers' misbehaviors, researchers should examine how these customer outbursts are created and maintained by organizational structures and management policies. Arguably, understanding how principles of co-creation shape this interaction is an important next step in furthering the study of customer-worker interactions.

The current study of customer-worker interactions focuses on managements' strategies to control workers' emotional labor. The notion that workers are coerced by management to display specific emotions for the customer's benefit is referred to as emotional labor (Hochschild 2003; Wharton 2009). One strategy used to control the emotional displays of workers is providing workers a script that narrates what they say and do while interacting with customers. Scripts can include instructions for how to greet and respond to customers or go as far as regulating how long workers maintain eye contact with customers (Leidner 1993; Ritzer 1993; Korczynski et al. 2000). When management believes that customers can sense the inauthenticity of routinized emotional displays, they push workers to go beyond simply acting positive at the surface but rather train and encourage workers to genuinely feel the emotions that are advantageous to interacting with customers. The past focus on management driven strategies to please customers implicitly assumes that customers uniformly value emotional labor above and beyond tangible

skills (Leidner 1993; Hochschild 2003; Williams 2006). Applying the theory of co-creation to an understanding of customer-worker interactions acknowledges that customers' perceptions of service interactions are both shaped and co-created by customers themselves as well as workers. This focus reiterates the necessity of incorporating consumers' perspectives into the study of work, rather than relying strictly on workers' experiences and managerial policies.

METHODS

This study employed abductive analysis in a qualitative study of online restaurant reviews. Abductive analysis shares many similarities to grounded theory but differs regarding the use of theory (Tavory and Timmermans 2014). Grounded theory relies on researchers avoiding theoretical preconceptions when entering the field to collect data or during analysis of data (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Glaser and Strauss 2017). Conversely, abductive analysis "rests on the cultivation of anomalous and surprising empirical findings against a background of multiple existing sociological theories and through systematic methodological analysis." (Timmermans and Tavory 2012: 169). Abductive analysis involve the following three steps, which at times happen in conjunction with one another: 1) exploring initial patterns within the data through a process of reading the data, memoing and coding, 2) continued analysis of the data until a level of defamiliarization is reached which allows for potentially taken-for-granted activities to emerge as relevant or surprising, 3) rechecking initial findings that emerged against the data to ensure that findings accurately represent the data as a whole. Further, abductive analysis encourages researchers to continuously engage with literature and to discuss their work with other scholars during the process of refining their analysis and positioning their findings within the existing scholarly literature.

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filter relies on linguist and behavioral cues and is more likely to be extreme in rating and by reviewers with fewer reviews (Luca and Zervas 2016; Mukherjee et al. 2013).

Sample

As implied when employing a study using abductive analysis (Tavory and Timmermans 2014), I did not approach my data with a specific goal but maintained a general interest in exploring consumers' perceptions of workers (Goldberg 2015). This broad interest influenced my sampling design. To include diversity among restaurant policies, which I believed could be meaningful in understanding consumers perceptions of workers, I employed a three-step sampling procedure. First, I identified Joe's Crab Shack (JCS) as a restaurant that had implemented a no tipping policy. JCS experimented with a no-tipping policy at 18 restaurants throughout the Northeast and Midwest from September 2015 and April 2016. I sampled all reviews posted to each of the 18 restaurants during this time period, resulting in 188 reviews from 188 unique reviews. Next, I systematically sampled reviews posted by these 188 reviewers directly prior and directly after posting to JCS. This resulted in an additional 285 reviews from 248 unique restaurants, as not all reviewers reviewed a full-service restaurant both before and after reviewing JCS and some reviewers reviewed the same restaurant. Finally, as themes related to prosumption emerged in my data, I purposefully sampled additional reviews to capture consumers reactions to self-service technologies within the dining out environment. I identified Olive Gardens' use of tabletop tablets as an example of self-service technology. Olive Garden placed tabletop tablets in 800 of locations beginning in April 2015 and completed their installments by December 2015. In total, this resulted in a sample of 536 reviews form 251 unique reviewers. The findings of this study are in relation to consumer's dining experiences. Therefore, the diversity among restaurant policies was not important for the findings of this

study, but there is no reason to believe that the sampling shaped the findings of this study in any meaningful way.

Analysis

Using abductive analysis strategies, I analyzed online review data. Notable, I approached my data with underlying assumptions of consumers as consumers—not with an understanding of consumers as prosumers. To begin, I entered all reviews from my sample into Dedoose software, a qualitative analysis software. During my first reading of reviews, I developed a codebook to categorize the large amount of data into excerpts with shared concepts (i.e. food, servers, management, quality, quantity). As themes emerged that directed my analysis in the direction of prosumption, I added additional codes to my codebook and then coded all reviews. These themes include reactions to making requests, receiving special attention and discussions of the worker making the experience special. Through an interactive process of data analysis and engaging with existing sociological literature, I positioned my findings within a broader academic discussion of prosumption.

FINDINGS

In addition to discussing the meal, the occasion for dining out and the ambiance, service remains a central component in diners' perceptions of the overall quality of their experience. As expected, service is referenced as both skilled tasks (e.g. taking orders, delivering meal items) and displays of emotion or attitude (e.g. kind, pleasant, cheerful, rude). Beyond these expected components of service, findings suggest that diners have embraced the role of co-creator and evaluate workers on their ability to facilitate a personalized experience. For example, customers dining out to celebrate an event, such a birthday, expect to enlist workers in co-creating the evening into a personal experience. In this context, customers may expect workers to wish them

a happy birthday, gather staff to sing them a birthday cheer and provide them with a free dessert. These expectations require that workers consume aspects of a customer's personal life and work with a customer to co-create an experience.

Findings suggest that customers mainly identify the role of front-line service workers, rather than their own role or the role of company policies, as responsible for facilitating or hindering a co-created positive experience. Findings reflect customers' positionality as co-creator in three predominant themes: expecting transparency, valuing personalized experiences and suggesting prices are negotiable. In what follows, I explore how customers relate to principles of co-creation and how this further complicates customers' expectations of workers as they interact within the worker-customer-employee triangle.

Co-creating & Transparency

Full-service restaurants alleviate diners from most of the 'work' involved in dining, such as cooking or cleaning as one would do dining at home, or even filling their own drinks and picking up their own silverware as might be expected in fast-food or fast-casual restaurants (Ritzer 2014). Still, diners must perform certain tasks throughout the dining experience. In acknowledging how the decisions and actions they take influence the overall outcome of their experience, diners recognize the role they play in co-creating the experience. Meaning, customers recognize that their actions contribute to the outcome of their experience. For example, the following reviewer reflects on how their meal choice influenced the quality of their experience:

> Came to this place because the birthday boy wanted to eat seafood. I ordered the East Coast Platter. Big mistake, the crab cake was dry and broke apart, the fried fish was

> greasy and the 3 shrimp wrapped in bacon were small. Disappointed, I should had tried one of steam pots, they looked better. I will come back to try something different.

Perceiving a meal as poor quality could lead a diner to assume the restaurant does not provide high quality food. Rather, this reviewer acknowledges the role they played in at least partially shaping the outcome of their experience by suggesting they should have ordered something different. By understanding their undesirable meal as the response of both the restaurant and their own actions, this reviewer expresses intentions to return and asserts that by changing their behavior (ordering something different), they can expect a more satisfying experience.

Even though customers recognize choosing a meal as their responsibility, this also has implications for their evaluation of service. Customers expect servers to provide additional insight they cannot gain from reading the menu alone and discuss soliciting additional information from servers when choosing a menu item. Being able to provide additional insight becomes seen as part of the workers' responsibility. Reviewers positively reference 'knowledgeable servers' and references to workers being 'clueless' or not knowing the menu are used to support representations of bad service. For example,

> Customer service is what they seem to excel at here at Jimmy's Egg. Our server was Megan, and she had great suggestions for deciding what to eat, kept our drinks full, and even offered to-go cups to take along.

Customers accustomed to being provided suggestions and guidance from servers can redirect their discontent with a meal choice towards workers when they feel they have not been provided adequate information. For example,

> We had never been there before and we each ordered a bowl from the house signature dishes menu; it was SO much food, like, nearly preposterously so. The food was good, i

> suppose, but not exciting. We each had a small tasty appetizer, and I wish the server had warned us that we should have split one bowl instead of ordering two, I kinda felt like that must happen a lot there and they don't mind at all selling you more than you want."

Despite no mention of asking for recommendations or explanations of portion sizes, this reviewer felt the worker should have guided them to split the meal, which in hindsight they feel would have been a better choice. To suggest diners split one meal, the server would have to have known not only the portion size of the meal, but also what portion size a customer would find appropriate. Additionally, recommending customers split an entrée would require the server to assume customers would be comfortable with splitting a meal. If one diner is not comfortable with this suggestion, it could leave them feeling uncomfortable or embarrassed. Additionally, splitting a meal would also result in less money spent, which would normally correspond with a smaller tip.

Also notable is their discussion of indifference to selling customers more than they would want. It is unclear if the reviewer is referring to the organization or worker as being indifferent, but this demonstrates the customer feels that there has not been complete transparency. Specific references to what the server could have done differently, not what the restaurant could have done differently (provide smaller meals, reference the large size on the menu), demonstrates that workers are held responsible for a lack of transparency provided by an establishment.

Co-Creation & Personalization

Shifts to organizational models of co-creation are designed to provide consumers with a more personalized experience. In a full-service dining environment, this requires that workers understand the individualized context in which customers are dining out and provide them with

service accordingly. When customers feel that servers have acknowledged and responded to their individualized needs, they review the service positively. For example,

> Scott was my server tonight. He was absolutely *wonderful.* I had a long drive back home, stopped off here for coffee. That's it; all I needed. He kept my cup full and was uplifting and kind. Best of all, he didn't disregard the importance of my presence here just because all I wanted was coffee; he made me feel valued and appreciated. Made my night.

In this example, the reviewer acknowledges the emotional labor performed by the server but focuses on the fact that she was treated like an individual with specific needs. Expecting personalization intensifies previous expectations of emotional labor which suggested that workers could express more homogenous emotions. Similarly, the following reviewer discusses the personalized experience provided to her family:

> My daughter's daycare went here for a field trip (weird huh) and they were amazing and the kids had a great time. They gave us a coupon to come back as a family. The servers recognized my daughter right away, had her dance with them, and made her feel like an utter princess. We had a very good meal on top of that. We have been back at least another six times since the summer with the same results. A big thank you to the servers for going the extra mile.

While this reviewer was extremely pleased by this interactive experience, determining how much customers want to participate in co-creating their experience can be challenging. Some customers may have been uncomfortable with this level of engagement. Additionally, other customers may like more individualized attention, but feel it is the server's job to facilitate this interaction. For example, the following diner felt displeased that the server did not inquire about

their reason for dining out, and in turn the service did not help co-create an experience that recognized their reason for dining:

> It was my husbands birthday- but we were never asked about dessert/special occasion and after waiting so long for the check- we were ready to go.

Even though they indicate the server was not made aware of the special occasion, they express feelings that inquiring more information about their reason for dining out is the responsibility of the server. This demonstrates that even though customers may recognize themselves as co-creators, they still feel it is servers' jobs to gather information about how they need their experience personalized. With an emphasis towards personalizing experiences, workers must not only control their emotions or learn to elicit certain emotions but be further capable of interpreting the needs of customers and then tailoring their emotional displays and actions in response to their unique needs. Understanding customers as co-creators paints a more complex portrait of what it means to provide good service.

Despite full-service dining being less routinized than fast-food establishments, to produce meals efficiently and minimize waste, kitchens reflect higher tendencies towards mass production than personalization. While there are always exceptions, both between establishments and within establishments, often restaurants will allow customers to make minor substitutions to menu items. Although servers do not contribute to preparing the meal itself, they are often held responsible for personalizing the meal. In the following example, the customer expresses feeling that their needs were met when the server offers to adjust the quantity of the appetizer requested:

> ***From start to finish, I was very impressed with the service….We all shared the bacon wrapped dates appetizer, which was just heavenly. Apparently, the app only comes with

> three dates, but I really appreciated that our waitress offered to bring us an extra date since there were four of us sharing.[3]

While obviously there is an objective gain by receiving an additional date [presumably at the same price since not noted otherwise], this customer expresses appreciating that the server recognized their needs and catered to their needs by altering the number of dates. This transaction also demonstrates workers acting in favor of pleasing the customer above obliging to rules of management. Because servers perform their work within the worker-customer-triangle, providing customers personalized experiences can sometimes come at the cost of bending managements' rules. Since customers are responsible for most of servers' wages via tips, workers may feel additional pressure to favor customers' requests.

Asking to adjust a menu item was the most prevalent example of customers requesting to personalize their experience. Although adjusting menu items at one time was considered rude, now customers value and expect to be able to adjust their meal (Ferdman 2015; Hirsch 2016; Jayaraman 2016). Although fast-food restaurants are recognized as the epitome of standardization, the pervasiveness of personalization is reflected by Burger King®'s long standing slogan, 'Have it your way,' demonstrating the expansiveness of the mentality towards personalization (Jayaraman 2016).

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[3] Asterisks are used by reviewers to indicate their star rating of a portion of the experience. Although each review is attached to an overall star rating, some reviewers included asterisk to indicate how they rate specific aspects of the meal.

Reviews reflect the value customers place on to being able to personalize their experience. For example,

> Great customer service but most of all good food I don't have to go to Burger King to have it my way. Most restaurant's have bell pepper mixed in their food and have no option to remove it as an example this place gave me what I wanted.

The reviewer describes the food as good but, rather than referring to quality or quantity, instead emphasizes the ability to customize their order. Considering that many people have taste aversions to specific food items, presumably bell pepper in this reviewer's case, being allowed to personalize a meal item can be more important than the objective rating of a meal.

Despite the importance to some customers of being able to modify a menu item, not all restaurants allow for adjustments. While some establishments specify a policy that indicates no adjustments can be made, often on the bottom of a menu or next to specific menu items, most often the rules surrounding modifications are left ambiguous. Since requests to personalize menu items are presented to the server, not the staff that would be creating the meal, the allowance of making modifications is often credited to the servers. When servers accept a customer's request to modify menu items, it is often seen as an extension of good service.

> Services is very fast, they even catered to my picky children with custom made dishes not on the menu... The staff are so friendly I almost thought I was back home in Kentucky at a family owned diner or as child eating at my Grandmaw's who wouldn't eat until it was cold because she was serving the needs of her family. Hats off to the staff and chief. It's absolutely a must have while staying in St Louis.

Conversely, when customers' requests to modify a menu item is denied, the service is regarded as poor.

> Had the misfortune of checking out Joes. Started with the waiter Jordan in the bar area. Having never been there, we went for the $2 appetizers and beer. We were told we could not get the sauce on the side due to how the dish is prepared. BS. It was French fries with a sauce on top, really?

By leaving the policy ambiguous, servers become viewed as gatekeepers to customers being able to personalize their meal. This strategy can protect the company from seeming unreasonable, but in turn can create additional tension between customers and workers.

Co-Creation & Value Assessment

Prahalad & Ramaswamy (2004) discuss price negotiation as an additional component of co-creation. They argue that by co-creating value, customers are also provided a greater input into determining the value they are willing to pay for goods and services. Prahalad & Ramaswamy (2000) provide the example of online auctions, suggesting co-creation doesn't necessarily mean customers will pay less, but that the value of a goods or services are unique to an individual and they are only willing to pay a price that reflects their perceptions of the value. Additionally, customers are also able to influence the price they are willing to pay by having access to more information, which can allow them to find the same product or service at a cheaper rate, find a similar product or service at a lower rate or gather more information about the current inventory allowing them to wait for price reductions.

In principle, tipping is centered around the notion of customers paying in proportion to the value they perceive they have gained. Unlike tipping, customers determining the price they are willing to pay for the meal itself explicitly contradicts the current pricing system used by almost all restaurants. Recently, a very small subset of restaurants adapted a 'pay what you can' or 'pay what you see fit' model of payment system, often tied to goals of serving a diverse

population of customers and including those who could not afford the menu items otherwise. Outside of these select cases, almost all restaurants operate on a system in which prices are standardized and determined by the establishment.

Findings depict customers are applying the logic of co-creation and narrate instances of feeling the bill should be modified to reflect their evaluation of the experience. Since prices are assumed to be predetermined, there is not a standard rule in place for when prices can be modified or at what rate they can be adjusted. Price negotiations are played out between workers, customers and often management. Again, the ambiguity surrounding this adjustment creates tension between customers and workers.

> This was a very disappointing visit. We were craving shrimp, crab, and lobster. The shrimp was not deveined (don't enjoy eating shrimp poop), the crab cake was mushy in the middle, and the temp on the foods were not up to par. The manager did reduce our bill by the kids meal that had the non-deveined shrimp; however, did not address the mushy crab cakes. Very disappointed in the food & customer service.

Even when prices are adjusted, consumers can still feel the adjusted price is at odds with the rate at which they value their experience. In this case, feeling that they still overpaid, impacts the perception of the product and service as inadequate. These feelings demonstrate that reaching a price agreement with customers is also considered part of workers' responsibilities. The following example exemplifies that decisions to alter prices are discretionary.

> Great food as always. Service was good as well. Had the Mexican tacos, my favorite. Half of the meat and tortilla was spilled over the side of my plate on the tray. The guy from the kitchen said he'd get me more meat. He the asked if I wanted more, scooped it off the tray said "I have it right here." I couldn't tell if he was joking or not so I said I was

> good. Either way, he didn't bring it back.*** I did make a mention of this in the comment card. The manager came and [talked to] us before we paid and said he took care of the meal. Really appreciated that!! Back to 5 stars.

The credit for making the adjustment to the meal is perceived as a discretionary decision made by an individual, rather than assumed to reflect an employee following a company policy. The following review again demonstrates how making appropriate price adjustments are depicted as a responsibility of the worker.

> The food arrived 40 minutes after we sat down. I immediately showed the server that I couldn't even find the shell under my tostada because it was so wet it had disintegrated. She agreed, but didn't offer to make it right in anyway. I paid in full, but I'll never be back.

Rather than explicitly requesting a price adjustment, this reviewer felt it was the server's responsibility to offer to rectify this complaint. Often servers do not have the authority to make price adjustments themselves, so doing so would require bringing this to the attention of a manager. The customer's interpretation that the server is apathetic towards their complaint is only one possible explanation for the server not acting to rectify the customer's dissatisfaction. Rather, the server may not be addressing the customer's complaint because from past experiences they have found that the manager is reluctant to reduce the meal cost, or fear that the cost of the meal will be deducted from their paycheck. Just as we can only speculate to why the server did not address this issue further, unless the customer further probed the server for an explanation of their reaction, customers are also making conclusions without all of facts. In the following example, again the reviewer assumes the options available to the manager without having full information. For example,

> I've seldom had a good experience here. I expected it to be excellent this time, though. I was with someone I adore and nothing could ruin this time spent together. Joe's tried to ruin it, though, by golly. I presented my AAA card for the 10% discount listed on the AAA website, and the manager refused to honor it. Said it wasn't on her list. My question is why wouldn't she have offered a token discount to keep a customer happy? Clearly there were other discounts they DO offer, so the idea is not foreign to them. Considering there's nothing special about this over-priced food, a little customer consideration would have been nice.

Regardless of if the manager could or could not apply another discount, there seems to be a shared understanding among customers that prices can and should be adjusted when they are dissatisfied. From an organizational standpoint it may be challenging to standardize these decisions. But as findings suggest, the ambiguity surrounding policies leave customers to assume that either workers or management always have the discretion to make price modifications.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Engaging in a customer-worker interaction as either a worker or customer is part of the daily lived experiences for most Americans. Previous studies of front-line service work have understood these interactions from workers' perspectives and interpreting guidelines outlining management driven strategies to improve customer satisfaction. Despite recognizing that customers' behaviors can shape workers' job experiences both positively and negatively (Bolton and Houlihan 2005; Chau et al. 2009; Goodwin, R. E., Groth, and Frenkel 2011; Groth and Grandey 2012; Wharton 1993; Wharton 2009), the study of customers' perspectives toward workers has been largely neglected by social scientists interested in worker well-being (Wood 1994; Korczynski 2009). Wood (1994) suggests scholars have shied away from the study of

customers' perspectives because it has traditionally been considered an area for marketing or management scholars interested in business development. By exploring customer-worker interactions from the consumer's perspective, this study helps to elucidate how customers' perceptions of workers are shaped by their position as co-creator.

This research extends prior literature by beginning to bridge the gap between the study of prosumption and front-line service work. Findings demonstrate that in the context of full-service dining, customers maintain a proclivity towards co-creating a personalized experience. While theoretical discussions of co-creation discuss a 'win-win' for firms and customers, findings suggest that co-creation increases customers' expectations of the responsibilities of workers. Customers see workers as gatekeepers to their ability to successfully co-create a positive experience. Customers recognize the role they play in shaping their own experience but see their actions as dependent of the information and allowances granted by workers. For example, when feeling full information was not provided about the size of meals, customers place the responsibility of transparency on the worker. Additionally, customers perceived their ability to adjust menu items or reduce their bill as dependent on workers' cooperation.

Limitations to this research include having only customer accounts of interactions. Having further knowledge of restaurant policies and knowledge of whether these policies are expressed to customers would allow for a more comprehensive understanding of how these structural elements influence customers' perceptions and behaviors. Additionally, despite Yelp's efforts to eliminate fake reviews, there is no way of verifying that all reviews are based on legitimate accounts. Yet despite these limitations, these reviews still speak to how these interactions are experienced or in few instances of falsified events, how these events are imagined. This still helps to explore what aspects of an event are noteworthy to customers.

This study allows for an understanding of customers' perceptions of workers by analyzing online reviews. Future research could expand this work by more systematically exploring how individual restaurant structures shape customers' role as either co-creator or passive consumer and how these distinctions can inform customer-worker interactions. Additionally, future work should explore how workers recognize customers as passive or active agents and how they see these roles as meaningful in their work experience. Through the continued study of customers' perceptions and experiences, additional insights will be gained in understanding the complexity of front-line service work.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

This dissertation furthers the study of prosumption by discussing the implications of prosuming online and in service-environments. I have addressed how prosuming—as opposed to consuming—influences management, customers and workers. Specifically, through a qualitive analysis of online reviews of full-service restaurants I explore: 1) how reviews serve as a form of prosumption that furthers the goals of management, 2) variations in how consumers perceive and respond to distinct prosumptive roles in full-service restaurants, and 3) how occupying the position of co-creator shapes customers' perceptions of service workers. The findings of each article both contribute to the study of prosumption and provide avenues for future research.

In Chapter 2, I broaden the argument for recognizing online reviews as exploitive by reviewing the ways value is embedded within review content. Previous scholars have taken a predominantly quantitative approach in discussing how online host-sites and restaurants benefit from reviews. This has been demonstrated through correlations between the number of reviews and the overall rating a company maintains and their profits (Ye, Law & Gu 2009; Zhang, Ye, Law & Li 2010; Luca 2011). Arguably, rating an establishment on a scale of one to five is only a small portion of the labor involved in contributing a review, the more time intensive task involves mentally crafting a review and the physical task of typing out one's thoughts. By focusing on the value of reviews quantitatively, the value attached to review content is unseen and in turn renders much of the unpaid work of reviewing invisible. By focusing on the qualitative content of reviews, this study brings attention to the value generated through the unpaid labor of writing reviews. Findings reveal three predominant ways that customers provide value; enticing future customers by using risk mitigating language, providing recommendations

for improvements, and by socializing future customers to establishment specific norms. By demonstrating the value made available to organizations through the work of reviewers, these findings challenge the capitalist driven narrative that consumers are the primary benefactors of systems of online reviewing.

In chapter 3, I provide additional insight into understanding customers' perceptions of performing prosumptive tasks. Previous scholars have discussed the implications of prosuming for consumers, but customers' voices have been largely excluded from this discussion. Through an analysis of online reviews, I give voice to customers and analyze how they understand being tasked productive responsibilities, namely self-service tabletop tablets and tipping workers. I find customers do interpret ordering food through tablets as work and resent being tasked this responsibility. Conversely, I find customers do not interpret the act of tipping as work, despite customers having to assume managerial work responsibilities when dining under traditional tipping policies. When management initiated a no-tipping policy, consumers rejected relinquishing this responsibility. These findings demonstrate that over time management can successfully co-opted consumers' cooperation and even preference for performing productive labor. A century ago, when tipping was first being promoted by restaurateurs, consumers protested tipping, and recognized tipping as advantageous to companies at the expense of demeaning workers and offloading expenses to consumers (Segrave 1998). Tablets in full-service restaurants are still relatively new and some reviews in this sample suggest that reviewers are discussing their first encounter with a tabletop tablet. Arguably, it is too soon to tell if customers will adopt and favor tablets. Considering the example of tipping and management's vested interest in using these technologies, it plausible to assume they will become more prevalent regardless of the consequences to workers and customers. This prediction mirrors

Ritzer's (2015) self-described pessimism of the power of capitalists to co-opt the cooperation of consumers.

In Chapter 4, I discuss the implications of consumers' roles as co-creators regarding their perceptions of front-line-service workers. Management scholars argue that as co-creators, customers contribute more input into the production processes and in return receive better service by means of personalized products and experiences. From a managerial perspective, a system in which customers are active co-creators—as opposed to passive consumers—can be interpreted as a 'win-win' for both consumers and companies (Cossío-Silva et al. 2016; Jaakkola and Alexander 2014; Prahalad, C. K. and Ramaswamy 2004). Even though customers interact with front-line service workers when co-creating experiences in service contexts, little attention has been given to the implications for customer-worker interactions. This study finds customers speak to their position as co-creator through discussions of expected transparency, valuing personalized experiences and suggesting prices are negotiable. Additionally, I find consumers hold front-line service workers accountable for the success or failure of their experience, rather than questioning how company policies or their own actions may have contributed to the outcome of their experience. These findings suggest that when consumers take on more productive tasks as co-creators it does not alleviate tasks assigned to service workers. Rather, the shift to a co-creation model places additional burdens on workers. As co-creators, consumers now perceive workers ability to co-create personalized experiences as an additional component of service. This has added to, rather than replaced, previous expectations of workers to perform skilled tasks (e.g. take orders, deliver items, etc.) and provide emotional labor.

I have several suggestions for how future research can build upon the findings of this dissertation. First, future research should explore how reviewers recognize the value of their

review contributions. While past scholarship has explored motivations for reading and writing reviews (Hicks et al. 2012; McQuarrie, McIntyre, and Shanmugam 2013; Yoo and Gretzel 2008), little is known about who consumers perceive as benefactors of this work. Additionally, research should explore how management interprets the value of reviews and if they make conscious choices to alter their business model based on these contributions. Also, survey and interview studies should be undertaken to further understand what types of prosumption customers recognize as unequitable by exploring customers' perceptions of completing tasks across contexts. Additionally, it is important to address how consumer demographics, specifically age, can play a role in shaping consumers' perceptions of prosumptive tasks. Finally, future research should explore workers' perceptions of customers as prosumers. Specially, understanding how front-line-service workers experience the model of co-creation both from the organizational model and through interactions with consumers. Extending future research to explore how consumers recognize the value of their productive tasks, under what context customers are willing to contribute to the productive aspects of consumption, and how workers perceive customers roles as prosumers, will help to strengthen the link between the study of prosumption and work. Future theoretical and empirical research dedicated to linking the study of work and prosumption can provide meaningful insight into both fields of study.

The findings of this dissertation have applications beyond academic scholarship. Specifically, these findings demonstrate that customers are benefitting companies through their prosumptive work by both providing them with value by producing online content and by performing tasks without compensation that are traditionally performed by workers. Currently, discussions of reviewing and self-service technologies and their impacts on consumers and workers are occurring parallel to one another. While these discussions include the impact on

companies, workers and customers—they tend to obscure the central component of prosumption—that consumers are contributing to the production process without compensation. Discussions of reviews in the broader media address topic of how reviews can make or break companies (Bosker 2011; Chang 2017), how reviews are becoming central to the way customers make decisions, and media depictions of the impact of reviews have even presented factitious depictions of a futuristic societies in which individuals use peer-to-peer ratings to rank all members of society (Kayser 2017). By focusing on the impacts of reviewing outside of discussions of reviews as unpaid work, less attention is paid to the benefactors of online reviews. Similarly, discussions of self-service technologies often focus on how machines are replacing workers, again foregoing the emphasis on the unpaid work of customers needed to operate most self-service devices. By using reviews to address reviewers as prosumers and give voice to consumers as prosumers, this dissertation helps to demonstrate the connections between prosuming online and in-service environments. The most salient connection being that when consumers take on more productive responsibilities, the goals of capital are further supported at the expense of unpaid consumers.

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