Coffee Shops: Exploring Urban Sociability and Social Class in the Intersection of Public and Private Space

Rose Pozos-Brewer

Sociology/Anthropology Senior Thesis

Professor Farha Ghannam

May 2015
Contents

Acknowledgements .................................................................................................................................................. 2

Introduction .............................................................................................................................................................. 3
  Background and Methodology .......................................................................................................................... 5
  Overview ............................................................................................................................................................. 9

Chapter 1: Public and Private Space in the City .................................................................................................... 11
  Places and Placemaking: Spaces with Meaning ............................................................................................... 11
  The Public and the Private .............................................................................................................................. 13
  Limitations of the Public/Private Dichotomy: The Purpose and Formation of Third Places ....................... 21
  Third Places in Daily Discourse .................................................................................................................... 27
  Sociability .......................................................................................................................................................... 30
  Connection to History .................................................................................................................................... 32

Chapter 2: From the Coffeehouse to the Coffee Shop: A Brief History ............................................................. 33
  The First Wave: Circa the Fourteenth-Century to the Twentieth-Century ......................................................... 35
  The First Coffeehouses ................................................................................................................................... 36
  Adoption of coffee in Europe .......................................................................................................................... 39
  Coffeehouse aesthetics ...................................................................................................................................... 42
  Gender dynamics ............................................................................................................................................... 43
  Female response to masculine coffeehouses .................................................................................................. 47
  Cultural differences .......................................................................................................................................... 48
  Tea vs. coffee ..................................................................................................................................................... 51
  The fall of the coffeehouse ............................................................................................................................... 53
  The Second Wave: Rediscovering Fresh Coffee .............................................................................................. 54
  Starbucks ........................................................................................................................................................... 56
  The Third Wave of Coffee ............................................................................................................................... 58
  The coffee shop vs. the coffeehouse .................................................................................................................. 60
  Femininity and masculinity ............................................................................................................................... 61
  Conclusion ......................................................................................................................................................... 65

Chapter 3: Sociability and the Coffee Shop: Uses, Practices, and Social Dynamics ............................................. 67
  Sociability - Situating the Coffee Shop in Urban Life ......................................................................................... 68
  The Appeal of Coffee Shops ............................................................................................................................ 69
  Etiquette .............................................................................................................................................................. 76
  Gentrification and Inequality ............................................................................................................................ 83
  Conclusion: Coffee is More than a Drink .......................................................................................................... 86

Chapter 4: Concluding Thoughts: A Re-Conceptualization of “Third Place” ....................................................... 88
  Limitations of Oldenburg’s (1989) conception of Third Place ......................................................................... 89
  Sociability and Technology in Coffee Culture .................................................................................................. 96

Appendix: Coffee in Popular Culture .................................................................................................................. 110
Acknowledgements

This thesis is the continuation of my work from the seminar Cities, Space, and Power. It has been a fun project and I am grateful to all of my friends, family, and professors who have contributed to this thesis, helped, and supported me along the way. I would like to thank Professor Farha Ghannam for her thought provoking conversations and guidance in this process. Thank you also to Professor Mike Reay for his insights and advice. Special thanks to the Santa Cruz Sunrise Rotary for their scholarship that allowed me to do observations in coffee shops in New York.

Lastly, a big thank you to my friends and family members who have supported me in different ways through this process! Thank you for listening to my ideas, accompanying me in my research, providing stories and insights about coffee shops, and being constant sources of encouragement and thesis chocolate. Also, thank you to my parents for their editorial support and comments that helped polish this thesis.
Introduction

I walked down the stairs of my apartment building in New York City’s Lower East Side one day and entered the new coffee shop in the basement. The coffee shop, Cat’s Den, was dark, even though it was a bright afternoon outside. Dark antique furniture and black leather couches, low lighting, and jazz music created a soft, warm ambiance. There were several young people working on laptops at tables while small groups of three to four people hung out, chatting. The space felt very separated from the bustle of the street, which was filled with cars and people walking by. There was no pressure to stay or to leave.

For a few months, Cat’s Den\(^1\) was the only coffee shop\(^2\) on the block. It was not the first one in the neighborhood, but it is one of the most distinctive. Peach Preserve, another coffee shop, opened next on the corner opposite to Cat’s Den and its success confirmed the social dynamic of the area. These coffee shops, and many others in the neighborhood and in the world, represent more than just buying a cup of coffee. These are “hipster” coffee shops where young and old go for the experience and ambiance provided. The owners and baristas live and breathe coffee and “have refined coffee to be more than just a caffeine boost […] Coffee is a way of life” (Franklin 2013). Coffee has developed a certain image in the United States. We take “coffee breaks” at work, we “go grab a cup of coffee” with friends or for a first date, we are well acquainted with Starbucks, we incorporate coffee shops into popular media, as in the TV show, Friends, and line up to see a pop-up replica of Central Perk\(^3\). Coffee itself is a very popular commodity, generating more trade than any other trade good except petroleum (Tucker 2011) and is the most popular legal drug (Topik 2009). Even those of us who do not drink coffee or do not actively participate in coffee culture are affected by it. Coffee culture in this thesis refers to

---

1 All names have been changed to protect privacy.
2 In this thesis, the terms “coffee shop,” “café,” “coffee bar,” and “espresso bar” are used to refer to roughly the same establishments. Until recently there were differences between these institutions, but today they have similar characteristics and functions as public places for sociability.
3 Central Perk is the coffee shop in Friends where the protagonists go to hang out.
specific habits and social interactions that revolve around coffee and coffee shops. Inviting someone out for coffee, getting coffee “to go” before work in the morning, spending free time and/or working in coffee shops, and joking about coffee addictions are all examples of coffee culture (for more, see Tucker 2011 and Stamberg 2002). “The worldwide coffee culture is almost a cult,” comments Mark Pendergrast (2010:xvii), “There are blogs and news groups on the subject, along with innumerable websites, and Starbucks outlets seem to populate every street corner, vying for space with other coffeehouses and chains.” The fact that Pendergrast (2010) emphasizes coffee shops indicates how a big portion of coffee culture comes from the coffee shop. Coffee shop chains grew more than 10% annually between 2000 and 2004 (Waxman 2006), which was before the increase in independent coffee shops in the recent decade. The coffee shop has been hailed as a “third place,” or the place one frequents that is not work or home. It also has a rich history with roots in the early coffeehouses of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which have passed down the ideals of the coffee shop as a place for public discourse and the formation of a democratic public sphere.

This thesis traces the development of the coffee shop from the first coffeehouses and how the coffee shop has become a center for urban sociability. In order to contextualize and unpack the social meaning and uses of a coffee shop, I use theories of public and private place, placemaking, and sociability, with an emphasis on third places and their role in the urban public sphere. “The places where people meet to drink coffee have facilitated the development of what is now typically and stereotypically construed as the public realm,” comments John Manzo (2014), situating coffee shops in the discussion of public and private space. I build on this to investigate how the dichotomy between public and private space is mediated by third places, with the coffee shop as an example of a space that people think of as a third place. However, I
argue that under closer examination, the coffee shop is not a third place in the way that Oldenburg (1989) conceived of the space. I offer an alternative conception of the third place, redefining it in terms of hybrid spaces, or spaces that lie in the intersection of the public and the private.

*Background and Methodology*

Ever since Ancient Greece, Western cultures and nations have honored the ideal of an open public sphere where property-owning men could come together to discuss current events and politics. Today, however, society is much more open in the West than ever before because of the movements for racial and gender equality, as well as the rise of the internet. Do we need a bigger public sphere? Or do we just need an escape from the physical spaces of home and work? The internet has become more of the idealized public sphere in the United States than basically any public space can be. In the age of the internet, our needs have changed. As a society, the role of the public sphere has changed and it is accessible to almost anyone with an internet connection, whether that be from a personal device or from a public library computer. Therefore, the traditionally public places such as parks and plazas fulfill different needs. In the world of the home-work dichotomy, we are more in need of places to be sociable without the burdens of full hospitality than we are of a place to express our ideas and engage with democratic discourse. The coffee shop is built for sociability and designed for contemporary urban life. Though many are quick to call it a third place, the coffee shop does not fit Oldenburg’s (1989) vision of a third place because society has changed enough since the 1970s that many of his ideas are antiquated, especially in cosmopolitan centers. Young people in small apartments need living rooms. Gender mixing is normal and nothing of note. More people are choosing to get married later.
Entrepreneurs need offices. Tourists need Wi-Fi. It is clear that the society in which we live in the United States requires a revisioning of the meanings of the public sphere and the third place.

Coffee shops, coffeehouses, cafés, and coffee bars, have existed for centuries, although research into their social meanings seems to have begun in the 1970s. The “third wave” coffee shops are attracting attention these days as social institutions based on good-tasting, ethically sourced coffee. The methods I used in my research include reviewing the literature on public and private places, analyzing coffee shop history, examining media representations of coffee culture, and observing in coffee shops in the New York City borough of Manhattan. Interviews and surveys would provide depth and an additional check on my observations. Unfortunately, these methods are beyond the scope of this thesis as the time frame to gather data was too short for me to establish the relationships necessary for those methodologies. However, in the past ten years, studies of coffee shops have been published that enable me to embark on a comparative study to understand the social meaning and uses of coffee shops in urban life (see Berg 2008, de Koning 2006, Papachristos, Smith, Scherer, and Fugiero 2011, Thompson and Arsel 2004, Reitz 2007, Manning 2010, Tucker 2011, Manzo 2014, Ellis, 2004, Cowan 2005, Pendergrast 2010, Biderman 2013, Waxman 2006).

I chose Manhattan as my field site because it has an acknowledged coffee culture and I could access it easily. Seattle is another city that is known for its coffee culture, especially Starbucks (Berg 2008). Portland Oregon also has a distinctive coffee culture. However, New York picked up on artisan coffee and locally roasted beans. The chic New York coffee shop image took off around 2008-2010 (Strand 2010). Thus, coffee shops, while not new to New York, have expanded and taken on new meanings in recent years. The meanings that people derive from and ascribe to coffee shops can be seen in the media, in marketing, and in how they
use the space. I look at online memes and references to habits and stereotypes about coffee, as well analyzing observational data regarding how and for what purpose people use coffee shops.

Due to the high number of coffee shops in New York City, I cannot provide a comprehensive perspective on the role of coffee shops through the city, or even all the possible uses they could have. Nevertheless, the coffee shops that I chose to observe serve distinct clientele and market themselves for different purposes. Through observing in these coffee shops, I present an array of the various types of coffee shops and uses that have become popular in the past decade. Altogether, I spent over 70 hours in coffee shops around Manhattan.

While I visited 11 distinct coffee shops, I chose to focus my analysis on five of them. Koffee Korner is a small international chain with locations in Chelsea, Flatiron, and the Upper East Side in Manhattan, Abu Dhabi, and Moscow. It is characterized by being on the corner of street blocks with floor to ceiling windows. I observed primarily at its Chelsea location because of its proximity to schools, office buildings, and residences.

Also in Chelsea, though tucked away in the middle of a street, Happy Coffee is one of the original hipster coffee shops in New York City. It has locations in Midtown West, Chelsea, and Chinatown, serving a wide cross-section of Manhattan’s population. Its purposeful lack of wifi stands out in comparison to other establishments. Happy Coffee also recently replaced one of the Starbucks locations in Grand Central Station. In contrast to Happy Coffee, Pod embraces technology, welcoming laptop users and featuring online ordering. Nevertheless, it does have a “No laptop zone” where people can go to chat as if they were in a coffee shop like Happy Coffee.

Another one of the pioneers of New York City’s coffee shop boom is Puro Café. Puro Café has locations in Chelsea, Midtown, the East Village, and Alphabet City. It is known for

---

4 All names have been changed to protect privacy.
priding itself on fresh roasted coffee to the point that for years they only offered coffee and coffee with milk. Now Puro Café offers tea, hot chocolate, cappuccinos, americanos, and lattes, but patrons must know that those are options because they are not shown on the menu.

Lastly, I observed at Cat’s Den, a single shop in the Lower East side. It is located in the basement of an apartment building and has quickly become a popular neighborhood location since its opening in December 2013. People frequently joke about how there could be a ghost in the coffee shop for it feels like an old house.

My choices are establishments that, in general, serve the middle/upper classes and are located in gentrified or gentrifying areas. While there are other coffee shops, such as Dunkin’ Donuts, that serve a wider clientele, I am interested in the social and cultural practices that occur in “hipster” or “yuppie” coffee shops\textsuperscript{5}, for they are the ones who compose mainstream coffee culture. What distinguishes these types of establishments is an obsession with fresh coffee and foods, sold at prices that only the middle class and above can afford.

I recorded my observation data on Google Docs, accessed through my iPad or computer, and sometimes post-it notes, depending on the location. I focused on the basic demographics of who was frequenting the coffee shop, noted interpersonal interactions, how technology was (not) being used, the spatial dynamics of the layout and ambiance, what they were selling, and how the menus and products were displayed. Additionally, I looked at the websites of the coffee shops to see how their physical presentation compared to the way they brand themselves online, as well as to learn more of the history of the establishment. It is important to note that my observations were conducted primarily in the winter months and that the demographics and uses of the coffee shops could change depending on the season. As the weather began to change, I noticed a change

\textsuperscript{5} For a stereotypical portrayal of the clientele at a hipster coffee shop, see Nacho Punch (2014).
in the types of drinks people were ordering, and that people sat outside and generally seemed happier.

**Overview**

In the coming chapters, I first review briefly the concepts of public and private space and their intersection before going into a fuller analysis of the ideas of place and Ray Oldenburg’s (1989) theory of third places. I then introduce coffee shops as a significant third place in the city for certain segments of the public.

I investigate the specific history of coffee shops in Chapter 2; their evolution from the male-only coffeehouse to the hipster\(^6\) coffee shops of today. Through a historical perspective, I track the development of coffee shops, their shifting uses and changing meanings over time, leading to contemporary meanings and functions of coffee shops in New York.

Chapter 3 brings me to a discussion of my observations in coffee shops in Manhattan. I present my findings and situate the coffee shop in current urban life. These observations also form the base for a critique of the ideas of sociability in urban public and private places.

Lastly, in the conclusion I investigate whether coffee shops really do fit with the conception of third place by critiquing Oldenburg’s (1989) characteristics of third place with examples of the reality of the interactions that take place in the coffee shops I observed. I also discuss the public-private distinction in terms of the questions that arise from notions of work, productivity, comfort (both psychological and physical), and technology. To conclude, I present a reconceptualization of the third place as a place in the intersection of the public and the private.

---

\(^6\) The definition of “hipster” is not fixed, but hipsters are a type of person that young adults recognize. The general conception of a hipster is a person who does not conform to traditional social norms. Hipsters are part of a subculture that is characterized by valuing independent thinking, progressive politics, and the arts. There is also a distinctive style of dress associated with hipsters - messy, colored hair styles, with bohemian influenced clothing such as skinny jeans, vintage shirts and skirts, thick rimmed glasses, and sneakers. According to Urban Dictionary (2007), “The greatest concentrations of hipsters can be found living in Williamsburg, Wicker Park, and Mission District neighborhoods of major cosmopolitan centers such as New York, Chicago, and San Francisco respectively.”
spheres that is flexible and facilitates many types of interactions within the boundaries given by its owners.
Chapter 1: Public and Private Space in the City

The city presents us with an interesting phenomenon in which the intersection of private and public space is just as important as distinct public and private spaces on their own. City dwellers must navigate the crowds and the constant activities of strangers in urban space. Nevertheless, being in the private, home sphere can be isolating and citizens can become disconnected from their surroundings. In large cities, such as New York, taking the time to interact with all the people on the street is nearly impossible for it requires too much energy and time. In order for people to live in the city, they must find a way to navigate the two extremes of isolation and overstimulation (Simmel 1950). Often, the interaction between citizens and the city is mediated by “third places” or places that are neither public nor private (see Oldenberg 1989). Third places include shopping malls, hairdressing salons, museums, libraries, and coffee shops. Coffee shops in particular are flexible spaces that can be modified according to the needs of the consumer. They also provide a place to go and to connect with other people, reducing alienation (Manzo 2014; Tucker 2011; Yodanis 2006). At the center of the third place idea is the intersection of the public and the private. In this chapter I review literature about public and private places in the city, and discuss the third place as a starting point from which to examine the coffee shop.

Places and Placemaking: Spaces with Meaning

Geographer and philosopher Yi-Fu Tuan (1977) uses a humanist perspective on space and place to differentiate the two concepts with feelings: Place is secure, whereas space carries a sense of freedom. He (1977:6) clarifies, “what begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value”. This means that the more familiar and comfortable we become with a space, the more we transform it into a place for ourselves. This is
done through our actions as we try to produce what we want to see and what is useful for us. However, social, political and historical influences come into play in placemaking. Giving space a purpose and organization through social actions is part of the placemaking process. The relationship between us and spatial forms is mediated by meaning (Pearson & Richards 2003).

A good conceptual model of place-making is cyberspace. In digital culture, cyberspace has been hailed as a third place where marginalized people can form groups, such as queer individuals (Woodland 2000; Rheingold 1996). That is, individuals enter cyberspace (the internet) and create communities with people who share their identities, giving meaning to the abstract idea of the space of the internet. Lisa Nakamura (2000) argues that cyber communities have reproduced class and racial divisions. This is reflected in David Harvey's (1990:418) statement that, "although conceptions of space and time are socially constructed, they operate with the full force of objective fact and play a key role in processes of social reproduction." In other words, we reproduce the socially constructed world that we experience in the way we interact on the internet. Our perceptions of space and time are informed by lived experience and shape the context of place, forming a part of its identity.

Sensory experience is a primary aspect of placemaking. Sarah Pink (2008) writes about the sociality of ethnographic placemaking, arguing that ethnographers need to be tuned into their research subjects’ experiences in order to comprehend the places the researchers seek to analyze. She also cites Emily Walmsely, “sensory knowledge is developed through the sociality of food practices, which is developed through the sharing of tastes, smells and embodied culinary techniques” (quoted in Pink 2008, p. 181). Combining food and conversation is a large part of people’s social lives, especially in the Americas (Gaudio 2003). People react to and create sensory experiences, which can develop into rituals, and define places through the actions that
create these experiences (Chau 2008). Kelvin Low (2005) points out that smell is an important and often overlooked factor in how we perceive and judge our surroundings and the people around us. In the context of the coffee shop, the sensory experience is a lot of what creates place for patrons. The smell of coffee and sometimes baked goods, the warmth, the seating layout, the noise of the patrons and the preparation of the drinks and food, in addition to the private nature of the space within the public sphere provides a rich sensory experience which the customers can use to shape their conception of the coffee shop as a place.

The Public and the Private

The concepts of “public” and “private” are fundamental to how we structure our spaces, form rituals and customs, and organize our social structures. The meanings associated with these concepts vary between cultures. However, the sharp division between the public and the private that we know today stems from the emergence of capitalism and the modern state. Capitalism separated industry and business from the home, shaping a society in which the men left the home to work and women stayed at home to take care of the family. Since domestic labor was not (and still is not) part of the formal economy, women had less labor power to sell, putting them at a disadvantage in the public market (Marx 1978). The public area of commerce and politics became the male domain and women were confined to the private home. Here, “public” and “private” are opposing domains that are defined by each other, and are salient to urban life, for we perceive the city in terms of public and private space, as well as publicly owned private space.

The public is a defining factor of city life (Montgomery 1997). Urban public space refers to particular spaces in the city that are open to “the public”, such as streets, plazas, markets, and parks (Iveson 2007). The public here is defined as every person in the city, regardless of gender,
race, ethnicity, nationality, and socioeconomic status. Urban public space is fundamental to conceptions of urban space, so much so that for “many urban activists and scholars, access to such public spaces is said to be vital for opportunities both to address and to be addressed as part of a/the public” (Iveson 2007:4). Indeed, public spaces used to be central areas of the city where citizens (men) would meet to discuss issues in the community, trade, and socialize.

Urban public space, however, is not to be confused with the public sphere. The public sphere, as defined by Jurgen Habermas (1964:49) is: “a realm of our social life in which something approaching public opinion can be formed.” He goes on to say that “a portion of the public sphere comes into being in every conversation in which private individuals assemble to form a public body” (1964:49). In other words, the public realm is characterized by the gathering of people and the potential for democratic action. It is the space where information can be easily shared and facilitate democracy, which made it vital to the development of modernity and continues to be an important force in the city today (McKee 2004). In addition, the public sphere mediates conduct under the power of “the gaze” (Iveson 2007). There has been debate over which spaces are conducive to the public sphere, for just because a space is public, it is not necessarily part of the public sphere and vice-a-versa. For example, individuals can access and participate in discourse on the internet from their bedrooms. In other words, they can participate in the public sphere without leaving the private place of their home. Nevertheless, public address and discourse are dependent on the public sphere, and the public sphere is dependent on the interactions that occur in it. Iveson (2007:22) references Michael Warner who argues, “while public address takes for granted the existence of a public sphere which can be addressed, these public spheres cannot exist without instances of public address”.

14
Habermas (1991) traces public life back to Ancient Greece where the *polis* (open to free citizens) and the *oikos* (individual realm) were distinct spheres. Public life happened in the agora and the public sphere “was constituted in discussion (*lexis*), which could also assume the forms of consultation and of sitting in the court of law, as well as in common action (*praxis*), be it the waging of war or competition in athletic games” (Habermas 1991:3). Since the economy was powered by slave labor, free male citizens were dependent on their political participation in the public sphere to determine their social status. Everything happened under the master’s domain, from labor to the way women conducted their lives. All male citizens interacted as equals, but at the same time tried to get ahead of each other.

In the Middle Ages, societies adopted the Roman definitions of public and private, which came from the Greek practices. However, though those definitions were useful for laws, social decomposition made the public sphere insignificant. The feudal system did not exactly fall in line with the public and private dichotomy because the economic organization of labor was dominated by the lord’s household (Habermas 1991). Private holdings did not appear until the end of the feudal age and then early finance and trade capitalism sparked the beginnings of a new social order in the 13th century and were well established by the 1500s. With the birth of the modern state, individual economies that used to be private were now public, oriented to the market, and “the economic conditions under which this activity now took place lay outside the confines of a single household; for the first time they were of general interest” (Habermas 1991:19). The market economy was a male realm and women were excluded from participating in it and were pushed back into the home.

Ideally, public spaces are areas which people of all genders, socio-economic classes, races, and ethnicities may occupy equally, and the public sphere would be composed of those
actors. Nevertheless, it is a powerful myth of the ideal of public spaces and the public sphere that these are open to all. There is always a group that is excluded, such as the homeless, and is marginalized from public places and pushed into invisibility. Brian Cowan (2005:246) states, “Addison and Steele [newspaper publishers] understood far more than Habermas or his admirers that the practical public sphere of early eighteenth-century England was such a complex and variegated entity that it often defied the attempts of even its champions to describe it, let alone discipline it.” This critique is extended to women’s rights in that historically and in some cultures today, women and children are confined to the private space of the home and only allowed limited access to the public sphere. Habermas is often critiqued by feminists for idealizing the public sphere while ignoring that “masculinist gender constructs were built into the very conception of the republican public sphere, as was a logic that led, at the height of Jacobin rule, to the formal exclusion from political life of women” (Fraser 1990:59). In addition, Nancy Fraser critiques Habermas for failing to discuss alternative public spheres, such as the ways in which women participated in politics in the nineteenth century.

Fraser (1990) challenges us to ask if one public sphere is preferable to multiple public spheres. Seyla Benhabib (1998:82) agrees, emphasizing that, “The public sphere comes into existence whenever and wherever all affected by general social and political norms of action engage in a practical discourse, evaluating their validity.” This fits with Kurt Iveson’s (2007) deconstruction of publicness: a contested space that provides a context for action, a kind of action and a collective actor. There are, therefore, publics for each controversial debate about social and political norms.

For our purposes, a model of multiple publics formed by active participation by the people who frequent them is useful in thinking about the social dynamics that form inside the
coffee shop. In the seventeenth century in Europe, later in the United States, and currently in developing countries, a particular type of politically active public was formed based on the actions and intentions of the people who used the space. Habermas uses the example of coffeehouses of this type, for “their public was recruited from private people engaged in productive work, from the dignitaries of the principalities' capitals, with a strong preponderance of middle-class academics” (Habermas 1991:34). The coffeehouses also helped to launch the newspapers into the public sphere and made them an integral part of public debates. Today, different types of publics are formed inside different coffee shops according to what the patrons want and what they are doing. The type of public formed inside a neighborhood coffee shop is very different from that of a Starbucks in a tourist section of a city. In this way, publics are constantly being generated and performed into existence through people exercising their power over spaces and places, and the actions of others.

A defining characteristic of a public place or space is that the public creates visibility, and being in public requires being visible (Iveson 2007:7). Anything that we do in public is subject to the gaze of everyone else who is occupying that public (not to mention security cameras and other surveillance mechanisms). It is this “gaze” that enforces social norms and causes us to be socialized to behave in certain ways while out in public. Iveson explains, “To be in public is to have one’s conduct exposed to the normative gaze of others, and exposure to this gaze is one of the technologies of governance which incite us to regulate our own conduct with regard to what is ‘appropriate’ when in public” (2007:214). People exercise their gaze upon others, but they are also subject to the gaze of those whom they are watching. This ensures that everyone is

---

7 I am using the conception of power from Michel Foucault (1982): power is relational and productive, or in other words, it is created as it is used. In this sense, power is inherently neither good nor bad, for the results of power are not necessarily the intended effect. Further, Foucault (1982) states that society is based on power relations, which means that there is always power being generated as people act on each other’s actions.
following proper conduct. Despite the force of the gaze, people find ways to avoid the gaze and create a private area out of the public. Michel de Certeau (1988) describes how people navigate the gaze by trying to reshape what space is used for and by attempting to use it invisibly as a form of resistance. Both through following the social forces behind the gaze that dictate how to behave in a coffee shop versus in a church, for example, and through avoiding the gaze, people make use of public visibility to further their own ends. In this sense, the public is a more flexible space than its definition in opposition to the private would suggest.

Indeed, juxtaposed to the public sphere, the private sphere exists in near absolute opposition. "Any theory of publicness, public space, and public dialogue must presuppose some distinction between the private and the public" (Benhabib 1998:85) and the private sphere was used to confine women and keep them out of the public sphere. The public and private spheres "have been treated, until recently, as 'natural' and 'immutable' aspects of human relations. They have remained pre-reflexive and inaccessible to discursive analysis" (Benhabib 1998:86). In contrast with the public sphere, private spaces are characterized by the intimate connections and personal relationships between members of a group who inhabit the same home space (Montgomery 1997). Conduct is regulated not by an impersonal “gaze” but rather by the group members according to dominant social and cultural norms. Nevertheless, the distinctions between the public and the private are not clearly drawn, as we will discuss. The dichotomy between these two spheres, however, has been emphasized and reproduced through the history of gender relations.

Benhabib (1998:86) distinguishes between three different meanings of “private”: individual moral and religious consciousness; economic liberty and free market economics; and the “intimate sphere.” Most often when the private sphere is referenced, it is to talk about the
home or domestic sphere. Despite the fact that women are now allowed to participate in the public sphere, there continues to be interest in the separation of private and public life “as [women] juggle the multi-layered psychic structures of femininity as well as confronting roles of daughter, wife, and mother with professional identity and/or political activism” (Davidoff 1998:164). The private sphere is also associated with minority groups and counter-publics that are excluded from the normative public sphere. Zizi Papacharissi (2010:132) notes that: “In modern times, the private sphere is associated with privacy rights and the right to be left alone, but is also viewed as a space where marginalized interests and counter-publics are regulated.” With the emergence of traditionally private subjects (i.e. sex, finance) and groups (i.e. women) into the public discourse, the idea of what is private and what is not is changing.

The line between the public and the private is not always clear. For example, the public can enter the private sphere in the form of media and conversations about public events, such as someone watching the news from their bedroom. Private exchanges can also exist in the public sphere without becoming common knowledge or news, for example, having a personal phone conversation in a coffee shop, which further complicates the notion of the separation of public and private space. Negotiating the public and the private has become an issue recently, especially with the rise of the internet bringing the two spheres into even closer contact. Papacharissi (2010:128) explains,

“Online technologies afford us spaces, public and private, rather than a public sphere. These spaces accommodate a new kind of publicity and privacy, constructed via the amalgamation of private and public interests. Whereas in the past public had been used to demarcate the end of private, and private signaled a departure from public, the terms no longer imply such opposition, especially in terms of how they are architecturally employed for the construction of place. Spaces presented by convergent technologies are hybrid public and private spaces.”
The issue of whether a space can be truly “public” or fully “private” remains under debate. However, the intersection of public and private space plays an important role in city life. It provides a space for public and private interactions to happen while in the normative public sphere.

Spaces that allow for the intersection of public and private interactions have been part of city life for centuries. Men used to cross a line when they went into public, but just because they were in public did not mean that they engaged strictly in public activities. "Even their most private, 'sexual' activities came to be shared between the home and the public arenas of café, pub, saloon, inn, and brothel”, notes Leonore Davidoff (1998: 181). Davidoff continues, arguing that masculine spaces in colonial America were seen as a counterpoint to the market, but free from “claims from dependent and/or demanding womenfolk” (1998: 181). Along those same lines, the English coffeehouses were a masculine space where men could relax outside the home but also conduct business and engage in debate. Today, public and private spaces still play an important role in how we conceptualize the city, and the theories of the public and the private remain salient, especially with regards to publicly owned private spaces.

According to Habermas (1991), the privatization of public space began with the emergence of salons in bourgeois households. No longer did the public sphere, the gatherings for democratic thought and action, exist in a public space. The industrial revolution and the strengthening of capitalism served to stratify social classes, breaking apart the tradition for social mixing in public areas. There were public places still, however, such as plazas and parks. Nevertheless, by the mid-twentieth century in New York City, these public spaces were disappearing and, as William Whyte explains, “As an alternative to plazas, builders have been turning to indoor spaces” (1980:76). These privately owned public spaces are very different from
the spaces that were fully public or fully private, and defined a new kind of social conduct. Most importantly, these spaces are, in a sense, not really public in the sense that many groups are excluded from entering. The question of inequality is very salient for, “The look of a building, its entrances, the guards do have a filtering effect and the cross section of the public that uses that space within is somewhat skewed – with more higher-income people, fewer lower-income people, and, presumably, fewer undesirables” (Whyte 1980:79). This does not mean that it is impossible for such spaces to be public – they are just influenced by the rules that the private owners enforce. Private control makes spaces more attractive, especially to middle and upper class sensibilities, but it also makes them less representative and more ideologically closed.

Limitations of the Public/Private Dichotomy: The Purpose and Formation of Third Places

Citizens desire a sense of comfort, place, and belonging to the area in which they are living, hence being able to create places out of space is an important factor in cities. Humans are social beings and as such need places where they feel welcome and connected, and so they create such spaces for themselves in the city. They are able to shape the city to their needs for the city is made to be public and is performed into existence (Iveson 2007). Providing the proper spaces for people to turn into places that have meaning to them and give them a feeling of belonging mitigates some of the negative isolating effects that can arise from being in a big city, especially for newcomers. Neighborhood spaces for consumption, institutions such as diners, coffee shops, hair salons, bars, and grocery stores can all play a part in the residents’ satisfaction with their community. These third places defy the home-work/public-private dichotomy and open urban space to broader interpretation and uses (Oldenburg 1989).

The intense stimulation of the public areas of a compact city and the rapid pace of the consumer market economy on which the city runs leads people to protect themselves from too
much interaction. In his essay, “The Metropolis and Mental Life,” Georg Simmel (1950) speaks of the blasé attitude as a side-effect of being in a dense environment. It is not possible to maintain the same connection to a large context as it is to a small town atmosphere. While Simmel (1950) claims that the blasé attitude prevails in the city because people use it as a survival technique, John Gulick (1989) explains that classical urban theorists did not account for the many different environments in the city. “Anomie and unwelcome do prevail in some of them” (Gulick 1989:156), but are not the rule for all urban spaces. Simmel (1950) also does not account for the fact that people who have grown up in cities are used to the pace and anonymity of city life. Public places where people feel welcome and/or share a particular value, belief, interest, or experience are not controlled by the blasé attitude and can help to break it down.

Social capital and mental health are important for people living in cities (Heaton Kennedy and Dannenberg 2012) and space and place are factors in those issues. It should also be noted that subjective experience is what makes a space livable (Okulicz-Kozaryn 2013). Socially, some places and environments may be better for certain people than others. That does not make that area less livable, for it does still cater to some people’s needs. It does, however, indicate that what one wants in terms of livability is subjective and highlights the need for flexible third places that can facilitate a variety of social needs.

Beyond how people interact with their surroundings and with strangers, there are other factors that inform how people live in the city, including their socio-economic status, job, preference for separation or integration of work with home life, and, oftentimes, race and ethnicity. The relationship between the home and the workplace can be thought of on a continuum, for depending on the person and the job, a person might work from home, bring work home or live with co-workers, or might clock out and not think about work until the next
day (Nippert-Eng 2008). Regardless of where on the work-home spectrum a person falls, third places offer an escape from the continuum.

The term “third place” was coined by Oldenburg (1989) as a way to address “the problem of place” in the United States. He argues that,

“...In the absence of an informal public life, Americans are denied those means of relieving stress that serve other cultures so effectively. We do not seem to realize that the means of relieving stress can be just as easily built into an urban environment as those features that produce stress” (Oldenburg 1989:10)

Oldenburg’s (1989) solution is to think of our lives as split into three realms: work, home, and informal social space that celebrates community. In essence, he is reaching into pre-industrial times where he argues that the third place used to exist before the home became a closed place of residence. Oldenburg (1989) argues that communal spaces are the heart of the city and that they provide an escape from the pressures of everyday life. Humans need a community to be happy and healthy but “...most needed are those ‘third places’ which lend a public balance to the increased privatization of public life” (Oldenburg 1996:6). Coffee shops provide such an informal social space, though they also play a larger social role, as we will discuss in Chapter 3.

Oldenburg’s (1989) third places are defined by eight characteristics: neutral ground, social leveler, conversation dominates, accessible and accommodating, regular patrons, low profile, playful mood, and home away from home. Firstly, through incorporating the work of Richard Sennett and Jane Jacobs, Oldenburg argues that third places are “neutral ground” where people can gather outside of the home and that allow for more informal contact between people. He states, “...There must be places where individuals may come and go as they please, in which none are required to play host, and in which all feel at home and comfortable” (Oldenburg 1989:22). This quality is emphasized throughout Oldenburg’s (1989) book. Having a place
where all people can come and go as they please is seen as fundamental to lively neighborhood life.

Creating lively neighborhood life also involves removing social hierarchies. Thus, third places act as levelers. Levelers are all-inclusive places with no formal criteria for membership that act as equalizers among the people who frequent them. “There is a tendency for individuals to select their associates, friends, and intimates from among those closest to them in social rank. Third places, however, serve to expand possibilities, whereas formal associations tend to narrow and restrict them,” argues Oldenburg (1989:24, emphasis in the original). In fact, Oldenburg (1989) points to the English coffeehouses as examples of levelers where people across social classes enjoyed the new interactions that were possible as a result of the fall of the feudal systems. For Oldenburg, breaking down the formal barriers between people is a necessary aspect of the third place so that people can get to know their neighbors at a deeper level, as well as experience “pure sociability” as defined by Georg Simmel (1949); people gathering for no other purpose than for joy of association.

For Oldenburg (1989), conversation is a necessary part of sociable interactions. He is very critical of the lack of what he considers to be good conversation in the United States. “The judgement regarding conversation in our society is usually two-fold: we don’t value it and we’re not good at it,” laments Oldenburg (1989:27). The neutrality and inclusive atmosphere set the tone for conversation, while encouraging style of conversation over vocabulary adds to the leveling effect. This style is based on Henry Sedgwick’s rules of conversation: listening, avoiding controversial topics, say little about yourself, and don’t preach. Oldenburg (1989) claims that it is the above characteristics that allow the conversations in the third place to be
superior to conversations in other places. Any “bore” who interrupts the flow of conversation ruins the atmosphere.

The feeling of the third places is affected by how accessible and accommodating it is. The third place must be accessible at all times of the day so that people are able to drop in at any time and find acquaintances. The third places must accommodate irregularity for “Those who have third places exhibit regularity in their visits to them, but it is not that punctual and unfailing kind shown in deference to the job or family. The timing is loose, days are missed, some visits are brief, etc.” (Oldenburg 1989:32). Location is also important for if a place is inconvenient to get to, it is not likely to host regulars.

The regulars are the people who give the third place its character and are almost more important for Oldenburg than the other characteristics of third places. Oldenburg (1989) is thinking of the regulars as specific individuals who come back again and again. However, today one could argue that it is a predictable type of person who frequents certain coffee shops. Consistent with the literature on the transformation of space into place, Oldenburg (1989:34) writes:

“The third place is just so much space unless the right people are there to make it come alive, and they are the regulars. [...] It is the regulars, whatever their number on any given occasion, who feel at home in a place and set the tone of conviviality. It is the regulars whose mood and manner provide the infectious and contagious style of interaction, and whose acceptance of new faces is crucial.”

Indeed, if regulars do not create a welcoming atmosphere, then the third place becomes closed, not neutral territory.

---

8 Interestingly, Oldenburg describes the process of becoming a regular as part of a game. One must play well with the regulars and the regulars must accept the newcomer as a good person who is capable of making good conversation and showing respect to others. This sets up a criterion for a kind of membership that is enforced by the people who are already established in the space. Thus, although seemingly anyone can enter a third place, only certain people can become regulars and therefore truly take part in the formation and life of a third place.
Another characteristic of third places, however, is that they maintain a low profile that can be exclusionary. In Oldenburg’s (1989:36) opinion, “Third places are unimpressive looking for the most part. They are not, with few exceptions, advertised; they are not elegant. In cultures where mass advertising prevails and appearance is valued over substance, the third place is all the more likely not to impress the uninitiated.” This plainness is the “protective coloration” of the third place, serving to dissuade social pretense in favor of social leveling and pure sociability. It also parallels the attitude that Oldenburg ascribes to a third place: something that is an expected part of the daily routine.

If people are not comfortable, then it is hard to feel relaxed. This is counter-productive to the playful mood that Oldenburg (1989) lifts up as one of the most important aspects of third places. “Whether pronounced or low key, however, the playful spirit is of utmost importance. Here joy and acceptance reign over anxiety and alienation,” Oldenburg affirms (1989:38). Being able to “play” in the sense of enjoying spending time together so that people want to come back is key to the development of third place, and the ability for it to become a home away from home.

In third places, people enjoy congeniality, restoration, freedom, and warmth. “One suspects that it is the similarity that a third place poses to bear a comfortable home and not its differences that poses the greater threat. Aye, there’s the rub – the third place is often more homelike than home,” states Oldenburg (1989:39). In addition, Oldenburg mentions gender relationships of the third place in terms of the home: “Homes are private settings; third places are public. Homes are mostly characterized by heterosocial relations; third places most often host
people of the same sex\textsuperscript{9} (Oldenburg 1989:39). He believes that the average third places provide a more congenial environment than most homes, and are sites of restoration where people are relaxed. The psychological aspects of the third place, such as the warmth created by companionship, are comforting to its patrons. Of course, the idea of what makes a “home” is culturally determined and not everyone has the same experience of home as Oldenburg. Being comfortable and relaxed is enjoyable, however, and people seek out such places. Also, the third places that Oldenburg (1989) discusses are all spaces of consumption, which is counter to the idea that the home (private) is separate from the commercial (public) realm.

\textit{Third Places in Daily Discourse}

The idea of the third place has resonated with many people and they have incorporated the term into daily discourse. One of the most known examples is Starbucks. Howard Schultz, the CEO of Starbucks, “had a vision to bring the Italian coffeehouse tradition back to the United States. A place for conversation and a sense of community. A third place between work and home” (Starbucks). Many would dispute labeling Starbucks as a third place, considering its current image as a commercial establishment filled with individuals on computers. Alice Walton (2012) of \textit{Forbes} argues that Starbucks succeeded in becoming a third place initially, but that the new global business model that the company adapted around 2012 was a step backwards. Industrial psychologist Suzanne Roff notes that “If Starbucks continues to standardize its stores and shave down their comforts, its ‘third placeness’ will continue to dissolve, and ‘urban consumers in particular will lose an informal social network (that emerges without a plan) that is an important antidote to loneliness and isolation…’” (Walton 2012). Three years later,

\textsuperscript{9} While this is true in some parts of the United States and in other countries, I believe that gender segregation is less characteristic of urban third places than Oldenburg (1989) portrays. In my observations, the gender divide was about half and half in New York City coffee shops.
Starbucks has solidified its standardization and thrives on brand recognition. Can it still function as a third place? Based on my observations of Starbucks locations in New York City, and my experiences with Starbucks in airports domestically and internationally, I would argue that the potential of a Starbucks (and indeed most coffee shops) location to be a third place is completely dependent on context. Small Starbucks locations in neighborhoods and off the main roads can function as third places, whereas Starbucks in busy sectors, tourist areas, and airports cannot.

In addition to the establishments that use the ideas of the third place in their structure, there are places that use the term as a name. There is a coffee shop in Raleigh, North Carolina called The Third Place. The homepage of their website features a slideshow of pictures of the inside of the coffee shop, their products, and people relaxing on couches. The title of the page is “Feels like home.” Another Third Place is a co-working/networking site in Melbourne, Australia. “There is much to learn from your peers – but why connect only online through social media when you can also meet in person and have a true exchange of ideas and conversations?” asks the homepage of their website. Yet another example of an establishment called The Third Place is a lounge that caters more to the home-like side of a third place. Located in Arlington, Virginia, “The Third Place” will be a place where patrons pay a flat fee to get in and enjoy unlimited beverages, snacks, games, and social activities. These places come from Oldenburg’s (1989) idea. As cities become more oriented towards private institutions, the attractiveness of spaces invoking the third place feeling increases.

Nevertheless, these new establishments that are claiming the name have not been studied as third places, per se. Oldenburg (1989) studied French cafés, Viennese coffee shops, classic English coffeehouses, English pubs, American taverns, German-American beer gardens, beauty parlors, and community centers, examining them in their own historical contexts. His ideas,
though attractive and good at invoking nostalgia for a vision of small town American neighborhoods, are somewhat outdated. Anne Hendershott (1991:79) makes note of Oldenburg’s (1989) treatment of gender segregation saying that while Oldenburg himself might prefer the company of people of his own sex and “at one point affectionately refers to one woman as a ‘lovable old dame behind the bar of a southern lounge’ and later describes a second woman as a ‘spinster’—some readers may not agree.” More recent critics also question Oldenburg’s (1989) nostalgic tone and would like to see a discussion of how third places become defined, especially in inner-cities. Michael Lewyn of New York City wrote a review of The Great Good Place on Amazon in 2010 and asks, “are urban, walkable neighborhoods more conducive to third places today? Or has the decline of third places affected more walkable places as well?” At the time Oldenburg was writing The Great Good Place, however, people who would frequent a lot of the middle class third places were living in the suburbs. Shortly after, cities began to focus on new urbanism and invest in becoming walkable. Nevertheless, Lewyn (2010) brings up an interesting point – how relevant are these physical third places in walkable cities today? How have the needs of city dwellers changed? The fact that young adults are moving to cities at a higher rate than before, as well as the trends of new urbanism, combined with changes in the ways that people socialize thanks to the rise of the internet and social media, have created a social scene that is very different than any of those that Oldenburg (1989) imagined in his book. Because of these societal changes, sociability in the city looks different than it did in the mid-twentieth century and has different requirements than what Oldenburg saw to be people’s social needs.
Before we go further, it is necessary to clarify what I mean by "sociability." According to the Merriam Webster Dictionary, sociability is the quality of being sociable, where sociable means that one is friendly, as open to talking to people. Although this meaning of sociability is relevant to the social dynamics of coffee shops to the extent that it is necessary to interact with other people, we will work with the sociological definition put forth by Georg Simmel (1949).

For Simmel (1949:254), "Sociability is the art or play form of association, related to the content and the purposes of association in the same way as art is related to reality" (1949:254). In other words, sociability is characterized by the associations between people. Pure sociability has no end other than being sociable. It is not about forming deep, personal relationships – on the contrary, “character, mood, and fate – have thus no place in it [sociability]” (Simmel 1949:255). Personality is a determining factor in how people associate with each other, but one should not reveal the workings of one’s inner life. If an association reaches the point where people are connecting on personal, central values, then Simmel (1949) argues that the relationship has lost the essence of sociability and instead becomes determined by content.

More than anything, associations should provide satisfaction in "the very fact that one is associated with others and that the solitariness of the individual is resolved into togetherness, a union with others" (Simmel 1949:255). This idea that informal association with people helps relieve loneliness can be extended to complement Simmel's (1950) characterization of the blasé attitude that helps citizens negotiate the pressures of urban life. Sociability is the counterpoint to the blasé attitude in that instead of avoiding contact, non-committal interactions with people provide the individual with a feeling of togetherness. In this respect, people must exercise their social capital to be sociable. In fact, as Bourdieu (2011:90) describes, "The reproduction of
social capital presupposes an unceasing effort of sociability, a continuous series of exchanges in which recognition is endlessly affirmed and reaffirmed.” This involves investing continued energy and resources into maintaining relationships. Bourdieu’s (2011) ideas of social capital require more energy and investment than Simmel’s (1949) conception of sociability. Developing social capital is aided by sociability but is more about developing relationships than pure sociability. It is also formed from the conversion of cultural and economic capital into social capital (see Bourdieu 2011 for a discussion of how capital can be converted).

Another aspect of sociability that is critical to our analysis of third places is that of conversation. Simmel argues that “in sociability, talking is an end in itself; in purely sociable conversation the content is merely the indispensable carrier of the stimulation, which the lively exchange of talk as such unfolds” (1949:259). That talking is an end in itself fits with Oldenburg’s (1989) idea that conversation is the most important activity in a third place. Conversations must be meaningful, but not too deep:

“Outwardly, therefore, two conversations may run a similar course, but only that one of them is sociable in which the subject matter, with all its value and stimulation, finds its justification, its place, and its purpose only in the functional play of conversation as such, in the form of repartee with its special unique significance. It therefore inheres in the nature of sociable conversation that its object matter can change lightly and quickly” (Simmel 1949:259).

Indeed, the type of light social interactions that Simmel describes are central to the flexibility of the coffee shop. The assumption of a place is that there will be conversation and interactions between people, setting the stage for multiple uses. Felton (2012) notes how the expression "having coffee" suggests more than simply drinking coffee at a coffee shop. She argues that, “The ascendancy of the café is synonymous with the contemporary city and, as semi-public space, it supports either solitude – through anonymity – or sociability” (Felton 2012). By
stating that contemporary coffee shops provide solitude as well as sociability, Felton brings another aspect to the possibilities for interaction in the coffee shop. Solitude offers the possibility for private spaces to be created inside public spaces. Thus, the intersection of public and private space is made possible through the ability of coffee shop patrons to be sociable and anonymous.

Connection to History

The coffee shops that we know today are the product of years of changing social norms, needs for space, and ideas of what “public” and “private” entail. Each wave of coffee and coffee shops fits different generations and creates certain publics. John Manzo (2014) discusses how coffee and coffeehouses were an important part of the development of a public sociability. While the traditional English coffeehouses of the 17th century were influential in creating a place in the city for public sociability (Manzo 2014), the history of the coffeehouse as a gathering place outside the home and separate from work goes back to the 12th century in the Muslim world (Biederman 2013; Ellis 2004; Cowan 2005; Hattox 1985). Until the late 19th century, coffeehouses were third places for men to meet and were known as places of political discourse and informal business (Reitz 2007; Ellis 2004; Hattox 1985). Today, however, the public sphere and public address is open to many more people than before, and the lines between “public” and “private” are blurred due to technology and different social norms. The fact that coffee shops are still popular places shows that they have been able to accommodate the changing meaning of public and private places and sociability. The next chapter will explore the social history of coffeehouses and their evolution into today’s coffee shops.
Chapter 2: From the Coffeehouse to the Coffee Shop: A Brief History

The coffee shops that we know today are the product of a long history surrounding public establishments that sell coffee. Indeed, the coffee shop is just the most recent version of a social, urban space where people gather outside the home to enjoy a non-intoxicating beverage. Coffee shops today feature large espresso machines, free wifi, and a variety of pastries and food options. It is not uncommon to see patrons sitting in coffee shops with laptops, or other personal devices, plugged into their personal worlds for hours. Coffee shops are popular in urban centers today, a fact which begs the question, how did this institution come to be in the first place? In this chapter we will take a brief look at the social history of the coffee shop, beginning with the origins of coffee as a social drink, for without coffee there would not have been coffeehouses. Trish Skeie (cited in Hartmann 2011) provides a useful framework for conceptualizing the progression of coffee history. She separates the history of coffee into three waves that map to different eras of the coffeehouse. First, there is production and industrialization, beginning before the industrial revolution. The second wave comes much later in the form of specialty coffee, such as espresso and Starbucks. Lastly, the third wave is the phase in which we currently find ourselves and is characterized by artisanal roasting and concern for ethical production practices. We will start in the pre-industrial highlands of Ethiopia and work our way forward to “hipster” coffee shops. While there is a fair amount of literature on early coffeehouses, not much has been written about the second wave and the transition from the coffeehouse to the coffee shop, likely because of the
political and economic issues revolving around coffee production at the time, and also societal

concerns about the effect of caffeine on the human body. The third wave coffee shops are the
ones that we know today, so most of my analysis will be based on my observations, which will
largely be discussed in the next chapter.

A couple of notes before we begin: first, “coffeehouse,” “coffee-house,” and “coffee
house” are all accepted ways to spell the name of the early establishments that sold coffee. I
chose to use “coffeehouse” out of personal preference. This term is separate from

“coffee shop” which describes a contemporary state of the coffeehouse. Second, the early
history of coffeehouses is difficult to study, for close records were not kept of when material
goods appeared in the Middle East. There is a problem with trying to identify the start of coffee
drinking since the way in which historical events were tracked in the Middle East was to record
landmark events, including invasions and changes in rulers. Changes in material culture and the
introduction of new items “can only be called an invasion in the most figurative sense of the
word, there is not the immediate awareness and recording that inevitably attends the arrival of a
real army” (Hattoo 1985:11). However, by comparison, coffee was noticed rather quickly and
recorded promptly, which indicates its importance to the Muslim world. Third, there are also
some contradictory narratives that occur later in the history, such as, for example, what the
purposes of the first coffeehouses were. I have done my best to account for differing versions of
the history while maintaining the flow of the narrative. Fourth, while economics is a field that
one cannot ignore when discussing the history of coffee consumption, this chapter will not focus
on economics more than is necessary to understand how it affected coffeehouses. Our interest in
the history primarily lies in how the social purposes change over time.

The First Wave: Circa the Fourteenth-Century to the Twentieth-Century

Coffeehouses were an urban phenomenon. There is no mention in the histories of
coffeehouses of such establishments outside the cities. Indeed, Markman Ellis (2004:76) writes
that “Nearly every English city of consequence had at least one [coffeehouse], where men
assembled to discuss the news and to prosecute their business”. Coffee and coffeehouses spread
from the Middle East to Europe and through Europe along trade routes between major cities.
Cities also housed the populations that could afford to spend time sitting around in coffeehouses.

However, the origins of coffee consumption lie in the Ethiopian highlands. Before the
coffee drink was developed, tribesmen in Ethiopia mixed ground coffee seeds (bunn) with
animal fat for a high energy food, made tea from the leaves, and made wine from fermenting the
coffee cherry (Pendergrast 2011, Topik 2009). How did the Ethiopian tribesmen know to eat this
particular plant? According to myth, a shepherd boy saw his sheep dancing on their hind legs
after munching on the coffee cherries (Hattox 1985; Biderman 2013; Ellis 2004; Cowan 2005;
Pendergrast 2011). Different versions of the tale exist, but the basic premise is the same. Coffee
drinking and its surrounding culture, however, came only after coffee had spread to Yemen.

In Yemen, coffee was adopted by the Sufi religious order to help them stay awake during
their late night devotional services. Ellis (2004:14) reports, “It is not clear when this practice first
developed, but it is unlikely to be before the fourteenth century.” According to legal records, the earliest opinions on the legality of coffee consumption were recorded in 1438 in Aden, and others imply consumption in Mecca at the end of the 15th century (Ellis 2004). Ralph S. Hattox (1985) believes that coffee was in use throughout the Islamic world in the 1450s. He (1985:14) cites the first account of the drink given by an early writer:

"At the beginning of this [the sixteenth] century, the news reached us in Egypt that a drink, called qahwa, had spread in the Yemen and was being used by Sufi shaykhs and others to help them stay awake during their devotional exercises, which they perform according to their well known Way."

Coffee spread along the trade routes from Yemen to Hijaz and Cairo in the first decade of the 1500s. By 1520 it had reached Syria, and from there it reached Istanbul by the mid sixteenth-century.

*The First Coffeehouses*

Common coffee drinking outside of Sufi devotional services appeared around 1510. At least, 1510 seems to be a good approximation since the first coffeehouse in Cairo was opened shortly after that (Biderman 2013). However, Bob Biderman (2013:37) relates that “just twenty years later, there were multitudes, as witnessed by a Turkish writer who stayed there for a while and noted 'the concentration of coffeehouses at every step’.” By 1511, coffeehouses were so popular that they aroused suspicion among the officials in Mecca.
One night after leaving the Mosque in 1511, Kha’ir Bey, the governor of Mecca and Chief of Police, noticed loud noises that sounded like those that might come from a party. He traced the noises to a coffeehouse, where he found men drinking coffee and socializing. Kha’ir Bey was alarmed by this scene and tried to ban coffee because he was convinced that it must have the same effect on people as alcohol. However, the Mufti of Mecca, Kansuh al-Ghawiri was a supporter of coffee drinking and did not cooperate with the ban, so coffee drinking continued in Mecca (Ellis 2004, Hattox 1985, Cowan 2005).

Since wine is forbidden by Islamic law, coffee became the beverage around which people gathered to socialize (for a comprehensive look at the legal implications of coffee and how coffee drinking was regulated, see Hattox 1985). Although coffee was not banned, coffeehouses were never free from suspicion. Jurist Muhammad ibn al-‘Arraq visited Mecca in 1526-1527 and learned of “immoral” activities happening in coffeehouses. He ordered officials to close coffeehouses, not because of the drink but because “the activities therein, were targets of opposition” (Hattox 1985:28). There are frequent references to “beautiful boys” serving patrons and acting as prostitutes in Ottoman coffeehouses (Tucker 2011; Hattox 1985; Topik 2009; Ellis 2004; Cowan 2005). However, more fundamentally, the social dynamics of the coffeehouses signaled the beginning of a new social order, which caused general anxiety, especially given the coffeehouses’ resemblance to taverns.

Coffeehouses made their way with coffee to Istanbul in the 1550s. Turkish historian Ibram-I Pechevi writes that coffee-houses made their appearance in Constantinople sometime
between 1520-1566, during the reign of Suleiman the Magnificent (Ellis 2004). Hattox (1985) specifies that Syrian traders Hakm and Shams introduced coffee and the coffeehouse to Istanbul in 1555. These coffeehouses were luxurious, according to Biderman (2013) and Turkish men would sit in the coffeehouse for long periods of time, performing the rituals of coffee drinking by passing around ceramic cups of very hot coffee. In 1585, the Italian traveler Gianfrancesco Morosini criticized the Turkish custom of sitting in a coffeehouse, sharing cups of coffee, conversing, debating, and playing games as a waste of time (Pendergrast 2011; Tucker 2011). This ritual of coffee drinking continued to gain popularity among the Ottomans and by 1610 the coffeehouses were well established in Istanbul, attracting men from various social classes.

Indeed, Ottoman coffeehouses were like third places. They functioned as levelers, were accessible and accommodating places for men to go to relax, socialize, and have conversations among their peers in a place that did not carry the same obligations as the home did. Since these coffeehouses existed in an era before capitalism separated the home and the workplace, the Ottomans might not have needed a “third” place in the same way that critics today articulate the need for a place separate from the work-home dichotomy, but they certainly seemed to relish having an informal place to gather with other men. In fact, the coffeehouses were one of the only places to socialize at night and entertain guests outside the home (Topik 2009).

From Turkey, coffee made its way to Europe. Coffee was introduced to Europe in the late 1500s not as the drink but as an ecological specimen. Alpin, a Professor of Botany in Padua, published the “Book of Egyptian Plants” in 1592 where he presents the first illustration of the
coffee “tree”. He referenced coffeehouses, but did not know how the coffee drink is made (Ellis 2004). Dutch physician Paludanus was the first to note the preparation process in the late 1590s.

Adoption of coffee in Europe

Coffee was first used both as a beverage and as a medicine in Europe. Brian Cowan (2005:18) explains that “Because travelers could not recognize the tastefulness of coffee, the salutary effects of the drink were emphasized instead as the primary reason for consuming it.” Walter Rumsey, a Welsh judge, made a thick mixture of coffee and honey which he found preferable to other medicinal herb mixtures that were meant to induce vomiting. His book on coffee was well accepted by the English virtuoso community in the mid-1600s. Cowan (2005) argues that coffee culture was developed by the virtuoso community in England in the 17th century, which facilitated the growth of coffee culture in England.

Drinking coffee became especially popular in England in the 17th century. Cowan (2005:30) asserts, “London’s coffeehouses had no rival anywhere else in Europe save perhaps Istanbul.” Nevertheless, it still took time to establish trust for a beverage coming from a “heathen” country. There was no reason to trust exotic products and medicines. Cowan describes the virtuoso community as curious people who “shared a distinct sensibility, a set of attitudes, habits, and intellectual preferences that they labeled ‘curiosity.’” (2005:11). This curiosity and interest in other cultures and the “exotic” helped to popularize coffee as a social drink when it first arrived in England. Indeed, Cowan (2005:14) claims that without the virtuosi to learn about,
drink, and promote coffee, “coffee drinking may have remained little more than an odd Turkish habit with only a few English practitioners.” Instead, coffee was embraced as a social beverage that could be drunk in a similar manner to alcohol, but without the intoxicating effects.

Coffee itself was perceived as fairly harmless and even as having health benefits. There was also a precedent for the development of coffeehouses because “The coffeehouse was a public house much like the ale-houses, inns, and taverns that had long formed a part of the British urban landscape” (Cowan 2005:79). That is to say, coffeehouses were not as exotic to the British as coffee itself was because there was already a format for public gathering places. That said, there was resistance to coffee and other caffeinated beverages being served, “but [it] was rather almost entirely a function of political anxieties about the rise of the coffeehouse as a new social institution” (Cowan 2005:40) and did not stop coffeehouses from spreading. Just as in Mecca, it was the institution and the sociable practices it encouraged, not the drink itself, that aroused suspicion.

Asaf Bar-Tura (2011) states that coffeehouses started out as sites of political resistance. However, Cowan (2005) argues that there was nothing inherently novel about the appearance of the coffeehouse for there was already a social structure in place for such establishments, including the tavern. He asserts, “despite the lamentations of their contemporary opponents and the encomiums of their modern champions, the coffeehouses should not be understood as an institution that developed in complete opposition to the existing structures of government” (Cowan 2005:180). In fact, coffeehouses fit well into the existing structure for they were good
places to conduct business and find out what was going on. Although the coffeehouses allowed for social flexibility and there were anxieties about these new institutions, the coffeehouses did not challenge gender norms, family structure, or business practices. The coffeehouses were law-abiding establishments where men talked about political and social change, but did not enact their ideas. Which origin story of the European coffeehouse is more accurate? Cowan’s (2005) version sounds more plausible, for Ellis (2004), Hattox (1985) and Biderman (2013) described early coffeehouses as taverns that did not sell alcohol. However, coffeehouses represented social change and did become centers of political debate during the English restoration (approx. 1660-1685).

By the early 1660s, the upper social classes in Europe adopted coffee. The first coffeehouse in England was opened in Oxford in 1650 by a Levant Jew named Jacobs. Students at the university happily frequented the coffeehouse as a separate social space, “distinct from those older centers of learning which were constrained by their dependence on church or state patronage” (Cowan 2005:91) and stuck in traditional academic practices. Anxiety over the new social institutions arising from the coffeehouse spread to academia and Oxford restricted student access to the coffeehouse.

Shortly after Jacobs opened his coffeehouse in Oxford, Pasqua Rosée opened the first coffeehouse in London in 1652 (Pendergrast 2011; Cowan 2005) with the sponsorship of merchants Daniel Edwards and Thomas Hodges (Ellis 2004). Rosée was the first to promote the medicinal virtues of coffee (for example, alleviating headaches, coughs, consumption, and aiding
digestion) in printed advertising (Pendergrast 2011). Outside of academia, coffeehouses were first used as meeting places for traders and businessmen to exchange information and conduct business (Biderman 2013). Coffee arrived in the home shortly after it appeared in coffeehouses, which meant that both women and men could drink it. This strengthened coffee’s force in Ottoman and English society. By the end of the 1660s, coffeehouses had spread all over England along the communication routes, reaching Ireland and Scotland in the 1670s (Ellis 2004). The first English-style coffeehouse to open outside of Britain was in Boston in 1670 to serve English merchants.

Coffeehouse aesthetics

The decor of early coffeehouses in Europe was inspired by the Ottoman style. "Judging by their names – like Jerusalem, the Sultan's Head, Morat Ye Great – made a conscious effort to maintain an Ottoman appearance," states Biderman (2013:76). Thirty-seven coffeehouses in London were named “Turk’s Head” in reference to Ottoman turbans. Nevertheless, while the early coffeehouses did not eschew their Middle Eastern origins, “they downplayed the predominantly negative images of the heathen Turk by emphasizing the innocence of the coffeehouse experience” (Cowan 2005:115). However, not all coffeehouses were necessarily portrayed as such exotic establishments.

There were lots of types of coffeehouses ranging from small places with very limited supplies to large establishments with many customers (Cowan 2005). A survey taken in 1663 of
the coffeehouses in London revealed that there were coffeehouses all over the city and that there were two main types: the ones in the more populous and wealthy sections of the city that provided the equivalent of office space for politicians and businessmen, and the smaller “local” establishments that served primarily neighborhood residents (Cowan 2005).

The distinguishing feature of the coffeehouses was not that they were in a particular part of town or decorated in a certain style, but rather that they sold coffee. According to Cowan (2005:82), “While coffeehouses offered many drinks in addition to coffee, it seems that coffee was not sold in other drinking establishments, such as taverns, ordinaries, or alehouses.” The cafés in Paris, Vienna, and the rest of Europe developed into higher end establishments catering to a wealthier class of people, but English coffeehouses remained simple.

Nevertheless, some English coffeehouses offered so many amenities that they were functionally no different than inns. They were effectively homes away from home in that they provided food, drink, and a place to sleep, and possessed many characteristics of third places. With the rise of capitalism, men began to seek out places that were neither domestic space nor work, which contributed to the rise in popularity of the coffeehouses. Women, however, were still confined to the domestic sphere.

*Gender dynamics*

Although in some ways the coffeehouse did act as a social leveler, it did so in terms of class, not in terms of gender. “Public” does not necessarily mean “open” and this is clear in the
case of the coffeehouse, where women were not always welcome. Cowan (2005:246) explains, “The [English] coffeehouse was a male preserve and was clearly demarcated as a ‘public’ house, while the tea table was seen as a space presided over by women, and was properly located within the ‘private’ domestic household.” Women who frequented coffeehouses were often accused of prostitution, and indeed some coffeehouse-keepers did facilitate prostitution, such as the famous Tom’s Coffeehouse. Biderman (2004) reports that English coffeehouses and French cafés used attractive women to lure men inside, just as the Ottomans had used boys. He also claims that as women became more active in political and literary discussions they began to frequent cafés as customers, though while dressed as men. This last claim is up for debate for Cowan (2005) and Ellis (2004) argue that women’s access was more restricted. However, differing accounts of women in first-wave coffeehouses agree that women were not completely excluded from the coffeehouse.

One of the most common ways for a woman to frequent a coffeehouse was as its keeper or as a server. Cowan (2005:80) describes coffeehouse-keepers as: “heads of their households, and as such they were usually men, widows, or occasionally unmarried single women.” In fact, Mrs. Dorothy Jones and Mrs. Jane Barnard were approved by the Town Council of Boston to open coffeehouses (Ellis 2004). Being a proprietor of a coffeehouse carried a low social status, which left women vulnerable to insinuations that their success came from prostitution. Also, given the social anxieties surrounding coffeehouses, which were heightened by the coffeehouses
that *did* foster late night revelry, coffeehouses were coded as places where respectable women would not be seen.

In addition, the lines between the public and the private were blurred in coffeehouses, for the coffeehouse was often just a special room in the proprietor’s house. This meant that the dividing line between the public space of the coffeehouse and the private space of the household was never clear-cut,” comments Cowan (2005:253), and such spaces that did not conform to social-spatial divisions were suspect. Due to the public gaze present within a coffeehouse, patrons were expected to conduct themselves appropriately for being in a public space, but the fact that they were often inside a homelike environment allowed for more flexibility. Decent women were not allowed any flexibility in public, for their modesty was of utmost importance.

Richard Addison and Joseph Steele, editors of *The Spectator*, a periodical concerned with social critique, thought that it was possible for a modest woman to keep a coffeehouse and that males needed to control their behavior since “The coffeehouse was a key site of masculine social discipline” (Cowan 2005:244). Addison and Steele paint a picture of the ideal coffeehouse as being a third place for men to conduct business and/or socially engage with each other through good philosophical and intellectual conversations in which men of all professions and social classes can participate.

The behavior of men within the coffeehouse was also heavily monitored. Julie Reitz (2007) describes the coffeehouse as the place where men in eighteenth-century Europe defined their masculinity. Indeed, behaviors that were too feminine were of concern to coffeehouse
patrons. Men who paid excessive attention to their self-presentation and manners were criticized (Cowan 2005). Talking too much was also criticized and “Satirists argued that this gabble, the undifferentiated stream of opinions, was not only typical of the coffee-house but was also symptomatic of the moral emptiness of modern city life” (Ellis 2004:64). In other words, not only women, but feminine characteristics were suspect. That men might exhibit female characteristics in a masculine space was cause for concern, since coffeehouses were sites for the reproduction of masculinity and so, any feminine influence represented a weakening of masculine traits.

Of the unspoken rules of the coffeehouse, Cowan (2005) states that the most potent was the one excluding women. There was no need to formally express this, for “it was assumed that no woman who wished to be considered virtuous and proper would want to be seen in a coffee-house” (Ellis 2004:66). Theoretically, women might have participated in coffeehouse discussions, had educated women frequented them. There is an important distinction between class and gender here, for respectable, elite women would not risk their reputations by frequenting coffeehouses. Women from the elite classes, as well as middle-class women, “were rarely expected in the cafés unchaperoned: art historians estimate that the women depicted in Manet’s café scenes, for example, would have been understood to be prostitutes by contemporary viewers” (Ellis 2004:217). Women of lower social classes moved more easily in the coffeehouse, but that was likely due to the fact that they were there as servers (Cowan 2005). Ellis (2004) speculates that some transgressive women might have participated in political
discussions, but he and Cowan (2005) are in agreement that there are no reliable records of this happening in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In reality, women were seen as distractions from business, even when their express purpose of being in the coffeehouse was to serve men coffee.

Female response to masculine coffeehouses

Not all women were happy with the way that their menfolk spent so much time in the coffeehouses. “The Women’s Petition Against Coffee” published in London in 1674 blames coffee for causing impotence as stated here:

“The Occasion of which Insufferable Disaster, after a furious Enquiry, and Discussion of the Point by the Learned of the Faculty, we can Attribute to nothing more than the Excessive use of that Newfangled, Abominable, Heathenish Liquor called COFFEE, which Riffling Nature of her Choicest Treasures, and Drying up the Radical Moisture, has so Eunucht our Husbands, and Cripple our more kind Gallants, that they are become as Impotent as Age, and as unfruitful as those Deserts whence that unhappy Berry is said to be brought.”

Further accusations against coffee and coffeehouses are leveled, from leading men to become as talkative as women to wasting time and money:

“Certainly our Counrymens pallates are become as Fantastical as their Brains; how ellse is't possible they should Apostatize from the good old primitive way of Ale-drinking, to run a whoring after such variety of distructive Foreign Liquors, to trifle away their time, scald their Chops, and spend their Money, all for a little base, black, thick, nasty, bitter, stinking, nauseous Puddle-water” (The Women’s Petition Against Coffee).
It is possible that they were either not aware that their men could be taking part in the prostitution of some coffeehouses or the women wanted to shame their men for engaging in it. Respectable women, after all, were not supposed to know of such behavior. Nevertheless, the women of seventeenth-century London were unsuccessful in their efforts to reduce the popularity of coffee. Ironically, the following century saw the fall of the coffeehouse and the rise of tea, a drink most often found on the tea tables of upper class women before it became available to the greater English population.

**Cultural differences**

Coffeehouses developed differently depending on the country. In France, for example, in contrast to England, “From their inception, the primary commodity sold in French cafés was alcoholic drink” (Ellis 2004:81). Although in theory the coffee was the difference between the cafés and taverns, visitors noted that the French café was not a coffeehouse. In addition, French doctors felt threatened by new exotic coffee and found reasons to counter claims regarding why coffee is good for the body. In the late 1670s, however, French doctors had reversed their previous position and defended coffee (Pendergrast 2011). Perhaps due to this, coffee never became the dominant social drink in French culture.

Besides being a place for consuming coffee, the English coffeehouse became a social and commercial consumption center. Cowan (2005), Ellis (2004), Biderman (2013), and Bar-Tura (2011) emphasize the use of coffeehouses as centers where news was produced, distributed, and
consumed. During the English Restoration (1660-1675), the coffeehouses “soon became known as places ‘dasht with diurnals and books of news.’ The news business was a key means by which many coffeehouse-keepers could supplement their income” (Cowan 2005:172). More specifically than just centers for news distribution, coffeehouses in seventeenth-century England were notorious for spreading sedition. “The french historian Sorbiere, who visited London in 1664, noted that the coffee-house talk was dominated by complaints of high taxes and regrets at the passing of Cromwell’s regime,” says Ellis (2004:72). He (2004:72) also notes that the coffeehouses around Temple Bar “offered an important nexus between the printing trade and the news gatherers” and that it was easy to find subversive books at Ffarr’s coffeehouse.

During the Restoration, British lords felt threatened by the discourse that was occurring in coffeehouses. Chief Justice Francis North agreed with concerns that,

“retailing coffee might be an innocent trade, as it might be exercised but as it is used at present in the nature of common assemblys to discuss matters of state news and great persons, as they are nurserys of idleness, and pragmaticallness and hindered the experience of the native provisions, they might be thought a common nuisance” (North, quoted in Cowan 2005:198).

In other words, selling coffee itself was not worrying, but rather the conduct that arose from the social function of the coffeehouse. In 1675, King Charles II of England issued, “Proclamation for the Suppression of Coffee-Houses” (Pendergrast 2011:15). However, the royal ban on coffeehouses failed to pass in 1676 and, for the most part, coffeehouse trade continued as normal. This concern for what happens when lots of people gather in one place is parallel to the
concerns that K’ahir Bey had about the coffeehouses in Mecca a hundred years earlier. Again, it is not the coffee but rather the social space it provided that was problematic. Eventually, however, the English government simply learned to live with the coffeehouses, and the coffeehouses disappeared of their own accord.

By the end of the 17th century, coffeehouses and the associated culture were well established. Across the Atlantic, the first coffeehouse in New York was established in 1696 by John Hutchin. “Hutchin’s coffee-house was modeled on those he knew from London, with a large upstairs coffee room, lined with booths screened with green curtains” (Ellis 2004:79) and later was a distributor for a newspaper. However, the coffeehouses were not able to keep themselves separate from anxieties about prostitution, gambling, and other immoral actions that took place in the taverns and alehouses. In 1690, John Dunton published an article alerting people to what he saw as “the growing association between coffeehouses and the sins of bawdry” (Cowan 2005:251). He (2005:252) also notes that “the coffeehouses are not fit for the areas of town inhabited by the laboring classes, who have more need of alehouses as a source of recreation and nourishment…” but rather for gentlemen of leisure whose interests were not licentious. This is an important opinion to highlight, for although the coffeehouse was, in theory, open to all, it ended up being segregated by social class. This point about elite coffeehouses was emphasized by the fact that two famous newspapers, The Tatler and The Spectator, were only distributed to certain coffeehouses picked by the authors. The Tatler was first published in 1709 by Joseph Addison and Richard Steel, and The Spectator and The London Gazette were also
published around this time. Together, those three newspapers “were designed to bring about a
general reformation of manners” (Ellis 2004: 185) and were critical to English society. We will
take a closer look at the history of sociability and inequality in the coffeehouse in the next
chapter.

*Tea vs. coffee*

Despite the prominence of coffeehouses in England during the seventeenth and the
eighteenth century, a commonly perceived characteristic of English culture is tea time. Indeed, in
Victorian England, the upper classes enjoyed the ritual of tea time. Coffee was cheaper than tea
and so that is what the rest of the population drank. However, after 1717 there was a marked
decrease in coffee consumption, likely brought on by a change in England’s economy. The East
India Company gained permission to trade directly with Canton in 1717, lowering the import
fees on tea. Tea then began to spread through social classes other than the rich and become a part
of the offerings of the coffeehouses. Ellis (2004: 126) writes that the cultural associations of tea
and coffee remained distinct, even though “Both tea and coffee were available in many coffee-
houses, and certain coffee-men were at least as famous for their tea as their coffee,” such as
Thomas Twining, for example.

The first public sale of tea in England took place at Garraway’s Coffee House in 1658.
Just as coffee was introduced to Europe as a medicinal drink, “the English went mad for tea,
which was touted as a healthy curative. Tea became fashionable in the coffeehouses, and the
drink joined coffee and hot chocolate as one of the new temperance beverages that appealed to the privileged classes of professional men and ‘literati’” (Heiss & Heiss 2007:20). Nevertheless, the specific culture that arose around tea drinking was quite different from coffee culture. Certain societies preferred tea over coffee, such as the Japanese and Chinese, though the tea house has not had the widespread appeal and renown that the coffeehouse did (Tucker 2011). In England, tea time generally took place in the home, separating it from public spaces.

By the time tea became popular, coffee was no longer an exotic, exciting product. By the 1730s, “coffee and coffeehouses had been so thoroughly assimilated into the fabric of British society that they had ceased to be controversial. The Anglicization of oriental coffee was complete” (Cowan 2005:4). Increased segregation of the coffeehouses to serve the elite male sections of society in combination with all of the other factors mentioned, contributed to the decline in popularity of coffee.

Jumping over to the young United States, the English legacy of using the coffeehouses as centers for debate and distribution of news formed part of the American Revolution. The coffeehouses in Philadelphia became busy centers for politics and commerce (Bar-Tura 2011). The Boston Tea Party was planned in a coffeehouse, and afterwards coffee soon surpassed tea as the patriotic drink (Pendergrast 2011, Tucker 2011). After the British occupation of New York, the city’s economy was devastated. Coffeehouse proprietor Cornelius Bradford thought that restarting the coffeehouses would kickstart the economy. Bradford carefully rebuilt his business,
paying close attention to the cargo ships arriving in port. By 1784, Bradford’s coffeehouse was a place for bankers to gather and discuss business.

*The fall of the coffeehouse*

Due to the change in economics and social dynamics, by the end of the 19th century, coffeehouses had almost disappeared from England. In 1877, American novelist Henry James remarks on the lack of cafés in London:

“For the ‘inferior sort’, he remarked, ‘there are a thousand sources of interest, entertainment and delight’. For the ‘inferior sort’ there were gin palaces, each of which came equipped with a ‘detachment of the London rabble’. But for the ‘better sort’ London was ‘scantily provided with innocent diversions’, such as those offered by the cafés he recalled from his time in Paris, with their little round tables on a pavement or a gravel walk” (Ellis 2004:207).

A new social life, centered around churches and theaters, in addition to the growing consumption of tea, lead to a decrease in the popularity of coffee. Tea consumption rose faster than coffee consumption and was the primary drink consumed domestically because it was easier to make than the more elaborate roasting and grinding process required for coffee. “A vicious spiral resulted: falling consumption of coffee led to a lower price, to which growers responded by using high yield-low cost cultivation techniques, which further drove down the quality of coffee on the market”, explains Ellis (2004: 209). Economic changes and competition as early as the 1850s drove down the quality and price of coffee, and the East India Company used its influence and political power to distort trade.
With the decline of the coffeehouses came nostalgic reflections on the role of the coffeehouses in society. The myths of the coffeehouse as a democratic public sphere that came from the construction of memory of the coffeehouse set the foundation for future coffee shops. It also gave a rationale to movements to reclaim sober public sociability, such as the Temperance Movement. Between 1884 and 1890, The Temperance Movement reformers hoped that a Coffee Public House would provide a space for working class men to find food, drink, and company without alcohol (Ellis 2004).

The Second Wave: Rediscovering Fresh Coffee

Coffee faded into the background in Europe and the Americas, though it remained a staple beverage as is illustrated by the fact that instant coffee was developed to send to the troops during both world wars. After the world wars, instant coffee dominated the coffee market in the United States. Fresh coffee returned in the middle of the 20th century when espresso made an appearance. The early espresso machines were patented in 1902 by Luigi Bezzera and in 1932 by Archille Gaggia (Ellis 2004). However, it was not until the 1950s that espresso became popular through the efforts of Pino Reservato.

On a business trip to England in 1951, Reservato discovered the poor quality of English coffee and thought that an espresso machine could improve the quality of the coffee. In 1953, Reservato opened Gaggia Experimental Coffee Bar, known as Riservato, in Soho, England. Its novelty was "the shiny chrome styling of the espresso machine, and the light and modern
architecture of exposed stone, recessed up-lighters and modern art" (Ellis 2004: 228). This new establishment sparked off a new type of chain called the "coffee bar". Coffee bars were very popular and by 1960 there were about 2,000 in England with 500 of those in London (Ellis 2004). By 1956, Coffee bars are reported in New York and San Francisco. "The 'espresso revolution', as Pearson called it on BBC radio in 1956, changed more than just the appearance of coffee retailing" (Ellis 2004:233) and reintroduced the sociable aspects of the coffeehouses. Young people took to espresso bars, and these places became symbols of 1950s youth culture. During the Vietnam Era, some coffee shops were used for anti-war activism, reminiscent of their politically active ancestors.

Coffee shops did not integrate themselves into mainstream culture at this time, however. For one, many people were accustomed to the taste of instant coffee and did not see the need for fancy espresso. Second, the coffee shops were part of the counterculture movement. Economic and political conditions stifled coffee sales and raised prices, causing people who sold coffee to raise prices and water down their coffee (Pendergrast 2010). Coffee and other caffeinated drinks came under suspicion in the United States in the 1970s and 80s. Caffeine was blamed for causing birth defects, cancer, and psychiatric disorders. Scientific studies refuted and/or questioned such claims, but the social damage that these claims did to caffeine’s reputation was greater than the scientific evidence to the contrary (Pendergrast 2011). Also in the 1970s, social consciousness of the injustices being incurred by workers in coffee-producing countries, and workers in general who labored for multinational corporations, gave rise to the Fair Trade movement. A
combination of these factors, as well as the success of the soda companies’ advertising campaigns, turned the public away from coffee.

The second wave of coffee coincided in part with the second wave of feminism, which meant that women had more freedom to move in public without chaperones. Presumably women were present and active in coffee shops during this era, though there does not seem to have been a specific study of gender dynamics in coffee shops during this time. In fact, coffee shops themselves were not very well studied at this time because coffee itself was not as popular as soda. Even though coffee itself was still of lower quality in the middle of the twentieth century than what consumers today would call a good cup of coffee (Franklin 2013), things began to change in the 1970s when the coffee shops that we know as chains today started, such as Peet’s, Starbucks, The Coffee Bean and Tea Leaf, and Dunkin’ Donuts.

*Starbucks*

Despite the suspicion surrounding caffeine and the known social injustices of the coffee producing industry, small coffee shops that catered to hippies and disaffected baby-boomers thrived in the 1970s and 80s. One of these coffee shops, founded by three coffee enthusiasts in 1971 at Pike Place Market in Seattle, thrived and grew to become known globally – Starbucks. The founders, Jerry Baldwin, Gordon Bowker, and Zev Segle were inspired by Peet’s Coffee, which had opened shortly before in Berkeley (Pendergrast 2010). Howard Schultz, an NYU business school graduate, was hired by Starbucks to help with marketing. He had a vision for
Starbucks inspired by the Italian coffee bars that the Starbucks founders thought were too exotic for American tastes. So, Schultz founded Il Giornale, which introduced hot, milky coffees to the market (Ellis 2004). In 1987, Starbucks’ owners were looking to sell. Il Giornale was doing well and the new milky espresso drinks were so popular that Schultz was able to buy Starbucks. Times had changed a lot since the 1700s when people thought that milk would ruin the positive qualities of coffee.

Starbucks is now a recognizable logo worldwide with a huge mass market appeal (Marcy Franklin 2013). Even by 1995, “without paying for publicity, Starbucks had become synonymous with fine coffee, hip hangouts, and upscale image” (Pendergrast 2010:333).

Travelers can depend on Starbucks for a fairly predictable menu (with regional variations) and free wifi. It also has its own vocabulary that has spread through coffee culture, influencing the ways in which we order coffee. A barista at a Saxby’s location in New Jersey told me once how frustrated she becomes when customers use “Starbucks-talk” with her. Interestingly, however, not everyone seems to know what the Starbucks words they are using mean. “Some of them don’t even seem to know what the Starbucks terms mean. If they ask for a ‘tall’ drink I’ll confirm, ‘So you would like a small latte’ and sometimes they will say yes and other times I’ll get, ‘No, tall means large’” reports the barista. “Tall” at Starbucks does indeed indicate “small.” Because Starbucks-talk is a specific way of ordering coffee, it can be intimidating for people to place orders. There is even a wikiHow (2015) page to help people navigate the ins and outs of ordering at Starbucks, which indicates the level of social importance given to correctly following
Starbucks protocol. In addition to creating its own set of world recognized practices, Starbucks also formed itself as a third place under Schultz’ direction. Schultz liked Oldenburg’s (1989) *The Great Good Place* and deliberately used the idea of the third place in revisioning Starbucks.¹⁰

*The Third Wave of Coffee*

Laptops, gender mixing and visible gender non-conformity, espresso machines, jazz music, leather couches, bar stools, business people, students, couples and families – I would venture that there has never been a time when coffee shops were more open to a wide population than they are now. We are currently living in the “third wave” of coffee culture which is characterized by,

“small-batch artisanal coffee roasters and independent or small-chain coffeehouse that are themselves part of a supply chain including a collection of field-to-cup actors starting with direct-trade growers with whom the coffee brokers, roasters and café owners are understood to have relationships” (Manzo 2010).

In other words, the independent, fair-trade, quirky coffee shops that are appealing to hipsters and young professionals are a type of reaction to the second wave’s grand commercialization of coffee.

Not very much research has been conducted on contemporary coffee shops, a fact that Manzo (2014) is quick to point out. There are also so many different kinds of coffee shops now that it is impossible to define exactly what constitutes a coffee shop or café. The terms coffee shop and café are now used interchangeably, for some coffee shops serve full meals and a few of

¹⁰ See Sketchplanations in Appendix.
them also sell alcohol. What all these places do have in common, however, is their equipment, such as espresso machines (Manzo 2014), and the assumption that these are sociable spaces. The idea of the coffee shop as a key part of the public realm is still strong, even though the publics that they serve are different than the ones that Habermas (1991) and Oldenburg (1989) had imagined.

Third wave coffee shops constitute their own category not so much in terms of the social atmosphere and beverage options but rather in terms of their attitude and aesthetics. Much of the third wave lies in an ideology of the coffee shop as a socially conscious third place. While Starbucks, Peets, and the second wave coffee shops drew on the myths of the original coffeehouses to institute coffee culture in the United States and around the world, they are distinct from the third wave coffee shops. Some of these third wave coffee shops identify themselves as the “anti-Starbucks,” favoring locally produced foods, sustainable practices such as serving orders to stay using ceramic dishes and sourcing their beans from ethical and sustainable growers, indy music, and vintage or artsy décor. They pride themselves on being independent and not conforming to the model of mass consumption. These alternatives to Starbucks attract a clientele that identifies with less mainstream, though still middle class, lifestyles, such as the hipsters and yuppies.

Although their business practices and products may differ, third wave coffee shops have not completely broken with the past – they still are, fundamentally, spaces for consumption, both material and social. The sociable aspects of the different generations of coffee shops have not
changed, and have also not shifted that much from the purposes of the original coffeehouses.

What has changed, however, are the styles of public social interaction and what those interactions look like in different media.

*The coffee shop vs. the coffeehouse*

Coffee shops look very different from the coffeehouses. Even though many coffee shops present themselves as a place for sociability, Bar-Tura (2011:94) comments:

“Rather than being a site of interaction, contemporary coffeehouses have become a place of common isolation. A place to be alone together. People sitting in front of their laptop, staring into cyberspace, armed with earphones in case anyone invaded their little nirvana of detachment.”

Indeed, the coffee shop is a very different place, both in form and in function, from its coffeehouse ancestors. Is this necessarily a bad thing? There is no single answer. Despite the critique that coffee shops do not foster interaction with strangers, coffee shops do provide opportunities for other kinds of sociability and connection, such as wifi. Also, sitting alone with a laptop is not necessarily as unsociable as one might think. People still chose to go there instead of being alone at home or work. This indicates that there is a social reason for people to go to coffee shops that does not involve direct interaction with others.

There are places, however, that try explicitly to foster more traditional types of sociability, such as coffee shops that advertise the fact that they do not have wifi and offer community programs that take place within the coffee shop. For example, Happy Coffee hosted
pets from a shelter on Valentine’s Day for patrons to pet and adopt. Part of the proceeds from that day’s sales went to help the shelter. Other coffee shops try to do both, including Pod, a café in Manhattan that has a “No laptop zone” that is reserved for people who don’t have computers or who want a laptop-free environment (even though all other types of technology are allowed). All of the space around the “No laptop zone” is usually filled with people on laptops. I found myself in an interesting position the last time I visited The Pod because I had an iPad mini with a keyboard case – could I sit at the “No laptop zone”? Instead of just sitting down and seeing if someone asked me to move, I decided that since I was going to be using the iPad like a laptop, it counted as a laptop and so I joined the line of laptop users.

Femininity and masculinity

Today, the issues that women face in the coffee shop in the United States are reflections of ones that exist in larger society. Probably one of the biggest changes to how coffee shops function is the inclusion of women. Sexism is still prevalent, though not discussed. In developing countries, however, coffee shops can provide a space for women to relax and be active in a safe, public setting.

In the United States, women have the freedom to occupy public space without being suspected of prostitution. They can also participate in civic life, business, the military, academia, and in general, are supposed to have equal status with men. Nevertheless, there are myriad contradiction to this, some of which are represented in the coffee shop.
Aubrey Limburg (2013) at Portland State University studied how people perform gender in a coffee shop where she worked near the university. Drawing on Connell’s (1987) conception of gender in terms of hegemonic masculinity and emphasized femininity, Limburg (2013:4) finds that “The groups that most noticeably participated in normative gender performances were single men, single women, and heterosexual couples.” Limburg (2013) notes that there were alternative masculinities and femininities presented, but overall men were direct, emotionally distant, and avoided being associated with “female” drinks, whereas women were more timid, submissive to their male partners, and invested in the details of their drinks.

The drinks that men tended to avoid or justify ordering tended to be the sweet, milky drinks that cut the bitterness of coffee and especially espresso. Reitz (2007:8) describes how espresso is coded as a manly drink: “While coffee evolved beyond its masculine origins, the espresso shot has retained its masculinity by virtually avoiding entrance into the home and by the nature of the drink itself.” Her observations of Starbucks customers in Manhattan and Caribou Coffee in Detroit showed that the overwhelming majority of straight espressos were purchased by men. “Men’s” drinks are simple and strong whereas “women’s” drinks are sweeter, milkier, and often customized to suit the taste of the customer. These observations of the differences in ordering patterns according to gender is shared by baristas across the country, including a friend of mine who works at Saxby’s.

While coding drinks based on gender is something that is discussed at large, sexism among the employees of the coffee shop is not. Lisa Knisley (2013) discusses how the same
thing that happened to female chefs before the restaurant industry took off happened to the
female baristas in coffee shops. Knisley (2013) spoke with a representative from Peet’s Workers
Group in Chicago who reported,

"Before the coffee culture started growing, it was more likely that a shop was going to
be predominantly women. The high customer service, physicality, and skill while barely
making minimum wage made this job, like being a waitress, a job you took because you
needed to. Now, however, it seems like so many independent shops offer more than
minimum wage and have far more men than they did before. Now that the job has
become ‘skilled,’ be it in the roasting or latte art, it has become a whole different
industry. But at corporate chains, she added, baristas are often ‘still viewed by some as
unskilled workers.’"

In those corporate chains and other service labor, women are not treated equally to men.11
Women do not get promoted as often as men and are stuck earning less. In the class of the
independent coffee shops, women are not always included in the workplace culture, even though
their presence in the coffee shop is not questioned (Knisley 2013). The term a “woman in coffee”
is used to describe a woman who runs a coffee shop and participates in selecting growers, blends,
and all the administrative aspects of a coffee shop. Notably, the term “men in coffee” is not a
phrase that is used (Hoffman 2012), implying that women who work as anything other than
baristas are entering a man’s world. Knisley (2013) calls for a specific discussion about sexism
in the coffee shop work environment, not just a gender blind approach: “Restricting the

11 For a portrait of women in fast food, see Robin Leidner (1993). For a discussion of gender in construction work,
see Kris Paap (2006).
forecloses an essential discussion about workplace equality both feminists and baristas (and feminist baristas!) should be having.” We shall see how and if this conversation unfolds, for addressing sexism in the workplace in general is an issue that is not yet being discussed openly.

In other parts of the world, and specifically in developing countries, women are finding new avenues of social interaction in coffee shops. In Cairo, for example, upscale coffee shops create spaces of urban belonging, according to Anouk de Koning (2013). They are illustrative of changing mixed-gender norms in the upper middle class. These coffee shops provide new public spaces, especially for women both veiled and unveiled. de Koning explains that women being present in the coffee shops is a striking feature of new urban social life for “Unchaperoned mixed-gender socialization and the presence of single women in leisure venues are issues generally surrounded by suspicion and restrictions. Yet in these upscale coffee shops, veiled and nonveiled women often constitute more than half of the customers” (de Koning 2006:222). Coffee shops are considered to be safe spaces where respectable women can go to socialize. They are, in effect, a type of third place.

Nonetheless, the transnational space of the coffee shop, which caters to leisure, sociability, and the intersection of urban public and private space, separates the space socially from the rest of Egypt. It is also open only to the comfortable classes. "It's as if you are not in Egypt", states de Koning (2013:228) for the prominent use of English in the coffee shop and the customers’ tastes for United States style coffee. These coffee shops are also serving a similar function as the coffeehouses in seventeenth-century England in that it is possible for discussions
in coffee shops to get a little too racy for polite Egyptian society. For those who are not comfortable with western social dynamics, there are coffee shops such as D Cappucino that maintain gender separation (Reuters 2013).

**Conclusion**

In summary, the coffeehouse established coffee as a social beverage. Through the years, the coffeehouse has changed to meet the needs of urban populations, though some of its core functions have remained the same: a space for commerce and networking, socialization and the development of class-based habitus, or lifestyle. It reflects the values, and expectations that one is raised with and to which one becomes accustomed over time (Bourdieu 2011), as well as providing a social space for entertainment and relaxation in the public sphere. Tucker (2011:56) recounts, “At certain points in history, coffeehouses became places where people had the chance to question authority, challenge preexisting norms and customs, discover new ideas, and foster political action.” Though the image that we have of the seventeenth-century coffeehouses is of spaces where the public sphere formed, the way we think of and interact with the public sphere has changed. Thus, while being a part of the public sphere in a coffee shop is still an important function of the space, having a democratic space within the coffee shop is not as important. It is also interesting to note that the English coffeehouses were hailed as social levelers, and that social leveling is one of Oldenburg’s (1989) criteria for third places, yet people are self-segregated by class within the coffeehouse (Biderman 2013). Today, hipster coffee shops are not
seen as leveling spaces but rather are considered indicators of gentrification (Papachristos, Smith, Scherer, and Fugiero 2011, Zukin 2011). Nevertheless, both institutions are considered “third places.” As we will see in the next chapter, socioeconomic inequality and its effects are visible in today’s coffee shops.

Another question to consider in relation to coffeehouses is whether coffee shops today are still relevant. It is worth reflecting on whether the coffeehouses in early modern Europe really mattered in history. Cowan (2005) argues that it depends on how one evaluates that question. While coffeehouse practices and customs did not dethrone kings or start rebellions, “the story of the introduction of coffee into the British Isles reveals much about the ways in which early modern economic, social, and political relations were constituted” (Cowan 2005:263). It also shows how society adapted to a new consumer model and social institution. In this respect, even though the coffee shops are more passive spaces than the early European coffeehouses, they could still have a subtle effect on society, and continue to show how people develop social and cultural capital and adapt to new models and social institutions.
Tuesday afternoon at Happy Coffee – In front of the shop, three young women are hanging out in a window seat, a woman grades papers, and a middle-aged man does the crossword from a newspaper. A young man with messy hair found a corner in which to read. He is slightly curled up against the wall, blocking out the rest of the coffee shop with his body language. Another pair of female friends chat in the opposite corner from the young man. In the back room, separated from the main part of the coffee shop, accessible through a wide hallway, there are more types of interactions: Three business men are deep in conversation about strategies for growth, two pairs of people are meeting for the first time for informational interviews, a mother and daughter are chatting, and a young man talks on the phone.

Scenes such as the one described above are common to coffee shops such as Happy Coffee that provide spaces for free social interaction. Social engagements range from first dates to job interviews, from gatherings of friends to people working alone on their laptops. In my time observing the activities that take place in coffee shops, I have noted: dates, interviews, friends hanging out, tourists resting and getting their bearings, families on outings, people reading (books, iPads, newspapers), people playing games, students studying individually and in groups, professionals working, private phone calls, Skype video calls, and business meetings. Some of these activities, such as interviews, phone calls, and Skype video calls could be considered private activities. The fact that they are permitted in the space of the coffee shop indicates the unique social qualities of the place. Nevertheless, while these activities display the flexibility of the coffee shop as a certain kind of third place, a concept described in Chapter 1, they also reveal the hidden hierarchies and protocols embedded in coffee shop etiquette, showing the inequalities that are reproduced in coffee shop rituals. All of these habits and practices surrounding coffee and coffee shops constitute coffee (or café) culture. As Emma Felton (2012) states, “Café culture is emblematic of social and urban change, of the rise of food culture and industries, and ‘aesthetic’ cultures.” In other words, coffee culture consists of the meanings and practices ascribed to coffee and coffee shops by coffee drinkers and coffee shop patrons. Coffee is more
than just a job or a business for buyers of specialty coffee and owners of coffee shops (Franklin 2013), as well as for people who are addicted to the drink and cannot function without a cup in the morning. This specific culture influences mainstream society in ways that become indicative of patterns in urban society, since coffee is an established part of city centers.

Sociability - Situating the Coffee Shop in Urban Life

"Wanna go grab a cup of coffee sometime?"

"It's been ages since we've caught up – let's get coffee on Saturday!"

"Sure, I would be happy to meet up with you. How about we meet at Happy Coffee at 4pm?"

Going to "get a cup of coffee" is a phrase loaded with meaning, for its significance changes depending on to whom it is given and by whom it is received. It could be an offer to go on a date, or a college admissions interview, or friends catching up, or any number of activities. The coffee shop is a useful place for casual meetings, for the "ritualistic behaviour, 'meeting for coffee' facilitates encounters not only with those known to us, but also among relationships that are provisional and contingent. It is among those less familiar that the café is useful as a space for engaging and practicing civil discourse" (Felton 2012). It is also good for negotiating encounters with strangers. Because it is not the work place, the coffee shop facilitates an informal atmosphere conducive to conversation, but not so informal as the home, which is a private domain with its own set of formalities. It is also considered a safe space mostly free from "stranger danger" where two people can meet for the first time and know that they are in a place where there are other eyes watching.

The space of the coffee shop lies in the intersection of the public and the private, and also addresses commonly perceived problems of urban space. Open public spaces such as plazas went out of fashion in the mid-twentieth century, and publicly owned private spaces have been
increasing in the United States in the form of malls, food courts, restaurants etc., especially in the suburbs. As Whyte (1980) noticed in his examination of crowding in New York City, The Street Life Project, public spaces inside privately owned buildings or areas were not as public for they excluded “undesirable” groups of people.

How can public spaces not be public? Spaces are given meaning in the relationship that people construct with them, and the actions of the people who own and occupy the spaces determine how accepting of the general public it is. “All inclusive” spaces are few and far between. Pearson and Richards (2003:3) cite Gregory and Urry's observation that “spatial structure is now seen not merely as an arena in which social life unfolds, but rather as a medium through which social relations are produced and reproduced.” Therefore, people can make a space as exclusive or as inclusive as they want, reflecting their ideologies and values. A privately owned public space has rules governing the conduct of its patrons, many of which are unspoken as we will see in the case of the coffee shop. Additionally, the sociability of the space is also determined not only by the spatial forms of public spaces but also on their purpose and the ways in which people engage sociability with that purpose.

The Appeal of Coffee Shops

Interestingly, despite all the social meanings and functions of the coffee shop, getting a cup of coffee (or other beverage) to go is still the main purpose of the coffee shop. Free wifi is also a strong draw, especially for tourists who might buy a small coffee just to be able to use the wifi for 15 minutes to figure out where they are going next. Some coffee shops, such as Coffee Corner, Puro Cafe, and Starbucks, have extra items for sale including coffee mugs, t-shirts, fresh beans, ground beans, and chocolate. Full meals are also available in addition to snacks in some coffee shops, though if people purchase those, they are likely to stay for a while.
Meeting up with friends is probably the second most common use of the coffee shop, depending on location. In general in my observation sites, groups of 2 or 3 friends will come to a coffee shop together, though occasionally groups of 4 or more will enter together. The people who come in to chat will often gravitate to certain spaces of the coffee shop that are more suited for conversation. For example, there is a window bench at Coffee Corner that is big enough for two people and looks out onto 8th avenue. It is the most secluded part of the venue, and it is almost always occupied by people who are conversing. The only times I have seen a single person sitting in it were when that person was waiting to meet a friend or the friend had just left. Likewise, at Happy Coffee, the back room serves as a more private room for long conversation, even though it holds the most people. Coffee shops without obvious places for private conversation, such as most Starbucks locations, Puro Cafe, and Pod, tend to self-segregate, with people who are talking separated from those who are using devices.

In every coffee shop I visited, I saw people studying or at least answering emails, including in the large Starbucks in Times Square that is not meant for lingering. In terms of studying, one of the stereotypes of university students is that they like to work in cafes. Although in New York it is difficult to tell who are students and who are young professionals, the coffee shops around university campuses are generally very busy. For those who are not students, the coffee shop still functions in a similar way. Just as students sometimes want to escape from the libraries, some professionals also want to get out of the work place. The Huffington Post and Fast Company\textsuperscript{12} have published articles about the benefits of working in coffee shops both as a self-employed person and as an employee, such as boosting creativity with a change of scenery, being served so as not to worry about cleaning up, being free from distracting co-workers or family members, and the possibility for collaboration with other people working there. Of

\textsuperscript{12} See Ditkoff (2012) and Verhove (2013)
course, the number of people that one sees working in coffee shops varies by geography. Coffee shops like Puro Cafe are far enough out of the way that they attract smaller numbers of people than say, Coffee Corner, which is located in the heart of Chelsea.

Location and environment also affect how frequently a coffee shop is used for interviews and dates. Happy Coffee seems to be a fairly popular spot for informational interviews. In one afternoon I witnessed three unique informational interviews where neither party had met the other before meeting at Happy Coffee. Phone interviews and business calls also take place in the coffee shops I observed, though not necessarily when it is noisy. Conversations in general are strained in noisy environments, which detracts from the ability of coffee shops to facilitate conversation.

It is usually fairly easy to identify a first date by the slightly nervous behavior of the couple. Anna Hall, a barista and writer for The Specialty Coffee Chronicle comments on how she observes many blind dates and first dates. I have also seen multiple dates in coffee shops, and have watched as two strangers broke down the barrier between them by negotiating use of an outlet and struck up a conversation that quickly turned to flirting. Coffee shops are considered safe spaces that are good for casual dates (Tucker 2011), in contrast to the reputation that coffeehouses had for prostitution. Although the other customers in the shop will likely ignore the date, everything still happens under the watch of the public eye. There is also always something in the space to talk about. It allows for people to part ways and return to being anonymous persons, but also permits continued associations.

As Felton (2012) pointed out, the anonymity of the coffee shop allows people to pass through without interacting with other people, leading to solitude instead of visual sociability. People reading books, doing crossword puzzles, browsing Facebook and other social media sites,
reading off of their phones, or just contemplating the street or the people around them generally keep to themselves and do not interact with the people around them. These patrons create private spheres for themselves and can act as if they are alone, provided that they follow coffee shop etiquette. These same patrons could engage in solitary activities in their living rooms, but they chose to frequent a public space. This indicates a desire to be sociable without having to commit to interacting with another person except during a transaction.

In some respects, coffee shops can function like living rooms. Living rooms are one of the primary social spaces in the home, as they are places for entertaining guests as well as being places for familial sociability. Cat’s Den is the one coffee shop that most serves this purpose, true to its advertising. The atmosphere is very relaxed, slightly quirky, and appeals to the young professionals that live in the small apartments around it. On weekends and in the evenings, Cat’s Den fills with people from the neighborhood who want a relaxed space for reading, working, and entertaining guests that is not inside their apartment.

As we can see through these uses, the coffee shops in New York City serve a variety of urban needs for social and personal space. Nevertheless, why do strangers trust each other to hear private conversations? Why do people feel comfortable sharing a table with strangers? Thinking about the coffee shop as a third place, a place that is not quite work and not quite home, illustrates a lot of the attraction. However, coffee shops are not third places in exactly the way that Oldenburg had envisioned them. Instead of being the all-inclusive space where conversation is the main activity, each coffee shop creates its own kind of place in negotiating the tension between public and private space. They have their own informal entrance criteria, based primarily on the sensory experience of the space and their pricing. As Adam Chau (2008) notes, humans react to and actively create sensory experiences. Chau’s (2008) assumption
underlying his claim is that humans receive stimuli from their environment and then interpret the stimuli in terms of meaning. This model makes sense when one thinks about first impressions and what makes a person feel comfortable. Is it comfortable chairs? Is it the smell of fresh brewed coffee? Is it the decor or the attitude of the baristas? What about how loudly the music is playing? Likely it is a combination of all those factors that makes people like or dislike different coffee shops.

The principal product that coffee shops sell is the experience, with sociability being an important part of that experience. This kind of sociability is based in Simmel’s (1949) idea about informal associations between people, but goes further to incorporate a depth of relationship more akin to Bourdieu’s (2011) ideas of social and cultural capital. Sociability offers a useful lens for this experience because a primary part of it is being around other people. Whyte describes the necessities of a good public space as having seating, food, retailing, and toilets. Coffee shops provide all of those elements, but beyond that they also provide comfort. Thinking about it, a gas station has the same features, but is it a place that all the types of people described above would frequent at the same time? Probably not, because the purpose and the sensory experience created are distinct. As Shannon Larson (2010) highlights in her response to a question about why people like to sit in coffee shops, “What these places are actually selling is the ambiance, a place for social mixing, and service (you don't have to do the prep work yourself or clean up afterwards).” The way the coffee shop smells, sounds, and arranges furniture helps to create a specific environment. Lisa Waxman (2006:35) found that the top five design elements that made a coffee shop appealing for patrons were: “cleanliness, appealing aroma, adequate lighting, comfortable furniture, and a view to the outside.” Each coffee shop had its own social

---

13 See Chapter 1.
climate and sense of community, and patrons who felt more attached to the community tended to stay longer in the coffee shop.

Taking the senses into account is an important aspect in our consideration of the coffee shop because the senses reveal the structure of the ambiance. Kevin Low points to smell as an overlooked factor in how we perceive the world and defines smell as a "sociocultural phenomenon, associated with varied meanings and symbolic values/associations by different cultures" (2005:399). Walking into a coffee shop in New York, one is immediately enveloped by the smell of brewed coffee and often fresh baked goods as well. We identify certain values with that smell in a coffee shop, not just coffee as a beverage. However, those identifications come with familiarity with the ritual of going to a coffee shop. As Chau (2008) argues, humans react to and actively create sensory experiences through rituals. Even for those who do not drink coffee, the smell of it is part of the atmosphere of the coffee shop. I have had multiple conversations with people who do not like the taste of coffee but enjoy coffee shops for the smell, warmth, casualness, and security.

The security of the coffee shop is invoked by its publicness and the widespread practice of getting a cup of coffee. When one meets someone else for a drink in a coffee shop, the first step is to order at least a drink, then choose seats and enjoy the beverages and snacks. The length of the encounter is usually based on how long it takes to consume the beverages and snacks, but can last longer depending on how the conversation is going. I have yet to see anyone get up and leave before finishing their coffee, even if it means drinking quickly. Felton (2012) points out that "In this way, the possible complexity or ambiguity associated with meetings with strangers in the more intimate spaces of the home is avoided, and meeting in a café may relieve the onus and anxiety that can be associated with entertaining." The amount of social control that coffee
culture etiquette has over the patrons of the coffee shop makes it safe to consume food and drink as well as engage in social interactions.

Additionally, the feeling of security in the coffee shop is enhanced by the knowledge that everyone is watching out for each other and being watched. One afternoon at Happy Coffee, a woman in her early thirties came into the shop, left her bags at the table next to me, and then went to order a cappuccino and a pop tart. She did not ask anyone to watch her things. When she came back, she left her order at the table and then left to go to the bathroom. After that, she left her things a third time to get napkins before settling down with her book. Waxman (2006) highlights trust and respect as important social factors in how attached people become to a coffee shop. This kind of trust is not something that one would see at Starbucks in an airport or Times Square, but it does exist in the smaller, more conversation and work-oriented coffee shops. It is like a form of surveillance in that these places are small enough that the people around you will notice if something goes wrong.

The sobriety of coffee shops adds to their trustworthiness and makes them safer social spaces as well. Larson (2010) contrasts the coffee shop experience with a bar, “In the case of bars, the experience that is sold is the potential of mixing (or picking up dates) in a shared public space where everyone has their inhibitions relaxed because of alcohol.” In contrast to bars, which are another example of a social third place, the coffee shop provides a sober, productive, creative environment. Mitch Ditkoff (2012) of The Huffington Post also mentions the privileges of being waited upon by the baristas, being able to connect with other regulars, and not having to worry about the responsibilities associated with working at home or in an office. The coffee shop comes with a different set of procedures.
Society has changed quite a bit since the eighteenth century, from our government to issues of class, race, and gender. However, people still desire informal public places to frequent, as is illustrated by coffee culture. Additionally, the tradition in the United States of combining food and casual conversation is not universal but it plays a large role in our social lives. One of the appeals of the coffee shops is the fact that they provide food and drink and a place to relax. Rudolf Gaudio (2003:662) argues that Starbucks symbolizes the commodification of leisure, the commercialization of public places “and the role of consumption in reconfiguring class-based social identities.” Indeed, the commercialization of public spaces and the definitions of social identities based on consumption are very relevant to Starbucks and third wave coffee houses in particular.

When people go to a coffee shop, they are exercising their right to be there through use of their middle or upper class cultural, social, and economic capital. The coffee shop is a space for consumption, both material and social, and coffee shop patrons are expected to consume both. In other words, they consume the food and drink economically and physically, but they also partake in the casual environment, enjoying other people’s company, and the versatility of the space. This identifies them with the middle class by exhibiting their cultural capital. The ways in which coffee shop patrons use the space is indicative of the patrons’ knowledge of the ways in which a coffee shop is designed and expected to operate. Knowing how to behave is part of embodied cultural capital that is acquired through personal investment and exposure. Embodied cultural capital is not something that we think about every day, but it is a part of the way we act. Bourdieu (2011:84) describes it as, “external wealth converted into an integral part of the person, into a habitus, cannot be transmitted instantaneously (unlike money, property rights, or event
titles of nobility) by gift or bequest, purchase or exchange.” This habitus refers to lifestyle, habits, values, and expectations that are transmitted through socialization starting from infancy. We can see a certain middle class habitus manifested in the ways in which people negotiate the coffee shop, for example, dressing in nice jeans, expecting to be waited on by the baristas and being allowed to walk in unquestioned and stay for as long as they want.

Walking in to a coffee shop seems fairly straight forward: You enter, go to the counter, place your order, and take a seat. However, in that sequence of events, you are following an established protocol of mostly unspoken rules that govern customer conduct in the coffee shop.

First and foremost, customers must buy something, even if it is the cheapest item on the menu. Buying something is essentially the equivalent of paying an entrance fee. Those who cannot buy at least a small coffee are not welcome in the coffee shop, with the exception being people who ask the baristas if they can just use the bathroom. Nevertheless, I observed several instances in coffee shops where the baristas either did not notice or looked the other way as multiple people, the majority either homeless or hitchhiking, came in side doors or walked through the back of the coffee shop to use the bathroom. Even though this behavior is not allowed under coffee shop etiquette, none of the patrons said anything if they observed this happen. On rare occasions there are signs that explicitly say bathrooms are for paying customers only.

The one group that I saw reprimanded for not buying an item from the menu were the middle schoolers who would come to Coffee Corner every day during their lunch break. Since there were so many people flooding the venue at this time, all the baristas were working the counter and the manager was present and monitoring the crowd. The manager’s rule for the middle schoolers is that they are allowed to bring their lunches and stay there as long as they buy
something from the coffee shop. Anyone caught sitting without purchasing an item is asked to
give up their seat to paying customers. The manager seems to target the middle schoolers. One
time I watched as four high school students came quietly into Coffee Corner during a busy lunch
rush and claimed the corner of a table without buying anything. There were no seats left for
paying customers, so the manager was going around to evict the people who had not purchased
something. The manager passed right by the high schoolers and went straight for a group of 6
middle schoolers who were gathered at the other end of the table from the high school students.
About half of the middle school students had ordered beverages and the other ones were standing
at their sides. Despite minor protests that they had bought drinks, the group left under the watch
of the manager.

The encounters I observed between the store managers and the middle school students
versus the lack of confrontations between the store managers and adults who sneaked in to use
the bathroom indicate an interesting pattern of interaction. Clearly the manager of Coffee Corner
was much less concerned about the presence of non-paying adults who spend less than 5 minutes
on the premise than she was about middle school students taking up residence for 10 minutes
during lunch. Of course, this could also be a function of the time of day. Coffee Corner is a fairly
popular spot for people from the local business to come get coffee. It is also easier to make
middle school students leave than to call out adults for violating coffee shop standards, assuming
that they are not making other patrons uncomfortable. Conforming to societal norms of decency
(ie. wearing appropriate clothing, behaving politely to all present in the coffee shop) is expected.
Additionally, the middle school students are being educated in middle-class consumer habits and
values through being required to pay to be in the space.
Another exception I have seen to the rule that you must buy something is in the case of meeting someone who has already ordered and paid. From my field notes, this happens most frequently in Happy Cafe when people are meeting for interviews or quick meetings. Anyone staying for any length of time still orders, though it might not be right away. Happy Cafe also has the backroom that is more private and not under the direct eye of the baristas. It is harder to get away with not ordering in venues that are very visible and/or small.

Being respectful to the staff and other patrons is also of primary importance. Sharing responsibility for each others’ possessions creates a temporary relationship between patrons based on mutual trust. Also, not acknowledging what you can hear from other people’s conversations and knowing where to look and where not to look are considered good manners. If you are sitting with someone and are conversing, then the techniques of good, active listening are expected and practiced. All of these habits and practices are elements of a person’s embodied cultural capital and are thus acquired over time.

Something else to learn from experience is knowing how long is appropriate to stay in the coffee shop. Coffee shops are still owned and operated privately and patrons are expected to respect the hours of operation and not take advantage of the coffee shop’s amenities such as wifi and air conditioning. Although patrons are welcome the whole day, when it is time to close the store, everyone must leave. It is mainly in my conversations and in reading about the stereotypic coffee shops that I encounter stories of people spending all day in a coffee shop. In the coffee shops in which I chose to observe, patrons might stay for several hours, but rarely for more than three or four. The exceptions to this were the afternoons I spent at Pod – I spent several hours there but there were still a couple of customers who had been established there before I arrived and were still working away when I left.
Staying in a coffee shop all day requires additional etiquette. One Starbucks store manager, Jeremy Dunning, says, “I’d much rather have someone in my store than have an empty café, even if it’s the same person the whole day” (Swallow 2011). However, people who take advantage of the coffee shop’s flexibility cost the shop a lot of money and jeopardize the services for other people. Buying one cup of coffee about every 2 hours is considered polite. Additionally, although inconvenient for people with multiple bags and those who want a little extra space to spread out, the general rule is that since your bags did not pay for something, they don’t have a right to a chair. I do not know what would happen if a homeless person or a hitchhiker tried to take up more than one seat, even if they paid for a drink. However, in the case of students and middle class people with a backpack or laptop bag, it is rarely a problem for them to take the seat next to them for their bag, if it is not a busy time for the coffee shop. Some people will use this as a strategy to dissuade people from sitting next to them, but it is frowned upon during busy times when other customers are looking for seats.

No matter what the venue, your purpose in being there, or whether you have ordered, however, no disruptive conversations of any kind, whether in person, on the phone, or over Skype, are permitted. Although it is considered most polite to take all phone conversations outside, in my experience no one has paid much attention to phone calls or Skype calls happening inside the coffee shop. I find that people regularly hold business and personal calls in coffee shops without much of a second thought. Video calls, although less common, I notice happen more often in the intimate, casual coffee shops such as Cat’s Den. I could imagine them happening in Happy Cafe too, but their lack of wifi stops activities that would require large amounts of cellular data.

80
In terms of noise level, some coffee shops are louder than others, depending on the amount of conversation and the number of espresso or milk-based drinks being ordered. Normally, however, the music is kept at a level that is just loud enough to be heard above a normal level of conversation but not drown it out, while at the same time masking others’ conversations. There were times at Coffee Corner and Happy Cafe that the noise of conversation would almost cover the music. At Puro Cafe, however, the noise level rarely competes with the music. This is due to the amount of traffic that passes through each of the coffee shops at any given time. Puro Cafe is located in a residential area and does not see as many people every day as Coffee Corner and Happy Cafe. Cat’s Den, another residential coffee shop, is also on the quieter side.

Sound is carefully managed in coffee shops so as to create a friendly environment. Listening to music or watching videos without headphones is not allowed, and large, potentially noisy groups are discouraged. The only time that I saw someone use a the sound on a computer without headphones was when a group of middle school boys was crowded around a computer playing a game quietly one afternoon on their lunch break. Group meetings are generally welcome, but really only for groups of four or less. “Four people can be handled pretty smoothly, both for the lack of table rearrangement and maintenance of reasonable noise levels,” (Swallow 2011) says Dustman, director of Coffee at Red Rock Coffee in California. I rarely saw groups of more than four people, regardless of social status. The average size seemed to be about 2 people.

Keeping groups small also helps distribute people evenly through the coffee shop and prevents encroachment on personal space. Some coffee shops have large communal tables where anyone is welcome to sit, that are good for larger groups and combinations of smaller groups. From what I saw, most of the tables in coffee shops were made to accommodate 2 people, 4 if
needed. These tables are not considered communal and become the “private” space of the individual or pair occupying them. The only case of sitting with a stranger at one of these tables is when the coffee shop is full and one has the express permission of the stranger to share the table.

Working in coffee shops carries even more expectations. For one, electricity is a prime amenity of the coffee shop, as is wifi. Thus, courtesy dictates consideration of how much electricity and bandwidth you are using. This means that streaming videos, uploading and downloading large content, and Skype video calls should be avoided so that other people using the wifi are not inconvenienced by the slower connection. Dunning (Swallow 2011) recommends bringing a power strip if you are going to be charging multiple devices. I can’t think of a time when I have seen people doing this in coffee shops. In general, people are good about sharing outlets. One time I witnessed how sharing a power outlet broke the social barrier between strangers and facilitated a long conversation that turned into flirting.

Sensitivity about the content that appears on your screen and keeping it family friendly is important. As I mentioned earlier, I have seen people making Skype video calls without causing problems. However, it is important to remember that the coffee shop is still a public place, even when you have carved out a private sphere within it. Again, no matter if the coffee shop advertises itself to be a sort of “living room,” it does not afford the same privacy as an actual home place.

Lastly, while this is flexible depending on the coffee shop, it is good manners not to bring food into a coffee shop, especially not one that you are visiting for the first time. With the exception of the arrangement that the manager of Coffee Corner has with the middle school students, I have seen people bringing outside food in twice: once was an old man in his eighties
who was eating bagels he had gotten from the grocery store in Coffee Corner. Another time was a young woman eating an apple in the Cat’s Den. At the very least, coffee shops offer pastries to go with the coffee. However, it seems to be becoming more common for coffee shops to offer full meals and alternatives to pastries in New York. This practice blurs the lines between the “coffee shop” and the “cafe,” making them essentially one and the same. Providing the same services of wifi and a space to work and socialize further narrows the gap between “coffee shop” and “cafe” to the point where I am not sure there is a semantic distinction between the two anymore.

Beyond ensuring that the atmosphere is kept pleasant and the space stays safe for its middle class patrons, these mostly-unspoken rules also have implications for the way that social structures are reproduced in the city. Felton (2012) writes, “The social codes inscribed into café culture contribute to the production and reproduction of different social groups (Bourdieu and Lefebvre) and are reinforced by the café’s choice of aesthetics.” Despite the fact that the entrance fee to a coffee shop is very low, there are significant demographic groups that are left out of coffee shop culture.

Gentrification and Inequality

Coffee shops, just like Whole Foods, are taken as symbols of gentrification (Papachristos et al. 2011; Rascoff and Humphries 2015; Zukin 2011). Papachristos et al. (2011) found that the number of coffee shops in an area reflects a certain type of development that is linked to gentrification in Chicago. In fact,

“Measuring the number of coffee shops in a neighborhood has the distinct advantage over the more commonly employed census and survey indicators in that coffee shops provide an on-the-ground and visible manifestation of a particular form of gentrification – the
increased presence of an amenity often associated with gentrifiers’ lifestyles.”

(Papachristos et al. 2011:216)

This past January, Spence Rascoff and Stan Humphries, CEO and chief economist from Zillow (respectively), compared data from Starbucks’ new locations and their own housing data and found that Starbucks locations were a good predictor of rising home values. They also examined Dunkin’ Donuts and discovered that while on the whole Dunkin’ Donuts follows the same trend historically, the property values do not appreciate as fast around Dunkin’ Donuts as around Starbucks. Critics of Rascoff and Humphries (2015) point out that this is like the chicken and the egg situation in that Starbucks is likely just good at spotting the up-and-coming neighborhoods. (CNN Money 2015) However, regardless of whether coffee shops are tools or a side effect of gentrification, the fact that they exist and can be profitable in neighborhoods that have typically housed lower class populations, such as the Lower East Side in New York City, indicates that these coffee shops do have implications for the neighborhood. Just as widespread visible prostitution, alcoholism, and drug dealing in a neighborhood indicates an area where people cannot find good jobs (Zukin 2011), the appearance of coffee shops in an area signals an increase in middle class white-collar workers.

High prices for food and drinks make entering the coffee shops prohibitive for people with lower discretionary income. Zukin (2011:18) admits to being an “urban dweller” with middle class tastes. “I define my identity in terms of the same subjective kind of authenticity that Jane Jacobs admires, while seeing that it displaces the poor by constructing the habitus, latte by latte, of the new urban middle class” (Zukin 2011:18), she states. If a coffee shop moves into a neighborhood that is beginning to gentrify and manages to establish itself, it helps create an atmosphere that is attractive to young professionals and people with hipster characteristics.
Having a place that is lively will attract more life and “is a principle vital not only to the ways cities behave socially, but also to the ways they behave economically” (Jacobs 1961:99). In other words, a place where people spend not only time but also money will affect the spending habits of their neighbors. If residents are spending time and money in a coffee shop, for example, this not only adds to the sociability of the neighborhood, but also its economy. If the coffee shop is successful at generating both economic and social activity, then it will affect the neighborhood as a whole. This in turn could attract prospective residents for, “In most big cities, we Americans do reasonably well at creating useful neighborhoods belonging to the whole city. People with similar and supplemental interests do find each other fairly well,” says Jacobs (1961:119).

Coffee shops and similar institutions provide more vigilance of the streets, which adds a feeling of security to the area and makes people want to frequent it (Papachristos et al. 2011). Although what makes people feel more or less secure is subjective (Nissen 2008), there are certain standards of cleanliness and public conduct that middle class consumers expect. Iveson (2007:5) explains that political measures are enacted to ensure “order” and “quality of life,” "on behalf of a public that public authorities claim is intimidated by begging, threatened by graffiti, menaced by boisterous groups of teenagers, disgusted by the smell of urine or faeces they associate with rough sleepers, and inconvenienced by unauthorized political gatherings which block traffic.” A clean, quirky coffee shop that features art, live music, and $3 cappuccinos can only survive in an area with the proper clientele where their patrons do not worry about being assaulted as they walk down the street. Thus, the presence of a coffee shop indicates more than just being a place to get coffee. Rather, it is filled with implications about the social class status of the patrons and the demographics of the neighborhood. Coffee shops that open in areas that
are already middle class and above reinforce the class dynamics, even though they themselves are not the cause of gentrification.

**Conclusion: Coffee is More than a Drink**

As we have seen in this chapter and the history of the coffee shop, coffee and the coffee shop have greater social meanings than just consuming a drink. It is a place where the lines between the public realm and private life are blurred creating a flexible space that at the same time is subject to the rules of the owners and social norms. The coffee shop is a place to go on a date, have an interview, hang out with friends, use the internet, read a book, grade papers, eat lunch, use a bathroom, meet new people, and more. Though the coffee shops in New York City can facilitate the public sphere that Habermas (1991) describes and integrates Simmel’s (1949) notions of sociability, the uses of the coffee shop goes far beyond those characteristics. Granted, some people use the coffee shop as a way to be around people without needing to interact with them on a personal level, but the coffee shop is used to an equal, if not greater degree, by those who want to engage on a deeper level with their friends and family. The older patrons in particular develop social support networks in third places like the coffee shops (Rosenbaum, Ward, Walker, and Ostrom 2007; Rosenabum 2006). Beyond older patrons, Waxman (2006) found that newcomers to the community and people just passing through were more dependent on the baristas and the coffee shops in general than those patrons with long-standing ties to the community. Nevertheless, this does not mean that coffee shops do not form part of established neighbors’ social lives but rather that the patrons put different amounts of weight on the importance of that social network.

Coffee and coffee shops are also about more than just Starbucks. Chermelle Edwards (2014) of *The Guardian* challenges the perception that coffee culture is all about Starbucks when
the third wave of coffee is actually about buying coffee based on where it comes from and the social experience of drinking coffee. Hall (2014) comments on the breadth of the coffee industry, noting that while coffee culture does have to do with the beverage, “[it] is also very much about what the beverage represents. Coffee represents togetherness; not only between friends but between strangers who become friends. It is a bonding agent and a comfort food for the soul.”

It also reflects social behaviors that conform to the expectations of the coffee shop, which value middle class consumption, forms of interaction, dress code, and expectations for service. Each public that is formed within each coffee shop represents the social class and dynamics of the patrons, who engage in interactions that connect them to the wider coffee culture. These social dynamics reproduce social class inequalities and also reveal the complexity of the third place as a social space. Is the coffee shop today still a third place? In the following chapter I examine how the kinds of hipster coffee shops I studied do not fit with Oldenburg’s (1989) third place, but still fill an important space in urban life.

---

14 Coffee breaks with co-workers also indicate the development of community around coffee (Topik 2009).
15 The integration of coffee humor into popular culture demonstrates the symbolic nature of coffee in our society (see Appendix).
Chapter 4: Concluding Thoughts: A Re-Conceptualization of “Third Place”

It is Thursday afternoon in the neighborhood of Chelsea in the borough of Manhattan. Coffee Corner is serving multiple functions – office, social space, waiting room, and classroom. In a corner by the condiment bar, a young woman leans against a pillar with a book and a cup of tea, waiting for a friend. On the other end of the bench from her sit an older man and a middle-aged woman, speaking softly in Spanish. Just one small table width away from them are two young middle-aged Asian men. When they get up to leave, their table is immediately taken by two older white men. In the middle of the room, two tall, long tables with outlets underneath provide space for computers. At the far end of one are two men in their 30s, talking about the characteristics of business partners. One of them has a laptop and is typing as his friend talks. The other end of the table is occupied by a middle-aged woman and a female student. There is a gap about 3 feet wide between the end of that table and the next. An old man, probably in his 80s, with a walker, sits at the table with book and magnifying glass. He chats with anyone who will talk to him and makes comments on the conversation happening between a young gay couple who are sitting next to him. Almost hidden is a bench seat looking out the window onto 8th Avenue. Two middle aged female friends chat and watch the people walk past. The last seating area in Coffee Corner is a 4-person bar against the window facing 8th Avenue. It is currently occupied by 2 young men, one talking on the phone and one working on a project in Photoshop on his laptop.

Coffee shops today, whether they are the big chain stores that began in the second wave of coffee or the independent third wave coffee shops, do not fit with the conception of the third place that Oldenburg (1989) offers. Instead of being a neutral, completely open place, coffee shops are sites for the reproduction of class inequality. Even though third places are supposed to be accessible to everyone and function as social levelers, these places are still exclusionary and divided along class lines. Coffee shops are taking on the name of “the third place” and forming themselves based on that idea, however, due to the changes in the meanings and uses of public and private space, the result of the third place coffee shops is different than what Oldenburg (1989) conceived originally. The concept of the third place, while still fundamentally being about a place that is between the home and the workplace, has been modified to meet the needs of middle class city dwellers. No longer do the old models of public and private fit the context of
the city, especially with the rise of the internet, and it is time to shift toward the idea of consumer hybrid spaces as a way to understand urban life.

Limitations of Oldenburg’s (1989) conception of Third Place

The characteristics of third places that Oldenburg (1989) outlines in The Great Good Place may be relevant to specific institutions that he had in mind. However, these characteristics are somewhat outdated and do not all apply to today’s third places, especially when we compare the third place aspects to current coffee shops.

First, Oldenburg (1989) states that third places are on neutral ground. I would argue that no space, and thus no place, is neutral but is instead subject to power dynamics and social hierarchies. Even the location of the coffee shop is not neutral, for its presence can indicate gentrification or a reproduction of the social norms of the neighborhood. In publicly owned private spaces, such as coffee shops, the owner’s rules come first and the owners and their employees have the right to enforce those rules. In other words, conduct is not just contingent upon following social norms but also obeying the requirements of the proprietor. As I explain in the previous chapter, there is an etiquette guiding patrons’ actions in the coffee shop. While those rules may not always be followed perfectly, they still reveal and enforce the power dynamics in the space.

Second, Oldenburg (1989) praises the third places for encouraging interaction between strangers. However, coffee shops are not so much for going to meet strangers spontaneously as they are a space for pre-arranged meetings and solitary activities. Coffee shops can offer a living room-like environment that is good for the people who need or want to form that kind of place. This does mean that aside from negotiating shared tables, there are few instances of other

---

16 See Chapter 1 for a review of Oldenburg’s (1989) eight characteristics of third places.
17 See Gentrification and Inequality in Chapter 3.
interactions between strangers. In fact, it is generally assumed that people do not want to be disturbed. After all, who wants strangers wandering into their room unannounced? Each person/small group creates a private sphere within the public space. That act automatically changes the dynamic of the space and takes away some of the freedom of movement within the coffee shop because it is not socially acceptable to interrupt a private conversation. The claim that third places are for neighbors to meet each other does not necessarily hold in the city, for people lead such independent lives that there is not much overlap. Also, as I stated previously, coffee shops are not places that necessarily lead to interaction with complete strangers (at least, not in New York City). If anything, passing each other in doorways and hallways is more cause for association between neighbors. For some people, however, the coffee shop could be a place that they deliberately frequent to meet strangers. The co-presence of people in the space gives the potential for interaction, which coffee shop patrons can use to varying extents, depending on what their purpose is for being in the coffee shop.

With respect to the coffee shop as being a social leveler, a more apt comparison would be to the English coffeehouses of the 17th century. The historical literature on coffeehouses supports the fact that English coffeehouses were known for being spaces where any man who could pay for a cup of coffee could go. In contrast, the coffee shops we have today have formal, unspoken barriers to entry. Not only must you be able to pay for your drink, but you must also look presentable according to middle class standards for personal hygiene and dress. Personality does not get customers past first impressions based on looks. In New York City, people of the same social class dress in many different styles, so their manners and knowledge of coffee shop etiquette are equally as important.¹⁸

¹⁸ One day at Pod I noticed a transwoman with pink hair, red thigh-high boots, fishnet stockings, a tight pink dress, and black jewelry, typing on a MacBook in a corner of the laptop area. She had a guitar and a fake human skull next
Additionally, class is manifested in what people can buy, what technology they possess, the way they speak, their clothes, and their accessories. In United States society, where it is not good to be too rich or too poor, class is something that silently segregates people. Coffee shops do not necessarily facilitate class interaction. However, anyone can sit anywhere on a first-come, first-served basis.

Oldenburg (1989) strongly maintains that face-to-face conversation is the main activity of a third place. In 1989, however, cell phones were rare, as were laptops, and tablets still just existed in people's imaginations. Today's common methods of communication such as texting, email, Facebook messaging, and the like did not exist. The idea that conversation is the main activity in a third place does not necessarily hold now that our ways of communicating have shifted away from primarily being in person or talking over the phone. Does conversing over email, text, Facebook, or cell-phone still count? I would say that it does, for people are still engaging with others. The difference is that face-to-face conversations no longer dominate. In-person interactions usually happen between friends or follow social conventions of how acquaintances or strangers interact.

Another significant distinguishing factor about how accessible coffee shops are is their hours of operation. Most third places in the city are no longer open as long as the 16 hours a day of the early English coffeehouses. Bars open in the evening while coffee shops tend to close around 9 pm. Therefore, only publics that are active during the day have access to coffee shops. This excludes the people who work at night or get home late from being able to go to most.
coffee shops. There are more coffee shops that are staying open later in New York City, primarily in Brooklyn, catering to the late night crowd, but they are the exceptions to the norm.

More important to Oldenburg (1989) than any of the other aspects of third places are the regulars. The regulars are customers who come frequently to an establishment and help determine its social character. In my observations, it was fairly easy to identify who were regulars by the comfort with which they navigated the space, their interactions with the baristas, and their possession of loyalty cards (if available). Indeed, the regulars do help to create the atmosphere in a coffee shop. Nevertheless, there are more types of regulars than just those who come to spend time in the space. As we saw in the previous chapter, getting coffee to go is still the most common transaction in a coffee shop. Thus, I would still count people who frequently come to get coffee to go as regulars – the baristas know their orders and the people are very comfortable walking in and out. I am not sure, however, that Oldenburg (1989) would have considered them regulars because of the lack of time spent within the coffee shop means that they do not contribute as much to the social dynamic of the space. On the contrary, the fact that people come in and out as well as stay adds to the coffee shop’s flexible nature.

Attracting regulars is another question. Oldenburg (1989) emphasizes that third places have low profiles that are not necessarily attractive to those who are not regulars. Establishing a regular clientele requires attracting the types of people one wants as clients. Keeping a low profile in New York City is not the best way to entice people to come to a third place of any kind. Indeed, places that appear to be sketchy and grungy do not appeal to middle-class sensibilities and standards of cleanliness. In its way, this “protective coloring” is exclusionary. It is discouraging all the people for whom the plain decor and less than middle-class standards for
cleanliness are discomforting or unsafe. Many coffee shops brand themselves so as to
differentiate themselves from the rest and be better able to compete\textsuperscript{19}.

Hipster coffee shops, such as Cat’s Den, cater to a certain clientele and are not concerned
with having a mass-market appeal. People who like jazz, antique furniture, and cute names for
their drinks would like Cat’s Den, but people who don’t like basement spaces or any other
combination of factors would not feel at home there, for example. Being unique and quirky, but
clean and organized, is a hallmark of how hipster coffee shops present themselves.

The atmosphere of a coffee shop can vary a lot depending on the décor, the music
selection, and what kinds of activities people are doing in it. In Oldenburg’s third places,
playfulness and lightheartedness dominate the atmosphere. While I would characterize the mood
of coffee shops as “calm,” I am not sure I would call it “playful.” The ambiance of flexible
spaces must allow for different kind of interactions and moods. I witnessed some serious
conversations in coffee shops, including a business meeting where three men were figuring out
what the partnership of their companies would be going forward, and if in fact there would be a
partnership.

Last but not least, coffee shops are homes away from home in the sense that it is a
relaxed space where one can go to read a book, work, play games, and rest. However, the uses
and homeliness varies greatly by coffee shop. As Rosenbaum et al. (2007) find, third places can
provide more psychological support than homes do for the elderly. On the other hand, however,
for many people, coffee shops are just places to get coffee. The concepts of “home” and
“comfort” are heavily influenced by personal experience, cultural background, and social class,
which means that coffee shops are not necessarily homes away from home even for people who

\textsuperscript{19} Starbucks is famous for its branding and standardization of its product line so that it is recognizable all around the
world.
regularly go to coffee shops. Some people, such as those who do not have a designated office space or want a change of scenery (see Verhoeve 2013), use the coffee shop as an office away from office.

Oldenburg (1989) also points to gender as a distinguishing factor between the of the coffee shop and one’s actual home. He claims that third places are generally filled with people of the same sex and that the home is the site for heterosocial relations. However, this notion reflects conservative thoughts on gender-relations and does not match the reality that mixed-gender groups and places are becoming more and more common. In my observations there were just about as many women as men in the coffee shops.

At first glance, the rhetoric around coffee shops and the ways in which coffee shops present themselves make them seem like textbook third places. I too thought that coffee shops were third places. However, under closer investigation it appears that there is much more going on below the surface than meets the eye. Coffee shops are not isolated from society or from market place competition – they are spaces for consumption, both material and social. Since they are privately owned public places, the owners have the right to enforce rules that exclude people who do not conform to the owner’s vision of the ideal client. This turns hipster coffee shops into sites that reinforce class inequalities and uphold middle and upper class life styles and values. Different kinds of coffee shops cater to different clientele, and so they reproduce other socioeconomic class habits. Dunkin’ Donuts, for example, does not provide the same comforts for people who stay for long amounts of time as hipster coffee shops and the upscale chain coffee shops do. However, this thesis speaks to hipster coffee shops, which, as we have seen, do reproduce socio-economic class inequalities, physically, socially, and economically.
Nevertheless, within the class restrictions placed on hipster coffee shops, the space is accommodating of all different kinds of uses, from founding a start-up to dating.

All told, the theory of third place does not fit contemporary urban society for there are few truly open places and even fewer, if any, that deliberately cater to all social classes. In the case of coffee shops, the social reality is too complex and different than when Oldenburg was writing in the late 1980s. As active users of the space, coffee shop patrons create places and redefine the space according to what they think it can be used for, within what it can be used for according to social norms. Nevertheless, the idea of a neutral third place is still relevant to urban life, especially in increasingly crowded metropolitan areas – it is more that the characteristics that Oldenburg (1989) presents that are outdated. Society has redefined third places as places that lie in the intersection of public and private space, such as in privately owned public space.

Coffee shops provide a space for informal sociability in the city that allows citizens to engage in a variety of actions. Much like the issues raised with Habermas’ (1991) views of the public sphere, the coffee shop is not the unstructured, all inclusive space that Oldenburg (1989) longs for in the city. Instead, this dream of Oldenburg’s (1989) reveals the dynamic nature of the coffee shop. Each coffee shop provides a third place for the specific public that it creates. In other words, only people who belong to the public that is formed in the coffee shop enjoy the benefits of the third place. Within the unspoken rules of conduct in the coffee shop, people make a place to suit their needs in the space of the coffee shop, influenced by the feel and purpose for which the space was created.

20 Streets, city parks, and subway stations are the places I can think of that are open to everyone regardless of socioeconomic class, and even then there are exceptions.
Sociability and Technology in Coffee Culture

In a way, coffee culture is a commodification of middle class habits and preferences about coffee. Coffee shops are also a space for adults to continue to develop middle class habitus, since continuous learning and training is necessary in order to maintain social distinctions. Starbucks in particular has been referred to as one example of "commercial spaces of civility" (Zukin 2011:131). Everyone must follow coffee culture etiquette, and consumers are taught from an early age to behave in a coffee shop. For example, the middle school students were only allowed to stay in Coffee Corner if they bought something, a fact that helps reinforce the lessons they are learning in how to be middle class consumers. Patrons also demonstrate the ways that they socialize with each other in the ways that they interact, or do not interact, with the people around them. Certain coffee shops are more suited to face-to-face interaction while others are not, and patrons can chose which kind of coffee shop they go to depending on what they want to get out of the experience (Waxman 2006).

A new kind of sociability has arisen from the introduction of digital technology into the coffee shop. While some critics say that coffee shops are not social places anymore due to people being plugged into their individual devices, I would argue that these people are not necessarily unengaged from the world or the people around them. They could be communicating with friends, reading or watching the news, writing blogs, commenting on articles, participating in discussion boards, or contributing to Kickstarter campaigns, among other things. Coffee shop patrons can be as connected to or as detached from their surroundings as they would like to be, and this has little reflection on how sociable they are being, for they could be very active in cyberspace but not where they are physically. This sociability goes beyond Simmel’s (1949)

21 For example, the middle schoolers in Coffee Corner were learning how to behave like middle class adults (see Etiquette in Chapter 3).
22 See Bar-Tura (2011).
conceptualization, for it allows for deep relationships to be formed and maintained both in
person and online.

While it used to be the case that if one wanted to participate in public life one had to
interact face-to-face with others, most of the aspects of middle class participation in the public
realm now happen online. As Papacharissi (2010:128) states,

“Whereas in the past public had been used to demarcate the end of private, and private
 signaled a departure from public, the terms no longer imply such opposition, especially in
terms of how they are architecturally employed for the construction of place. Spaces
presented by convergent technologies are hybrid public and private spaces.”

Because of this shift in how our society in the United States interacts with the public, the coffee
shop no longer needs to be a forum for public debate.

Granted, neither Simmel (1949) nor Oldenburg (1989) had to account for the sociable
interactions that take place online. Habermas (1991) also did not have the internet as a public
sphere to contend with. The fact that having internet access has become an integral part of many
people's social lives in the United States has changed the medium of communication through
which our conversations are held. It is not so much about the verbal conversations that happen in
third places but rather the potential to have social interaction, whether that be through in-person
conversations or via online media. No one even fifteen years ago could have predicted that
Facebook would change the way millions of people would interact with each other, nor
anticipated that Facebook would become people’s personal news curator (Lafrance 2015). Social
media is a more effective social leveler in a lot of ways because all one needs to have a Facebook
page, a Twitter account, Google Plus, a blog, or any other form of free social media membership,
is access to the internet, which can be achieved through a library computer. Holt, Shehata,
Stromback, and Ljugberg’s (2013) study of the 2010 Swedish election cycle suggests that
frequent use of social media among young adults can motivate political participation, functioning as a social leveler.\footnote{23 Arguably, one could say that it is not sufficient just to have access to the internet, but rather also the social capital to know how to use it to participate appropriately in social media and wider public discourse. However, in terms of just access, it is much easier to enter the internet and learn how to use it because there one has more anonymity.}

We value the coffee shop not for the fact that it exists in the public sphere but rather because it is a hybrid place, both public and private, that facilitates middle class forms of consumption and sociability, both in person and online. The coffee shop provides the physical space and attraction, and the patrons construct their place within it through consumption. In fact, Zukin (2011:230) claims, “Consumption is the key element. Consumer culture has helped many men and women to make their peace with the city, and it has pacified spaces in the city to prepare them for growth.” Coffee shop patrons can create the place that they want out of the flexible space that arises from the intersection of the public and the private realms of urban life. All of the ways that Coffee Corner is being used as described in the excerpt from my observation notes at the beginning of this chapter are only possible due to the unique combination of social, economic, cultural, and spacial factors that are at play. Without public spaces where people can be present together, strangers have less cause to interact, friends have fewer places to hang out, entrepreneurs have fewer places to work and network, and all the other social interactions that are dependent on having an informal setting for being together lose their place in the public sphere. Therefore, coffee shops still fulfill an important social function in the city by providing a dynamic, ever-shifting space. Nevertheless, one must also remember that coffee shops are not neutral spaces, for even though they provide a flexible space, they are sites for the reproduction of middle and upper class social norms.
Bibliography


2013 Third Place Australia. http://www.meetup.com/Third-Place


2015 The Third Place. http://thethird.place/about/

ASAP Science


Austin, Michael


Bar-Tura, Asaf


Benhabib, Seyla


Berg, Chris


Biderman, Bob

Bourdieu, Pierre

Brown, Lance Jay, and David Dixon

Chau, Adam

Cowan, Brian

Davidoff, Leonore

de Certeau, Michel

de Koning, Anouk

Ditkoff, Mitch
2012 20 reasons why creative people like to go to cafes to work.
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/mitch-ditkoff/creativity-cafe_b_1879907.html

Edwards, Chérnelle
2014 The hipster coffee shop is going to save your morning and the planet. Are you ready to pay a little more to help?

Ellis, Markman

Evans, Peter B., ed.
Felton, Emma

Foucault, Michel

Franklin, Marcy

Fraser, Nancy
1990 Rethinking the public sphere: A contribution to the critique of actually existing democracy. Social text. 56-80.

Gaudio, Rudolf P.

Gieryn, Thomas F.
2000 A space for place in sociology. Annual review of sociology. 463-496.

Gulick, John

Habermas, Jurgen
1991 The structural transformation of the public sphere: An inquiry into a category of bourgeois society. MIT press.

Hall, Anna

Hampton Keith N.

Hampton, Keith N., Chul-joo Lee, and Eun Ja Her

Hartmann, John

Harvey, David

Hattox, Ralf S.

Hauk-Lawson, Annie and Jonathan Deutsch, eds.

Heaton Kennedy, Sarah and Andrew L. Dannenberg

Heiss, Mary Lou and Robert J. Heiss
2007 The story of tea: A cultural history and drinking guide. Random House LLC.

Henderschott, Anne

Hillier, Bill and Julienne Hanson

Hoffman, James

Holt, Kristoffer, Adam Shehata, Jesper Strömbäck, and Elisabet Ljungberg
2013 Age and the effects of news media attention and social media use on
political interest and participation: Do social media function as leveller?. European Journal of Communication, 28(1), 19-34. 
http://ejc.sagepub.com/content/28/1/19.full.pdf

Hummon, David

Iveson, Kurt

Jacobs, Jane

Knisley, Lisa

Lafrance, Adrienne

Larson, Shannon

Lefebvre, Henri

Leidner, Robin

Lennard, Suzanne H. Crowhurst and Henry L. Lennard

Lewyn, Michael

Limburg, Aubrey

Low, Kelvin E.Y.


Low, Setha. M. and Denise Lawrence-Zúñiga (eds.)

Manning, Paul

Manzo, John

Marlin, John Tepper and Andrea Kleine

Marx, Karl

McKee, Alan
2004 The Public Sphere: An Introduction. Cambridge University Press.

Miles, Steven
2010 Spaces for Consumption. SAGE Publications.

Montgomery, John

Nacho Punch
2014 “Hipsters Love Coffee” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IR7StSaaDKM

Nakamura, Lisa

Nippert-Eng, Christena E.

Nissen, Sylke

Okluicz-Kozaryn, Adam

Oldenburg, Ray
1989 The great good place: Cafes, coffee shops, bookstores, bars, hair salons, and other hangouts at the heart of a community. Da Capo Press.


Paap, Kris

Papachristos, Andrew V., Chris M. Smith, Mary L. Scherer, and Melissa A Fugiero

Papacharissi, Zizi
2010 A Private Sphere: Democracy in a Digital Age. Polity.
Parker, Scott F. and Michael W. Austin  

Pearson, Michael Parker and Colin Richards (Eds.)  

Pendergrast, Mark  


Pink, Sarah  

Portney, Kent E.  

Pozos-Brewer, Rose  
2013 Coffee shops: Using third places to connect with and shape the city. Final paper.

Rascoff, Spencer and Stan Humphries  

Reitz, Julie Kenjal  

Reuters  

Rheingold, Howard  
1996 A Slice of My Life in My Virtual Community. In High Noon on the Electronic
Rosenbaum, Mark S.

Rosenbaum, Mark S., James Ward, Beth A. Walker, and Amy L. Ostrom

Schoenholt, Donald

Shapira, Rina and David Navon

Simmel, Georg

Soja, Edward

Spain, Daphne

Stamberg, Susan
2002 The Coffee Break. NPR

Starbucks

Strand, Oliver
2010 New York is Finally Taking its Coffee Seriously. New York Times,
http://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/10/dining/10coffee.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0
Swallow, Erica
2011 The entrepreneur’s guide to coffee shop etiquette.

Thompson, Craig J. and Zeynep Arsel

Topik, Steven

Tuan, Yi-Fu

Tucker, Catharine

Urban Dictionary, Trey Parascuco
2007 Hipster.

Verhoeve, Wesley
2013 Why you should work from a coffee shop, even when you have an office. Fast Company. http://www.fastcompany.com/3005011/why-you-should-work-coffee-shop-even-when-you-have-office

Walton, Alice

Waxman, Lisa

Wheelan, Charles

Whyte, William H.
Woodland, Randall

Yodanis, Carrie

Zukin, Sharon
Appendix: Coffee in Popular Culture

The following song lyrics, images, and links are a small sample of how coffee culture is represented online.

**Songs**

*Falling in love in a coffee shop, by Landon Pigg:*
“I never knew just what it was about this old coffee shop
I love so much
All of the while I never knew
I never knew just what it was about this old coffee shop
I love so much
All of the while I never knew”
http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/landonpigg/fallinginloveatacoffeeshop.html

*One more cup of coffee, by Bob Dylan:*
“One more cup of coffee for the road
One more cup of coffee ’fore I go.
To the valley below.”
http://youtu.be/DMRLV8ne8DU

*Dangling conversation, by Paul Simon:*
“It's a still life water color,
Of a now late afternoon,
As the sun shines through the curtained lace
And shadows wash the room.
And we sit and drink our coffee
Couched in our indifference,
Like shells upon the shore
You can hear the ocean roar
In the dangling conversation
And the superficial sighs,
The borders of our lives.”
http://youtu.be/nntOYUODSV0

*Coffee Cantata by Johann Sebastian Bach:*
“Dear father, do not be so strict! If can’t have my little demitasse of coffee three times a day, I’m just like a dried up piece of roast goat! Ah! How sweet coffee tastes! Lovelier than a thousand kisses, sweeter far than muscatel wine! I must have my coffee.” (Pendergrast 2011:13)
11. The best coffee cup in existence:

Source: Buzzfeed

After I drink coffee I like to show the empty mug to the IT guy to tell him that I’ve successfully installed Java. He hates me.

Source: Pod’s Facebook page
"Oh man! They’ve thought of everything. Even the coffee is cold!!"

The 3rd Place.

I know about Third Places thanks to *Bowling Alone* by Robert Putnam, and Mr Schultz was serious about it when starting Starbucks. Believe the original concept is from Ray Oldenburg.


**Sayings**

"Pour yourself a hot steaming cup of joe, 'cause we’re gonna talk about the amber liquid of life... the common man’s gold, and like gold it brings to every person the feeling of luxury and nobility. Thank you Juan Valdez." Bob Dylan, *Theme Time Radio Hour*, “Coffee,” introduction. Cited in Scott Parker and Michael Austin (2011)

"Please, don’t even talk to me until I’ve had my coffee.” - common sentiment, referenced in Austin (2011:25)
15 Struggles All Coffee Addicts Know to be True: http://www.buzzfeed.com/farrahnicole/15-true-struggles-of-being-a-caffeine-addict-14ow5#.dtd7b4b2p

“There is no such thing as strong coffee – only weak people!”
“You know you’re a coffee addict when… you don’t tan you roast”

Coffee in Space
“The ISSpresso machine is a joint project between the Italian Space Agency, the coffee maker Lavazza and Argotec, an engineering and software company in Torino, Italy. This isn't the first time that an espresso machine has been tested on the ISS, but the new one is viewed as a major improvement compared to the previous one, which is no longer in use.”
http://mashable.com/2015/04/13/space-station-italian-espresso/

Videos
Nacho Punch
2014 “Hipsters Love Coffee” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JR7StSaaDKM

ASAP Science